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Goodbye to All That? A Requiem for Neoconservatism

Kenneth Anderson

REVIEW ESSAY

**GOODBYE TO ALL THAT? A REQUIEM FOR
NEOCONSERVATISM**

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AFTER THE NEOCONS: AMERICA AT THE CROSSROADS

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

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THE GOOD FIGHT:

**WHY LIBERALS –AND ONLY LIBERALS – CAN WIN THE WAR ON
TERROR AND MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN**

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*The war on terror and the war in Iraq have occasioned a ferocious debate over the Bush administration's commitment to neoconservatism as the guiding philosophy behind war aiming at democratic transformation. Two recent, widely noticed 2006 books have attacked neoconservatism—one, by a former neoconservative, Francis Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*, and a second, by a centrist liberal, Peter Beinart, *The Good Fight: Why Liberals – and Only Liberals – Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again*. Each seeks to anatomize neoconservatism and what, in each author's view, has gone wrong with it; each seeks to offer an alternative foreign policy. This review essay examines the two books, considering the respective cases they make against neoconservatism and the rationales it has provided for the Iraq war and the war on terror.*

The essay considers the broader intellectual framework of neoconservatism and its history within American conservatism, and the long-running American foreign policy debate over realism and idealism, setting out a seven point schema of neoconservative doctrines. It is respectful of Fukuyama's critiques, and particularly the internal contradictions that Fukuyama identifies within and among neoconservative premises that have led to what Fukuyama sees as disastrous policies. Still, this essay does not believe—even granting the strength of the critiques—that Fukuyama has decisively knocked down the entire neoconservative case for the Iraq war or, more broadly and importantly, the neoconservative commitment to democratic transformation as against realist doctrines of the accommodation and stability of corrupt or wicked authoritarian regimes.

With respect to Beinart, this essay praises his call for the Democratic Party to recognize that the fight against transnational Islamist terrorism is really a fight against a form of totalitarianism, and hence similar in certain respects to the Cold War. However, it rejects Beinart's characterization of neoconservatism and Bush administration foreign policy as likewise a threat to American values, different in degree but not necessarily in kind. The essay also rejects the new foreign policy proposed by Fukuyama or Beinart—amounting, in each case, to a version of increased realist multilateralism, what Fukuyama calls “realistic Wilsonianism”—

concluding that each is guaranteed from the outset to be merely ineffectual.

The essay proceeds, first, by considering Fukuyama's detailed history and critique of neoconservatism. It next considers the left reaction to neoconservatives failures in Iraq—the emergence of a new liberal realism—and takes up Beinart's critique of this liberal move away from idealism. Third, the essay examines Fukuyama's argument against neoconservatism from sociological premises, and especially the grave error of multiculturalism as a replacement for liberalism in dealing with Muslims within Western societies. Fourth, the essay largely agrees with Fukuyama's invocation of a new emphasis on international development and nation-building in ways that accept their slowness and limitations. Finally, the essay considers the alternative foreign policy approaches put forth by Fukuyama and Beinart, and finds them each finally lacking.

I

Neoconservatism in American foreign policy is over and Francis Fukuyama has written its obituary. And now that the hoopla attending his book's release has died down—the charges and counter charges, accusations of betrayal and bad faith, angry denunciations and bitter recriminations, ruptures of friendships and breaking of intellectual alliances¹—perhaps it is possible to give sober

1. For example, in 2004, Francis Fukuyama criticized Charles Krauthammer's 2004 prestigious Irving Kristol Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute, finding it "disconnected from reality" because it did not address the failures in already then evident Iraq. Krauthammer responded by accusing Fukuyama of purposefully ignoring the threat religion poses to national security, noting that Fukuyama "made his reputation proclaiming" that the world faced an "end of history." See Francis Fukuyama, *The Neoconservative Movement*, NAT'L INT., Summer 2004, at 57, 58; Charles Krauthammer, *In Defense of Democratic Realism*, NAT'L INT., Fall 2004, at 15, 18. The following year, Fukuyama resigned from his position on the editorial board of *The National Interest* over a "philosophical disagreement" regarding the "narrowly realist foreign policy" of the Nixon Center, the magazine's new owner. See also David Kirkpatrick, *Battle Splits Conservative Magazine*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 13, 2005, at § 4 at 12 (noting Fukuyama's intent to start a new publication, *The American Interest*, with other dissenting members of *The National Interest*, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Eliot A. Cohen, and Josef Joffe).

consideration to Fukuyama's farewell, more-in-sorrow-than-anger, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*.²

The bitter arguments over Fukuyama's book took place not just among conservative think-tank intellectuals in Washington D.C., however, and it would be a mistake to write them off as simply internecine warfare of no special moment among one sector of the chattering classes. The most incendiary moment of debate occurred when the conservative pundit Charles Krauthammer—who in 2004 delivered an address cited by Fukuyama as a proximate cause of his apostasy³—accused Fukuyama in the *Washington Post* of grossly misrepresenting his speech.⁴ Krauthammer, by my reckoning, appeared to be right about the specifics of his lecture, and yet I also reckon Fukuyama generally right about the ideological triumphalism generously spread among American conservatives even at a time when it was obvious that winning in Iraq was more than a matter of merely removing the dictator and letting democracy take its lovely course. Remarkably, too, the White House entered what might have

2. FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, *AFTER THE NEOCONS: AMERICA AT THE CROSSROADS* (2006). References to this book will be shown throughout the text in the form (F page).

3. Charles Krauthammer, Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World, The Irving Kristol Annual Lecture, 2004 (Feb. 10, 2004), available at http://www.aei.org/docLib/20040227_book755text.pdf. In this speech at the American Enterprise Institute, Krauthammer dismissed the four major schools of American foreign policy: isolationism, liberal internationalism, realism, and democratic globalism as incorrect paths for the United States, recommending instead democratic realism as a fifth alternative. *Id.* The main tenet of Krauthammer's democratic realism is the necessity for the United States to be involved only in those regions that are critical to its security such as the "Islamic crescent stretching from North Africa to Afghanistan." *Id.* at 18–19. The irony is that Krauthammer's realist position in this speech itself is a partial rebuke to the idealist assumptions of neoconservatives.

4. Charles Krauthammer, Op-Ed., *Fukuyama's Fantasy*, WASH. POST, Mar. 28, 2006, at A23 ("It was, as the hero tells it, his Road to Damascus moment. There he is, in a hall of 1,500 people he has long considered to be his allies, hearing the speaker treat the Iraq war, nearing the end of its first year, as 'a virtually unqualified success.' He gasps as the audience enthusiastically applauds. Aghast to discover himself in a sea of comrades so deluded by ideology as to have lost touch with reality, he decides he can no longer be one of them. And thus did Francis Fukuyama become the world's most celebrated ex-neoconservative, a well-timed metamorphosis that has brought him a piece of the fame that he once enjoyed 15 years ago as the man who declared, a mite prematurely, that history had ended.").

been thought purely an intellectuals' brawl—sending off emails quoting Fukuyama's past statements in contradiction to the new positions in his book, particularly his 1998 support for the United States forcibly to overthrow Saddam—joining the melee for the very good reason that, as Tod Lindberg, editor of the Hoover Institution's *Policy Review*, put it, the Bush administration has “been more influenced by Mr. Fukuyama's work than by that of any other living thinker.”⁵ Betrayal, bad faith, denunciation, recrimination, and rupture, indeed.⁶ Meanwhile, liberal commentators and reviewers watched the feuding with a mixture of prim righteousness and undisguised glee at the long-awaited conservative crackup over the intellectual bases of the Bush administration's foreign policy.⁷

The work that Lindberg had in mind as influencing the Bush administration was of course Fukuyama's 1992 *The End of History and the Last Man*, a volume that began as an article while he was at the Rand Corporation,⁸ the quintessential Cold War think tank.⁹ That

5. Tod Lindberg, Op-Ed., *In Full Pursuit of Democracy*, WASH. TIMES, Mar. 21, 2006, at A19 (detailing the feud between Fukuyama and the Bush administration).

6. Fukuyama was not slow to respond to Krauthammer's Washington Post attack. Francis Fukuyama, Editorial, *Debating the War in Iraq (Round 3)*, WASH. POST, Apr. 1, 2006, at A15 (responding in a Letter to the Editor a few weeks after publication of Krauthammer's article). Fukuyama wrote that Krauthammer mistakenly asserted that Fukuyama changed his support for the war in Iraq only after public opinion on the war began to shift. Fukuyama states that he wrote several articles in 2002 in which he began questioning the United States' mission in Iraq and noted that he never wrote an article in support of the war.

7. See—each reviewing *After the Neocons*—for example Martin Jacques, *Critical Thinking: Bush's Foreign Policy is Under Fire From a Former Prophet of Neo-Conservatism*, GUARDIAN, Mar. 25, 2006, at 7 (book review); Anatol Lieven, *The Man Who Changed His Mind*, NEW STATESMAN, Mar. 27, 2006, at 48–49 (book review); Paul Berman, *Neo No More*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 26, 2006, § 7 at 1 (book review); Michiko Kakutani, *Supporter's Voice Now Turns On Bush*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 14, 2006, at E1 (book review); Louis Menand, *Breaking Away: Francis Fukuyama and the neoconservatives*, NEW YORKER, Mar. 27, 2006, at 82–84 (book review); Perry Anderson, *Inside Man*, NATION, Apr. 24, 2006, at 23–29 (book review).

8. FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, *THE END OF HISTORY AND THE LAST MAN* (1992); Francis Fukuyama, *The End Of History*, NAT'L INT., Summer 2004, at 3.

9. Which is *not* to say the Rand Corporation is or was conservative, but rather that it was always *anti-communist* in the Cold War sense that shaped the American political center, in domestic as well as foreign policy, from Democratic presidents Truman and Kennedy to Republican presidents Nixon and Reagan.

book, written in the flush of victory in the Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Communism, argued that we were on the cusp of a historical moment in which history itself—at least “history” in the sense of fundamental arguments over political ideology—was essentially over. Liberal democracy, market capitalism, and the welfare state had won, for the reasons that they are both right in principle and have been proved right in practice, while their 20th century totalitarian, collectivist competitors, Communism, Nazism, and Fascism, have all been seen off. Despite the disdain of some academics, *The End of History* hit the intellectual zeitgeist of the 1990s in the United States perfectly—as perfectly in tune with the post-ideological tenor of the Clinton administration as with conservative celebration of democratic capitalist victory—and Fukuyama eventually became a celebrity professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington D.C.

The Balkans, Somalia, Rwanda, Chechnya, North Korea, Cuba, Haiti, Chinese Communism, failed states, authoritarian states, backsliding in Russia, Saddam’s Iraq, the mullahs in Iran, and the Taleban executing women *qua* women in Kabul—well, okay, even in the hopeful, post cold war 1990s everyone understood that progress would be only gradual and there would be setbacks. But the basic institutions and values of democracy, human rights, liberalism, the secular public-private divide, free markets, the emancipation of women, and social protections were accepted worldwide and not really open to question. The nightmare of modernity—Orwell’s *1984*—had been successfully avoided. Fukuyama himself moved on, partly to fleshing out certain of the institutions of cultural values that made liberal capitalism work,¹⁰ partly to working out the problems of failed states,¹¹ and partly to arguing how to avoid that other dystopia of modernity—Huxley’s *Brave New World*—which, while infinitely more pleasant, challenged the underlying premises of being human.¹²

10. FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, *TRUST: THE SOCIAL VIRTUES AND CREATION OF PROSPERITY* (1995).

11. FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, *STATE-BUILDING: GOVERNANCE AND WORLD ORDER IN THE 21ST CENTURY* (2004).

12. FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, *OUR POSTHUMAN FUTURE: CONSEQUENCES OF THE BIOTECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION* (2002).

Alas, as we now know, other intellectuals were also at work in those same years. They too were dreaming their dreams of a politics and a history. Theirs, however, were dreams not of the end of history, but instead its re-birth and, for some, even the return of the Twelfth Imam, the re-birth of politics, history on the march, a march long stalled by centuries of Western expansion but reinvigorated by contemporary global demography and mass migration. A history simultaneously older than old and newer than new, pre-modern in its deployment of ancient Islamic doctrines, but post-modern in its highly selective use of them and in its deployment of the cutting edge of the West's very own anti-Western ideologies of multiculturalism, anti-colonialism, and *ressentiment*, all at the same time—a distinctly pre-modern, yet post-modern alternative to modernity and particularly its secular liberal capitalist form. It too conceived of an end-time of ideology—not *our* polished, commercial, secular, capitalist, democratic civil society writ global, but instead a worldwide, politicized *umma*.

Pre-modern and post-modern, yes—but never *modern* in that term's formal sense, the way in which *we* are modern. But *they* wrote down their visions and grand strategies in languages few of us understood, even as they took full advantage of modernity's technologies to post their manifestos on the Internet. *They* lived in grimy, slummy, unglamorous places in the second and third worlds few of us visited as we went about with our *Lonely Planet* guides, admiring reformed South Africa, its game parks and lovely Cape Town, so full of rainbow, pluralistic promise, went to the beach in Thailand and Bali, climbed Kilimanjaro and lamented the loss of primate habitat to war and poaching, hiked from Cuzco to Machu Piccu where we heard stories of the ancient Incas and not-so-ancient Sendero Luminoso, and worried about the decline of the Cloud Forest in Costa Rica. *They*, meanwhile, organized among modernity's resentful left-overs in the great cities of Europe where, it is true, many of us also lived, only they lived in neighborhoods few of us ever visited, the *banlieues* of Paris and the storefront mosques of Bradford and Hamburg, and they, those same intellects, vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and

slowly and surely drew their plans against us.¹³ Great believers in *praxis* as well as Allah, patiently connecting theory to action, *umma* to *jihad*, preacher to terrorist, liberation to the *burqa*, what had they to do with the end of history conceived as the triumph of the complacent bourgeoisie?

The End of History and the Last Man, in other words, is indeed a splendid disquisition on the end of alternatives to liberal democratic capitalism *within* modernity—Communism, Nazism, Fascism. But what does it offer if the alternative is not genuinely modern? After all, that book only briefly, passingly mentions Islam (although, it must be said, that the fact that in 1992 it even mentioned Islam at all is a tribute to the book's precocity). Much of the anger directed at Fukuyama's *After the Neocons* by neoconservatives and by Bush administration intellectuals arose from the perception that Fukuyama intended *The End of History*, in the rosy glow of the fall of the Wall, to be a universal pronouncement, applicable across the world and history—not limited merely to the ideologies of modernity. That is how they took it and sought to implement it as an Ur-text of neoconservatism. In his new book, however, Fukuyama does *not* appear to say that he now recognizes that *The End of History* was in fact limited to the 20th century's struggle among modernity's ideologies. Whereas, post 9/11, we all recognize that something new is in play. Instead he suddenly and unexpectedly appears to believe that neoconservative policymakers and intellectuals *misread* him, and that he never meant it to be universal after all.¹⁴ The result being

13. H.G. WELLS, *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* 3 (Tom Doherty Associates, LLC 1988) (1898).

14. To be exact:

Many people interpret my book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) as arguing . . . that there is a universal hunger for liberty in all people that will inevitably lead them to liberal democracy, and that we are living in the midst of an accelerating, transnational movement in favor of liberal democracy. This is a misreading of the argument. *The End of History* is finally an argument about modernization. What is *initially* universal is not the desire for liberal democracy but rather the desire to live in a modern society, with its technology, high standards of living, health care, and access to the wider world. . . . Liberal democracy is one of the by-products of this modernization process, something that *becomes* a universal aspiration only in the course of historical time.

FUKUYAMA, *supra* note 2, at 53–54 (footnote omitted). To which neoconservatives retort, that is how you interpret yourself *now*, but what you said in *The End of*

that it is their fault, not his, for not recognizing the limits of what a policy of promoting democracy and liberalism in the Middle East can get you and, more pertinently, what it cannot. The neoconservatives, in the Bush administration and out, on the other hand, accused Fukuyama of profoundly changing his mind but refusing to admit it. In what Lindberg called the “Lucy, Charlie Brown, and the football” analogy, the administration faithfully teed up the Fukuyamian football of liberal democracy in Iraq and the Middle East only to have Fukuyama himself snatch the ball away at the last moment.¹⁵ And then, adding insult to injury, Fukuyama goes and denies having done so and says instead that if only he were read properly, it would have been clear that the ideological possibility of liberal democracy was never really there, or anyway so hedged up by the long term Burkean requirements of culture slowly, slowly accreting social preconditions conducive to democracy that it amounts to it not really being there at all.¹⁶

II

But this gets us ahead of ourselves. In order to get there, we must go back to how Fukuyama frames the sins of neoconservative foreign policy in *After the Neocons*. The book is not long but offers an argument in five large steps. It first defines neoconservatism as a set of linked beliefs about social policy while exploring the political and social backgrounds of the intellectuals who framed its arguments. It then argues that key tenets of neoconservatism were systematically violated in making the case for the Iraq war, to what Fukuyama sees as disastrous effect. It argues that the broader war on terror is ill-served not only by the Iraq war, but also by the project of democratic reform in the Middle East, because, Fukuyama argues—following such writers as Olivier Roy—Islamist extremism is a phenomenon less of the Middle East than of the disoriented modernity of Muslims in the West, and Western Europe in particular.¹⁷ It turns to consider

History in 1992 is much, much stronger than that. Although, like Lindberg, I regard myself as friendly to both camps on this point, I believe the neoconservatives have the more accurate reading of Fukuyama in 1992.

15. Lindberg, *supra* note 5, at A19.

16. *Id.*

17. See OLIVIER ROY, *GLOBALIZED ISLAM: THE SEARCH FOR A NEW UMMAH* 1, 22–38 (2004) (arguing that the Islamic revival or “re-Islamisation” is the result of

the requirements of policies of international economic development and long term nation-building—almost entirely ignored by neoconservatives, single-mindedly intent upon on security issues—to address particularly the myriad problems of failed states and their tendency to become safe havens for jihadist terrorists. Finally, the book offers an alternative for what should replace neoconservative foreign policy—something that Fukuyama calls “realistic Wilsonianism” (F 9). That is, rather than attempting to make, or remake, what Fukuyama would regard as a *genuinely* neoconservative foreign policy that harks back to *true* neoconservative postulates, it is “better to abandon the label and articulate an altogether distinct foreign policy position” and name it anew (F 7).

Fukuyama’s intellectual history of neoconservatism, both internally and in its relation to other American approaches to foreign policy, is fair-minded and sober, shrewd and informative. No doubt some of those present at the founding will quarrel with one thing or another in the account of neoconservatism’s rise, but Fukuyama displays an astute grasp of the movement and its place in American thought. The fair-mindedness of his exposition of the origins of neoconservatism is evident in the care devoted not only to laying out its positions, but to dissecting and dismissing various mistaken, hostile, or simply mendacious attacks on it. Fukuyama is particularly helpful in gently dismissing the tendency of the American Left today to see seemingly endless conspiracies around those who happened to have studied several generations back with the University of Chicago’s Leo Strauss, a classicist whose dense theorizing on the questions of truth and relativism are at once highly sophisticated and yet philosophically quite conventional, and only tangentially related to contemporary political theory.¹⁸ That Richard Hofstadter’s

the complex forces of globalization such as an increase in the number of Muslims living in the Western world and deterritorialization). Roy further posits that these forces cause Muslims to seek the universal community of Muslims, *umma*, based on Islamic law, *sharia*. *Id.* at 24–26. Bernard Poulet, editor of the French journal *L’expansion*, has pointed out to me, however, that, perceptive as Roy is, one must be very careful in reading him because, as a philosopher, he exhibits a marked preference for abstract philosophical categories—such as the “global *umma*” itself—over concrete historical accounts. It is a point well-taken.

18. At least to me, child of conventional Anglo-American analytic philosophy and student of Philippa Foot and Rogers Albritton, and someone who heard of Leo

“paranoid style” in American politics is not limited to the Right is amply demonstrated by the ever-weirder arguments in the Left offered today to show that Straussianism, whatever that is exactly, is something like the Da Vinci Code, the very special secret decoder ring, for decrypting the Bush administration.¹⁹

As a positive political doctrine, Fukuyama says, neoconservatism is one of four principal approaches to American foreign policy. The others are realism in the mold of Kissinger, emphasizing power, stability, and tending to “downplay the internal nature of other regimes”; liberal internationalism, hoping to “transcend power politics altogether and move to an international order based on law and institutions”; and finally, in Walter Russell Meade’s term, “Jacksonian” nationalism, tending to a “narrow, security-related view of American national interests [and] distrust of multilateralism” (F 7). What characterizes neoconservatism by comparison to the

Strauss only as an adult and read parts of his work a couple of years ago to find out what the fuss was all about. I do not pretend to be an expert on Strauss, either pro or anti, but standing as an outsider to the debate reasonably well informed in political theory and ethics, I cannot see that it is anywhere so important as the participants on either side have made out. Moreover, as Fukuyama notes, “it is even harder to extract an economic ideology from [Strauss]’ writing than a political one.” FUKUYAMA, *supra* note 2, at 198 n.19.

19. RICHARD HOFSTADTER, *THE PARANOID STYLE IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND OTHER ESSAYS* 29 (1965) (illustrating the central image of the paranoid style as “that of a vast and sinister conspiracy, a gigantic and yet subtle machinery of influence set in motion to undermined and destroy a way of life”). Hofstadter explains that the paranoid style is driven by the notion that the gigantic conspiracy is “the motive force in historical events.” *Id.* See, e.g., Scott Horton, *The Letter: Was Leo Strauss Democracy’s Best Friend?*, (July 16, 2006), http://www.balkin.blogspot.com/2006/07/letter_16.html (summarizing the key criticisms of Leo Strauss, and analyzing one of Strauss’ letter which, Horton claims, is supposedly key “in understanding Strauss and his politics”); Gerard Baker, *The Neo-cons Did Not Hijack US Policy*, FIN. TIMES, June 19, 2003, at 21 (rejecting as political agenda-driven BBC TV films exploring—proclaiming, more precisely—the alleged conspiracy that U.S. foreign policy is dictated by neoconservatives, and that Leo Strauss was a “Nazi in his belief in the power of the Big Lie”); Robert L. Bartley, *Thinking Things Over: Joining LaRouche in the Fever Swamps*, WALL ST. J., June 9, 2003, at A19 (tracing the historic roots of the “Strauss conspiracy,” its link to neoconservatism and criticizing journalists and independent presidential candidate and political extremist Lyndon H. LaRouche, for using it in relation to the debate on Iraq); FUKUYAMA, *supra* note 2, at 21 (noting that LaRouche, among others, accused Strauss in a radio commercial of “propounding a secret antidemocratic teaching and promoting lying on the part of public officials”).

others in this array? Fukuyama answers by laying out seven interconnected propositions that, he says, form neoconservatism's fundamental ideological base.²⁰ It is an unimpeachably intelligent analysis.

First, neoconservatism arose as a highly specific moralizing doctrine for promoting American security in the ideological struggles of the Cold War. In the late Cold War, it played idealist antagonist to conservative Kissingerian realism and, more precisely, the Kissingerian realism in the days of Nixon and Ford preaching—how quickly we forget—accommodation to the “inevitable” spread, appeal, and success of Communism. This was the doctrine of “declinism,” embraced by the endlessly cynical Nixon and hopelessly naïve Carter alike. It was only decisively rejected—to the amazement and derision of most of America's elites, whether cynical or naïve—by the great hero of the neoconservative movement, Ronald Reagan. Second, although neoconservatism is about *security* in the broad sense of preserving America, both its power and its ideals, it was and is never about power alone, let alone merely the maintenance of state-to-state realist stability. It is, rather, a belief in the power of ideas, ideals, and ideology as necessary conditions of victory in the Cold War, an understanding that the “mere” words of Pope John-Paul II were as necessary to the victory over Communism as NATO's battalions. Third, neoconservatism asserts that the internal affairs of states—their attachment to democracy, human rights, and liberal values—are overall indicators of external state behavior; predictors, even if imprecise ones, of their tendencies to war and peace. Fourth, neoconservatism conjoins simultaneously a belief in the universal validity and appeal of fundamental American ideals with an equally firm belief in American exceptionalism.

After the Cold War, neoconservatism asserted American exceptionalism as an American legitimacy to hold and wield power—not merely as a fact of American power, but as a *legitimate* ordering of power in the world, power wielded by a manifestly imperfect yet reasonably just and moral superpower, bearing reasonably well the moral responsibility of the powerful to provide a

20. Fukuyama offers four explicitly. I come up with seven by analytically taking apart the four basic principles that Fukuyama expounds at pages 48–49 and combining them with other elements of the book.

minimum level of order in a messy world. It is easy to doubt America's qualifications for such a role. But those who do might contemplate what the alternatives might be—*Pax chinana*, for example, a superpower acting only from self-interest, and not the rather diffuse self interest of *Pax americana* in maintaining status quo order, markets, and stability, but interests defined far more narrowly, and unsentimentally, by a rising, nationalist, internally undemocratic and externally unidealistic hegemon—a regime for which the term really fits. Darfur shows the way—China in effect rents out its Security Council veto upon any threatened hinderance to genocide in Darfur to the Sudanese regime in exchange, not for any grand ideological or even security point, but merely for narrow commercial gain, including that which benefits the family businesses of senior Chinese politicians and bureaucrats, in energy contracts and oil interests. Perhaps rising hegemony broadens self interest: perhaps not.

Fifth, therefore, neoconservatism is unapologetic that American power can and should be used for moral and ideal purposes—sometimes directly involving U.S. security interests, such as the Cold War itself, sometimes in defense of basic propositions of international order, such as the defense of Kuwait's sovereignty and indeed existence in the First Gulf War, but also sometimes in circumstances where, in the neoconservative view, America should act from morality alone and even if its security is not directly at stake—neoconservatives made the muscular moral case, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, for armed action in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Rwanda, East Timor, Kosovo and, today, Darfur. Sixth, neoconservatism shares with American realism an abiding skepticism of international institutions, at least those that go beyond a certain minimum state-centered multilateralism to invoke high-minded visions of global governance and the decline of sovereignty. Neoconservatism not only adopts the realist critique that, whatever countries high-mindedly say about international institutions, it is not in fact how they act—it goes a step further, into the realm of ideals, and says that democratic sovereignty, and America's democratic sovereignty in particular, is *also* an ideal, with its own moral legitimacy and that insofar as international institutions seek to undermine sovereign democracy, they are wrong in principle. Seventh, however, and profoundly different from the six preceding

propositions—this being the neoconservative belief most derived from neoconservative *domestic* policy—neoconservatism holds a profound “distrust of ambitious social-engineering projects” (F 49). “The untoward consequences of ambitious efforts at social planning is a consistent theme in neoconservative thought that links the critique of Stalinism in the 1940s with... skepticism about the Great Society in the 1960s” (F 49).

The first six of Fukuyama’s propositions roughly hang together as the lessons of victory in the Cold War. One may accept them or reject them, and they exhibit some tensions among themselves, but Fukuyama rightly sees them as a foreign policy vision broadly consistent with one another and in any case what neoconservatives learned from the Cold War, the collapse of Communism, and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and later the Soviet Union. Accepting their broad coherence in the Cold War, he instead asks another question of these propositions. To what extent were these lessons of the Cold War right in guiding the United States to war in Iraq and, more generally, in guiding the conduct of the war on terror? Are these principles perhaps instead the ideological equivalent of the oft-noted tendency of generals to re-fight the last war, with all-too-often disastrous results? And, going further, Fukuyama notes that the seventh proposition—the rejection of ambitious social-engineering as usually doomed to failure and ridden with unintended and unanticipated consequences—is quite *strongly* at odds with the other six propositions. Fukuyama focuses great attention on what he argues, with considerable merit, is the deep inconsistency within the neoconservative world-view of believing either that the project of social-engineering democracy in Iraq could be achieved easily and in a short period of time by the external device of forcibly removing the wicked dictator—or that the project could be pursued without unanticipated negative consequences both within Iraq and geopolitically across the region.

Conjoining the criticism of re-fighting the Cold War and the concern of neoconservative aversion to social engineering, Fukuyama argues that neoconservative principles led the Bush administration to re-fight the last war—the war for the liberation of Eastern Europe from Communism—and mistakenly to believe that the Iraq war would fundamentally be the same thing, a release of pent-up social and cultural energy for democracy, liberalism,

capitalism, civil society, and the rule of law. Take out the dictator, release the dictatorial check on these social goods, and these ideals would all naturally assert themselves. On the contrary, says Fukuyama—and putting a Burkean spin on the seventh neoconservative principle—it should have been clear that the social and cultural pressures for democracy, liberalism, capitalism, civil society, and the rule of law in Eastern Europe were the result of very long term cultural pre-conditions that simply are not present in the Arab Middle East. They are not “natural”; they are the result of social forces at play over historically long periods of time. In releasing the grip of the dictator, the United States opened the door to forces of sectarian, tribal, and other causes of violence and potential civil war that were not in the lexicon of anticipated neoconservative consequences. Why not? Because neoconservatives had mistakenly drawn their template from the fundamentally Western cultural examples of Europe and modernity.

III

Fukuyama’s is not the ugly, near-racist argument of “lesser breeds without the Law.”²¹ Fukuyama’s argument might be unfairly caricatured as that; in any case, it is a position George W. Bush has repeatedly and forthrightly assailed, declaring flatly that the desire for liberty and the dream of freedom are universal and not merely a Western birthright—only to be ridiculed and scorned, however, by supposedly “liberal” elites in America and Europe for his arguments on behalf of liberal universal values—arguments that, once upon a time, they themselves would have made. Yet we stand in a difficult position today in which calls for a new realism in foreign policy, as against neoconservatism, must walk a very fine line between two closely related claims. The first is the Burkean assertion that although most *individuals*, most people, most places, indeed have what Bush calls a universal desire for freedom and perhaps even for democracy, not all *societies*, as collectivities, possess the historical evolution and social conditions necessary to bring that about—even allowing for great differences in what those terms mean in concrete historical and social circumstances. The second is the belief—often

21. RUDYARD KIPLING, *Recessional*, reprinted in MASTERPIECES (1898).

unexpressed, but equally often lying just beneath the surface of contemporary foreign policy debates—that some people, some peoples, are just incapable of liberty or democracy or self-government of any kind, now and likely forever—to wit, the Arabs. The line between acknowledging the Burkean constraints of culture, including religious culture, upon politics, on the one hand, and cultural essentialism of a very unattractive kind, on the other, is a very thin one.

But Fukuyama's Burkeanism is not strictly a realist argument—it is, rather, a quintessentially realist caution *upon* moralist action, a caution that Fukuyama is quite right to say is precisely what neoconservatives in U.S. domestic policy have typically said to their blindly idealist liberal counterparts, eager to remake, revise, and reorder society without thought to the flooding forces they might inadvertently set in motion, the consequences of social incentives and disincentives that they cannot now foresee. And its Burkeanism entails not only the recognition that liberal democracy results from particular long-term social and cultural matrices that are not immediately enactable through, for example, mere elections—it is also the recognition that democracy itself is frankly a fragile social condition even where it exists, and that its underlying conditions can be destroyed far more quickly than they can be created. It is a deeply conservative critique of neoconservatism—exogenously Burkean while endogenously pointing to a profound contradiction within neoconservative moral assumptions. It is not precisely realist in the sense of narrow national interest or mere state stability alone; it is, instead, the position of a *moral* realist. It is, in fact, an important critique precisely because it is so, well, *neoconservative*.

It is also, however, not at all consistent with my reading, at least, of *The End of History*. If Fukuyama's argument that neoconservatives ignored at their peril one of their own central tenets is a fair point, it is likewise a fair point that it is very hard to locate that danger in Fukuyama's first book. In the first book, Fukuyama was a Hegelian triumphalist. In this book, he is a Burkean cautionary, if not an outright pessimist. It may be Fukuyama's discomfort with having changed his mind that accounts for the peculiar fact that Burke, despite hovering above nearly every substantive critique Fukuyama makes of neoconservative triumphalism, barely figures in the actual text of *After the Neocons*.

Whereas the epigraph for this book might well have been the young Burke's curt response to a Quaker friend seized with passions of idealism and do-gooding, "I dont like that part in your letter wherein you say you had the Testimonies of well doing in your Breast, whenever such motions rise again endeavour to suppress 'em."²²

But what does all this mean for the debate over the Iraq war? Unfortunately there is today a too-common response of American liberals. Many have abandoned, at least for the moment, their traditional Wilsonian idealism to revel in a mean-spirited realism usually associated by caricature with the Right—or at least with Fukuyama's conservative realists and Jacksonian nationalists. Far too many liberals have devoted themselves from 2003 onwards to not merely opposing the Iraq war on the perfectly legitimate grounds that it was not likely to achieve its aims and risked creating disorder that might turn out to be far worse—a cure worse than the disease. Far too many liberals, in order to bolster, if indeed not make, that case, have systematically downplayed the evil that Saddam had already done and continued to do and, along with his even wilder sons, promised to do well into the future. We are living in a weird age of liberal nostalgia for Saddam's rule.²³ The contrast with the previous decade of liberal internationalist idealism could not be greater.

22. CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN, *THE GREAT MELODY: A THEMATIC BIOGRAPHY OF EDMUND BURKE* 25 (1992).

23. I write this today (in Fall 2006) recalling a conversation I overheard—eavesdropped on—recently in a Washington D.C. coffee house. Two young women, law students I gathered, were having a serious discussion about the Lebanon war and the Iraq war. Both, they agreed, were the fault of the Bush administration. One of the students remarked at length on the Iraq war from the position of the new liberal realism. It started with why democracy could not work among such people, and gracefully slid into a remarkably eloquent defense of Saddam and his regime. She quoted from Nir Rosen, and argued that Iraq and its people were better off under his reign; she argued that a strongman dictator was necessary to keep order in a place like Iraq, and that his demonization by the United States had obscured all the good parts of his regime, especially its respect for women and freedom of religion. She brushed off those killed by the Saddam regime as compensated for by the regime's secularism and regard for women, because keeping order among the Kurds and the Shias required force, and because Saddam's rule was, in any case, less oppressive than the U.S. presence. She described herself to her friend as a liberal Democrat. I would guess she also counts herself as a staunch supporter of human rights and an idealist in foreign policy. This is a speech which is hard to imagine being delivered by someone of her political affiliations even a couple of years ago. I do not intend to caricature this

Recall how, during the 1990s, it was taboo in good liberal circles, in the United States, Canada, or Western Europe, even to suggest that the Balkan wars were the result of centuries old ethnic hatreds. Or that *any* civil war was, or could ever *be*, the result of ancient ethnic or religious hatreds. That was wicked conservative realism announced by morally indifferent Republicans such as James “No Dog in this Fight” Baker,²⁴ and denounced, for example, by progressives from Michael Ignatieff to Samantha Power. I myself delivered such speeches on behalf of Human Rights Watch, although even then I had qualms about its Whiggish view of history, insisting with Kantian moral certainty that history itself *had to* obey certain categorical moral imperatives—wars are never ascribable to ancient ethnic hatreds (Yugoslavia),²⁵ no justice-no peace (Sierra Leone), impunity always rebounds (Chile), etc., etc. Honest liberals will recall that the official progressive position was that ascribing the Yugoslav wars to ancient ethnic hatreds rather than the manipulations of present day politicians—Milosevic and Tudjman—was an immoral and cynical ploy to avoid getting involved. Today, on the other hand, card-carrying liberal realism says that—well, as Democratic Party “netroots” kingmaker, Markos “Kos” Moulitsas, recently wrote, “[i]t’s clear that in the Middle East, no one is sick of the fighting. They have centuries of grudges to resolve, and will continue fighting until they can get over them.”²⁶

young woman; she was not delivering a rant—on the contrary, she was reasoned, reasonably well-informed, and well-spoken. Perhaps I am unduly influenced by my own experience digging up Saddam’s chemical weapons victims in Iraq after the First Gulf War as a human rights investigator, but I found the unapologetic defense of Saddam chilling.

24. Baker made his famous—or infamous—realist response “[w]e’ve got no dog in this fight” to answer calls from idealists, both right and left, that the United States intervene in the Yugoslavia wars in 1991. See Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War and Humanitarian Intervention*, 17 AM. U. INT’L L. REV. 1, 14 n.32 (2001) (citing *The Road to War*, SOCIALISM TODAY, May 1999, available at www.socialismtoday.org/38/nato38 (quoting Baker, President George H. W. Bush’s Secretary of State, following his 1991 visit to Bosnia)).

25. See Kenneth Anderson, *Illiberal Tolerance: An Essay on the Fall of Yugoslavia and the Rise of Multiculturalism in the United States*, 33 VA. J. INT’L L. 385, 386 (1993) (arguing that the war in Yugoslavia resulted in part from the States’ “system of pre-modern ethnic power balancing”).

26. Posting of Markos Moulitsas to Daily Kos, <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/7/17/131952/052> (July 17, 2006, 10:19 PDT).

And Saddam? I recall one prominent human rights campaigner telling me, back in the Clinton years, back when talking about dictators was just that, mere talk, that Saddam was one of the three over-the-edge, current world figures who tiptoed up toward the truly great criminals of the 20th century, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot—the others being Milosevic and Kim Jong Il—for whom one should not rule out military measures for regime change. But that was under Clinton, pre-9/11, when it was easy to strike such moral postures, knowing that the United States would take no military action to remove him.

Today, however, Saddam has been re-invented as merely another bad guy in a courtroom that offered insufficient procedural protections during his trial for what Human Rights Watch, for example, carefully described way back when, following its investigations after the First Gulf War, as “attempted genocide.”²⁷ That same human rights monitor declined to offer evidence in the trials out of concern that the Iraqi court was not sufficiently fair—partly meaning that its procedures were not sufficiently fair to the accused, but also meaning not “international” in its composition and authority, and not authorized by the United Nations—and that, God forbid, Saddam might even be executed for his crimes.²⁸ Saddam is currently recalled in the new liberal realism as something not dissimilar to his own toppled statue of forearms crossing swords over a street in Baghdad, symbolizing, as rewritten today, stability—and recalled, in his botched execution, as a figure of even some pity. I am sorry, but I saw the skeleton of one too many victim of his Anfal campaign of genocide to join the revisionist parade.

There is little doubt, however, that the dreadful history of Saddam’s regime has been severely downgraded after the fact in the new liberal realism. The “Republic of Fear” under Saddam that Iraqi

27. Human Rights Watch, U.S. Needs to Screen Iraqi Opposition Allies (Nov. 21, 2002), http://hrw.org/english/docs/2002/11/21/iraq4415_txt.htm (using this phrase to describe the execution of more than one hundred thousand Iraqi Kurds by Iraqi troops during the 1988 Anfal Campaign).

28. See Human Rights Watch, The Iraqi High Tribunal and Representation of the Accused (February 2006), <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounders/mena/iraq0206> (arguing that the independence of the Iraqi High Tribunal is “already under a cloud” in part because of the controversial removal of one of its judges).

exile Kanan Makiya documented,²⁹ for example, has been wondrously defanged by revisionist Nir Rosen under the new, liberal realist assertion that regime change in Iraq has made things worse.³⁰ Not just potentially worse if civil war escalates beyond Baghdad and Anbar province, but actually worse than Saddam and his regime, taken in its total past and potential future, and for the whole of Iraq, from Kurdistan to the south: Iraq today in 2005–06, under the U.S. gun, according to Rosen, is the real “Republic of Fear.” It is a position embraced by many of the new liberal realists and, I venture, many readers of this essay. In Rosen’s hands, however, and in the hands of the new liberal realists, it is far more than even the assertion that the violence of Iraq today is worse than under Saddam once he had slaughtered his hundreds of thousands and consolidated power in a frightening but less bloody police state. In order to get there, it undertakes a systematic, sordid downplaying of the history of Saddam’s regime—all those slaughtered, after all, inside the regime and all those wars of conquest, beyond Iraq’s borders—and, lest we forget, the continuing possibilities into the future represented by his sons.

That Iraq today is worse than Iraq yesterday might of course actually be true, although—even in Fall 2006, as I write this, and despite the disastrous errors made by the United States on account of neoconservative dogma—it seems to me not yet in fact so. At this writing in Fall 2006, civil war properly so-called is still limited to Baghdad and Anbar province—it is not the case of the south or of Kurdistan. Complete, widening civil war and ethnic cleansing, across the whole country might, of course, quickly emerge, and it might indeed turn out finally to be worse than Saddam’s Iraq or that promised by Saddam’s sons. No Whiggish theory of history here. It is possible that by the time this essay is in press, in 2007, the situation will have become worse than Saddam’s once and future rule. At this writing, following the 2006 midterm elections in which Democrats took back the House and Senate, the Bush administration debates troop surges or withdrawals, timetables for the Iraq

29. See SAMIR AL-KHALIL & KANAN MAKIYA, *REPUBLIC OF FEAR* (1989).

30. See Nir Rosen, *Iraq is a Republic of Fear*, WASH. POST, May 28, 2006, at B1; NIR ROSEN, *IN THE BELLY OF THE GREEN BIRD: THE TRIUMPH OF MARTYRS IN IRAQ* (2006).

government, a unitary Iraq or a soft partition between Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia zones. I make no prediction as to these actions or their outcomes. The United States may precipitate a widening civil war and massive ethnic cleansing through a hasty retreat—or the same might develop anyway, on its own. All these possibilities and more are open.

Still, however one reads the turbulent facts of Iraq, the downgrading of human rights idealism and the embrace of the “hard men” realism of Brent Scowcroft or Henry Kissinger by American liberals in the matter of Iraq is wondrous to behold. Likewise the curious amnesia about earlier, equally fervently-held idealist positions that apparently only David Rieff has had the admirable forthrightness to jettison, yet say plainly, without obfuscation, that in embracing realism he has, in fact, changed his mind.³¹ Rieff, to his credit, and practically alone in his clarity and honesty, does not pretend to have it all ways, nor is he furtive about positions he held a decade ago, but no longer does.³² This is what makes Rieff serious in a way that the new liberal realists are not. It is as though American liberal idealists, long constrained to worship at the church of pious Wilsonianism, were suddenly freed to go out into the streets for a Carnival of realism, suddenly freed to expound upon the virtues of containment, stability, interest, accommodation, and “our sonofabitch.” What a relief, it seems, no longer always to have to be so bloody high-minded about human rights in Iraq, genocide against the Kurds, and so on. Yet this frisson of realism goes along with either a transparently insincere or else brazenly inconsistent idealist assertion of how international institutions could and should do all the things the United States cannot—realism, that is, applied to the United States as an actor in Iraq with wild enthusiasm but

31. See David Rieff, *Muscular Utopianism*, WALL ST. J., March 28, 2005, at A16 (expressing the author’s sense that he is “increasingly aligned with the realist position”); see also David Rieff, *Beware Wars of Altruism*, WALL ST. J., July 10, 2003, at A10 (describing the author’s skepticism about whether “the mission of America should really be to save other nations from their own, homegrown calamities”).

32. Rieff told me recently, for example, that although he believes he was right about Bosnia, in supporting intervention there, he now has grave doubts about Kosovo, although not finally committing himself.

conspicuously *not* applied to international institutions of dubious effectiveness. It is patently not serious.

IV

It is also deeply wrong. Peter Beinart has explained to the seemingly deaf ears of his own Democratic Party in his new book, *The Good Fight: Why Liberals – and Only Liberals – Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again*,³³ that it is not necessary and far from attractive for liberals suddenly to trash-talk idealism about democracy, human rights, and universal values simply because neoconservatives are also idealists. George W. Bush's second inaugural address, for example, or his 2005 speech to the F.B.I. Academy following the London subway bombings, among many others, announced that henceforth U.S. foreign policy would be predicated on the *universal* and *nonnegotiable* demands of human freedom.³⁴ It is one thing to attack such speeches as merely hypocritical, or as not likely to be the case, or as fatally compromised by U.S. interests, or as simply inflated rhetoric not redeemable at the bank of U.S. action. But attack *because* a U.S. president sang the hymn of human freedom, human rights, and democracy? *Because* a U.S. president forthrightly declared that the realism—cynical or merely realistic—of earlier U.S. administrations had led to the disastrous situation today, and renounced the unalloyed realism of his father's administration, declaring it both wrong and unsuccessful? How can a principled liberal response be anything other than a demand to put up or shut up, make good or stand aside for someone who will? Yes, one can say that the new liberal realism does not reject idealism, but merely introduces a salutary realist caution upon it. But that is not, as Beinart amply documents, the current rhetoric of the new liberal realism, which amounts practically to a denunciation of idealism as such.

33. PETER BEINART, *THE GOOD FIGHT: WHY LIBERALS—AND ONLY LIBERALS—CAN WIN THE WAR ON TERROR AND MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN* (2006). References to this book will be shown throughout the text in the form (B *page*).

34. *E.g.*, Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, 38 WEEKLY COMP. PRES. DOC. 133, 138 (Jan. 29, 2002); Inaugural Address, 41 WEEKLY COMP. PRES. DOC. 74 (Jan. 20, 2005); Remarks at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, 41 WEEKLY COMP. PRES. DOC. 1146 (Jul. 11, 2005).

Beinart's book, which began as a widely noticed 2004 essay in *The New Republic*, tells American liberals that the challenge of global terrorism is the Cold War of our times, and that prevailing depends crucially upon Democrats, not Republicans.³⁵ Why Democrats? Phrased positively, Beinart says it is because Democrats, and only Democrats, have the necessary values in both foreign and domestic policy for, so to speak, the good to prevail. Republicans, and particularly neoconservatives, he says, do not. Phrased negatively—and Beinart is creditably honest in doing so—just as in the Cold War, as in the struggle against transnational terror today, Republican support for national security is not in question—it is never in question—whereas with Democrats it is. In the struggle against terror, Republicans speak with a nearly unbroken voice, whereas Democrats are deeply split. True, there is a virtuous reason, according to Beinart, why Democrats are split in this way—it is because they are not solely interested in national security, as the Republicans are, but are also just as deeply concerned for civil liberties, especially over the long term. This is, of course, unfair to Republicans and their own commitment to Constitutional liberties.

But it is also true, Beinart says, that there is a leftwing wedge of Democrats who view the struggle against terror as either less important—far less important—than the war against Bush, or else regard the struggle against terror as merely Bush administration cover for its wicked policies. Either way, a fight against transnational terror is not on the priority list for these Democrats. Beinart's first call, therefore, is for Democrats today to reach back to their experience in the early days of the Cold War, and to do what Harry

35. Peter Beinart, *A Fighting Faith: An Argument for a New Liberalism*, NEW REPUBLIC, Dec. 13, 2004, at 17. Although Beinart himself admirably stresses that the United States is engaged in a "war on terrorism" in the same sense as it engaged in the Cold War—a war against a form of totalitarianism—and criticizes Democrats for downplaying that fact, I have deliberately referred in this discussion to the challenge of terrorism, the struggle against transnational terrorism, rather than the "war on terror." The reason is simply that at this juncture, *pace* Beinart, the phrase "war on terror" refers specifically to Bush administration policy; using it generically at this point would be tendentious, as it would sweep in a Democratic response that, in many cases, would not want to regard it as a war at all, or in any case not want to be identified with the specific policies of the Bush administration. Hence the more generic, if unfortunately vaguer, references. See Kenneth Anderson, *Law and Terror*, POL'Y REV., Oct.–Nov. 2006, at 3, available at <http://www.policyreview.org/139/anderson.html>.

Truman had done sixty years before—marginalize and then excommunicate the so-called Wallace Democrats, the leftwing Democrats of that day who were soft on Stalin, the Soviet Union, and Communism. Beinart calls upon today's mainstream Democrats to assert themselves and do the same thing to the leftwing of the Democratic Party that has effectively decided either that terror is not really a threat, or not a significant threat compared with the graver threat posed by the Bush administration, or anyway a threat that does not require any significant response beyond, perhaps, securing the ports but not the borders—the Moveon crowd, the Dean Democrats, the 'netroots' crowd.

Particularly given the criticisms that follow, Beinart's intellectual and moral achievement—recognizing that Islamist terror is a form of totalitarianism—must be given full and complete credit. Islamist terrorism is a totalizing ideology, a totalitarian ideology inimical to human freedom, one which must be fully and forcefully opposed by those who value the inheritance of the Enlightenment. Beinart has said this more plainly than perhaps anyone else, Republican or Democrat, on the left or right. Moreover, he has said this to his own party—which on this point, he says remains deeply in denial, morally and intellectually AWOL, and only too willing to shoot the messenger. Having thus faulted Democrats for entertaining appeasement as a policy, or at least for refusing to confront the appeasers in the party, Beinart turns to argue that Republicans, and neoconservatives in particular, are morally and intellectually incapable of winning the fight against terrorism.

Republicans and neoconservatives are led astray by their blind faith in overwhelming American power, by the hubris of American might, and by the temptation—which Beinart calls the “most dangerous” of all—to “tell Americans they are inherently good” (B 129). It leads them to war as the first and practically only response. They neglect, according to Beinart, other avenues: diplomacy, containment, allies, the virtues of patience, the long-term cultural advantages of freedom and a constitutional order that has survived many crises. Republicans are united on the issue of national security, yes, but even unified they cannot actually win the struggle, because their values are too narrow and frequently wrong. Neutralizing the appeasement wing of his Democratic Party, on the one hand, and showing why Republicans cannot succeed on their own policies, on

the other, Beinart urges Democrats to reinvigorate domestic and foreign policy liberalism—to wage a struggle against a jihadist terrorism that is really a form of totalitarianism—but to do so as an expression of Democratic Party values, at once muscular and liberal. “Winning the war on terror and reviving liberalism,” he says, “are two sides of the same fight” (B xiii).

Such a policy would not include an Iraq war. Beinart initially supported the Iraq war, but in the book loudly recants, today finding it insufficiently related to the war on *terror*. But neither would Beinart’s new Democratic policy shy away from the use of force against terrorists and in America’s national interests, if circumstance dictated—as comprehended by virtuous Democratic policy-makers unafflicted by Republican hubris. It would put America’s pluralistic, liberal values, as understood by the Democratic Party, front-and-center in the long-term struggle against terrorism in both domestic and foreign policy; it would embrace a muscular multilateralism that would seek real allies. Yet the renewed commitment to multilateralism and repudiation of Republican unilateralism would not be allowed unduly to tie America’s hands or forswear the use of force unauthorized by international bodies if, for example, the United Nations or the Security Council were manifestly unable or unwilling to act in a necessary situation.

V

One might be forgiven for asking what, apart from the Iraq war and a certain rhetorical tone, materially distinguishes this program from Bush administration neoconservatism. Of Fukuyama’s seven point account of neoconservatism, Beinart would seem to disagree with part—but only part—of the proposition declaring the legitimacy of exceptional American power in the world, wanting it to be tempered by much greater American humility. He would also differ from the essential neoconservative distrust of international organizations—although, even there, Beinart’s embrace of multilateralism stops well short of European-style worship of international organizations. Those differences, and the claim (better articulated by Fukuyama) that neoconservatism lacks certain essential predicates altogether, particularly those related to economic development and nation-building that are not directly derivable from

narrow Cold War national security experience. Even the charge of Bush administration unilateralism is belied both by the fact that it attempted—perhaps waiting longer than it should have and perhaps only on account of political pressure—at least to seek to line up Security Council approval for its actions, including the Iraq war, and assembled in any case a sizable ad hoc coalition—which, true, did not include France. It is not clear that President Beinart—or any centrist Democrat—would act differently from the Bush administration template in circumstances where force was deemed essential by the United States, but the Security Council, for example, was unwilling. Democrats have *already* been there and indeed led the way—the Kosovo war, for example, unsanctioned by the Security Council and a certain loser to a Russian, and perhaps Chinese, veto had it been put to a vote. Were Somalia, for example, to become the new Afghanistan—and well on its way until the Ethiopian intervention—and were a Hillary Clinton administration to conclude that it was necessary forcibly to intervene there—in the teeth, say, of a certain Security Council veto by Russia, China, or France—it is hard to imagine that its diplomatic method would be significantly different from that of the Bush administration. Soothing words that would fool no one aside, how could it be?

For that matter, Bush administration policy on Iran's nuclear program—surely one of the two or three most important long-term foreign policy issues today—has been a model of multilateralism and deference to our European allies and action through U.N. mechanisms such as the International Atomic Energy Commission—and, one might add, with nothing much to show for it, at least as measured by actually ending or even slowing down Iran's relentless march to weaponization. In an effort, seemingly, to underscore partisan difference, Beinart tends to ignore that it is a prevailing characteristic of the broad American political center, Democrats as well as Republicans, to see multilateralism, international organizations, the United Nations, and the Security Council, in pragmatic terms; useful when they do, from the broad American perspective, the right thing, but not things—in the fashion of Europeans who see these same institutions in transcendental, not pragmatic, terms—to fetishize and worship for their own sake. Certainly this attitude smacks of the superpower that can take those institutions or leave them; certainly it can be ascribed to imperial

hubris if one likes. But it is not a specifically Republican hubris. There are indeed differences in how Democrats and Republicans approach these matters, differences in behavior at the margins, and above all, differences of rhetoric that greatly inflame national and international debates. But the substantive differences are not that great, and in practice amount mostly to whether Western Europe generally approves of American policy, within or without the formal structure of the United Nations.

To answer the question of what makes this new policy not merely somewhat revised neoconservative idealism minus Iraq, Beinart offers a brief history of America's early Cold War and the role of Democrats in it, and later his own critique of Reagan-era neoconservatism. These accounts aim to establish the analogy of the Cold War and the struggle against jihadist totalitarianism, the special and irreplaceable role of the Democratic Party in each struggle, then and now; and to show why Republican and neoconservative policies are inadequate and indeed losing responses today.

Beinart's retelling of the first years of the Cold War is compelling. He makes a persuasive claim for the unique role of Democrats in America's opening moves in the Cold War. After all, it was the Left wing, the Wallace wing (and also the communist and socialist wings of the labor movement and the American intelligentsia) of the Democratic Party that were indisputably soft on communism, the Soviet Union, and Stalin. The Republican Party had no such wing.³⁶ The firm anchoring of anti-communism by reason of a liberal alliance that included stalwartly anti-communist labor leaders, committed simultaneously to expanding the welfare state and civil liberties yet equally opposed to communist totalitarianism (something almost entirely missing, for example, in Western Europe) was indispensable for the long-term national will to succeed against Soviet Communism. It required enormous political courage for Americans for Democratic Action to break with labor's hard-left flank to embrace the center—courage on the social-democratic left,

36. The Republicans long had, of course, a seriously isolationist wing. It had been largely extirpated from the moment of Pearl Harbor onwards, and did not immediately re-emerge in the early years of the Cold War. The Democratic Party's isolationist wing—much in evidence today, even if it does not quite dare to speak its name—did not get going until the post-Vietnam, McGovern years of the 1970s.

which paid benefits to the end of the Cold War and beyond. It is precisely this courage that Beinart demands of his party today.

Nevertheless, we can question whether the historical parallel works so very well with our situation today. The question is particularly apt in light of the fact that one of Fukuyama's shrewd points is to note that neoconservatives *also* think of the war on terror as today's equivalent of the Cold War and that, as he argues, they have drawn exactly the wrong lessons and are therefore disastrously fighting, in effect, the last war, not today's.³⁷ If the parallel is to work, who then are the Wallace Democrats in today's Democratic Party? After all, apart from a few fashionably radical apologists on university campuses, offering justifications for jihadist terrorism to undergraduates—Ward Churchill, for example, or University of Wisconsin lecturer Kevin Barrett, dangling the possibility that 9/11 was a U.S. government conspiracy³⁸—no faction in the Democratic Party is a fellow traveler with jihad—at least not in the sense of the Wallace Democrats or committed communists in the mid-twentieth Century labor movement. What Beinart identifies as the Wallace Democrats of today are anti-war, anti-Bush, and anti-Republican,

37. It is noteworthy, however, that while Beinart, Fukuyama, and the neoconservatives all draw upon the Cold War, they use quite different parts of it. The neoconservatives, and Fukuyama in critique of them, focus upon the late Cold War, and specifically the Reagan years of the 1980s. Those years are distinguished by Reagan's increasing pressure, both ideological and military, upon Soviet imperialism. Beinart, however, focuses upon the very early Cold War, the opening years, the Truman years. In those early years, containment of Soviet Communism was the issue. These differences lead to quite different conclusions about strategic parallels between the Cold War and the struggle against terrorism. Both communism and jihadist terrorism are species of totalitarianism—this is Beinart's core, compelling observation, the one that gives the rest of his account moral force. But if you take your lessons from the Reagan years, as the neoconservatives do, then it leads you to a forward, aggressive, roll-back strategy even if it also leads you to the error of thinking that liberating Iraq will be like liberating Poland or Hungary. If you take your lessons from the Truman years, then it leads you to George Kennan and the Long Telegram, a long-term strategy of containment—even if it also leads you to the error of allowing containment to embrace accommodation and never to confront or seek roll-back at all. And to assume, further that *of course* Iran will acquire nuclear weapons, just as the Soviets did. These are remarkably different lessons drawn from the same Cold War.

38. Thus confirming David Brooks' observation that the universities are where American society unaccountably chooses to "warehouse its radicals." DAVID BROOKS, *ON PARADISE DRIVE: HOW WE LIVE NOW (AND ALWAYS HAVE) IN THE FUTURE TENSE* 160 (2004).

and they put all those concerns and more ahead of counter-terrorism—any serious need for which many, being viscerally pro-appeasers, also doubt. But however willing to try to appease terrorists, few are genuinely pro-jihad or are jihadist fellow travelers in the sense of “shared goals” of the communists of the 1930s and 40s.³⁹

It is not clear, in other words, that there is a meaningful analogy between the special role of the Democratic Party today and its role in the early Cold War. Anathematizing one’s anti-war, appeasement wing is not the same as anathematizing a fellow-traveling jihadist wing that it does not really have. Beinart is undoubtedly correct in his declaration that if today’s liberals cannot “rouse as much passion for fighting a movement that flings acid at unveiled women as they do for taking back the Senate in 2006, they have strayed far from liberalism’s best traditions”(B xii). And undoubtedly many liberals *have* strayed far from liberalism’s best traditions, because a very large number of American liberals, like their progressive counterparts elsewhere in the Western world, have concluded that the Bush administration (and indeed America itself) is the greater threat to progressivism, not jihad. These progressives do not wish to oppose jihadism in any way that might actually undermine it, because they fear that such opposition plays into Bush administration or American hands. This way lies madness and many, alas, have gone there—but this passivity, while ultimately suicidal to liberal ideals, as Beinart says, is nonetheless not the same as embracing jihad. It is instead “merely” a refusal to engage against it and a specious, in Beinart’s view, attempt to find ways to appease, rather than defeat, it.

Perhaps the difficulty that Beinart has in answering this question of how a genuinely muscular Democratic Party counter-terrorism

39. Although one should not underestimate the fringe that is indeed willing to justify terror against civilians—whether against the United States or, more typically, Israel—on the argument that it is the only tactic available to the oppressed, or the occupied, etc. It is easily visible in the wilder neighborhoods of the Left blogosphere and not just among Palestinian apologists. It starts to overlap into fellow traveling, not just with terror in general, but specifically Islamic jihadist terror when combined with the ideological melding of Islam as a religion resisting Western colonial or neo-colonial oppression. Some of this, of course, is straight-out anti-semitism, as well. But these are not the targets Beinart has in mind; he correctly takes aim at the more mainstream, and vastly larger, leftwing of the Democratic Party.

policy would differ from that of the Bush administration—apart from rhetorical differences and not having fought the Iraq war—accounts for the weird disconnect between Beinart's call to revive the Cold War political center, with Democrats returned to a share in the central role, and the bitterly partisan anger that saturates his book. It is, after all, a book titled how “only Democrats” can win the war on terror and make America great again, and the whole text is devoted to the twin propositions, as the Hoover Institution's Peter Berkowitz has put it in a perceptive review, that while Beinart sets aside the Democratic Party's broad belief in “no enemies to the left,” he also relentlessly indulges the corollary, “no friends to the right.”⁴⁰ That is not the formula of the Cold War, however. The long run of the Cold War was driven by a shared anti-communism, shared across the parties, the Vital Center,⁴¹ that seems at odds with Beinart's partisanship.⁴²

VI

Indeed, Beinart is *so* shrill that it makes me, at least, wonder if he is genuinely serious about it. Might it be merely strategic posturing? A way of shoring up his bona fides with the left wing of the Democratic Party as he seeks to convince it that his muscular liberalism is really, really not just neo-conservatism minus the Iraq war? In perhaps the most perceptive remark made about Beinart's overall political project, Peter Berkowitz observes that although the book has been widely praised as a call for the Democratic Party to

40. Peter Berkowitz, *War Torn Democrats*, POL'Y REV., Aug.–Sept. 2006, at 69, 75 (book review), available at <http://www.policyreview.org/138/berkowitz.html>.

41. ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR., *THE VITAL CENTER: THE POLITICS OF FREEDOM* (1949) (coining the term, “the vital center” as a political philosophy that eschews the radical ends of the political spectrum in favor of policies in the center—including a robust commitment to both civil rights and liberties as well as a faith in freedom).

42. Moreover, not everyone agrees that our contemporary reading of Truman—including Beinart's—is an accurate one. See, e.g., Noemie Emery, *The Inconvenient Truth About Truman: His Heirs are Republicans Now*, WKLY. STANDARD, July 17, 2006, available at <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/407mnukf.asp> (claiming that though shunned when he left office, President Truman was later lauded by both parties, but his policy legacy is now being found principally among the Republicans, not Democrats).

move back to the foreign policy center, it is in fact something quite different:

Beinart's "antitotalitarian liberalism" certainly represents an improvement on the anti-imperialist left, which believes that "liberalism's real enemies are only on the Right." Yet in the process of exposing their error, Beinart reveals the extent to which he shares it. It's not, in his view, that the anti-imperialist left is wrong to think the right is driven by neo-imperialist fantasies that threaten all that Americans hold dear. Rather, the problem is that his fellow Democrats fail to include the jihadists *also* as among America's great enemies.⁴³

Beinart's dialectic therefore finally comes to rest, Berkowitz concludes, in a "moral commensurateness between the jihadists and the Bush administration."⁴⁴ That was scarcely, however, the example of Beinart's great hero, Harry Truman, who somehow managed to find common ground with the "tens of millions of citizens" who were "not members of his party."⁴⁵

Is Berkowitz right in his reading of *The Good Fight*? Does Beinart claim a "moral commensurateness" between jihad and Bush conservatives? It is a question of what Beinart means when, for example, he says:

The central question dividing liberals today is whether they believe liberal values are as imperiled by the new totalitarianism rising from the Islamic world as they are by the American right.⁴⁶

Beinart here anathematizes jihadists, yes—but what exactly does he mean about the American right? Clearly he sees it, too, as a threat to American liberal values, a certain moral equivalence of threats, else why say liberal values imperiled "as they are" by the American right? The positive aspect of this formulation is for liberals to understand who the main enemy must be. Yet clearly his position is

43. Berkowitz, *supra* note 40, at 80.

44. *Id.*

45. *Id.*

46. *Id.* (quoting BEINART, *supra* note 33, at 197).

that the American right is *also* a threat—seemingly just a somewhat lesser threat than jihadism.

It is, to say the least, a problematic formulation even to link jihadism and American conservatism in the same sentence. It is reckless, to say the least, to put a violent threat to the entire American political community—those that brought down the World Trade Center—in the same sentence as a political philosophy, values, party, and movement that has roughly half the country as its voters and routinely—more routinely than liberals of late although not, to be sure, the 2006 midterms—wins elections. Does Beinart really wish to link those two? And when he does, can he then still tell us that he has not drunk the Kool-Aid—what he himself regards as the Kool-Aid—and joined the Michael Moore crowd? Should we really take it as such a leap forward, as the book's admirers seem to have understood it, for a liberal Democrat to announce that jihad is a greater threat than... the Bush administration? This was the insight requiring such intellectual acuity and moral courage? That Beinart should feel compelled even to structure an appeal aimed at his fellow Democrats in this way, that it should be praised as an act of great political courage, and that its courage should consist in conceding nothing more than that the American center-right is something less of a threat than Islamist terrorism is, well, shocking.

So *The Good Fight* in the end sends a disturbingly mixed message. There is indeed something of real value in it—not so much a soberly reasoned argument as the *move* it represents in today's politics—because the Democratic Party, as well as the country as a whole, deserves a center-left foreign policy alternative, alternative to either the hard left or any part of the right. But that is to treat *The Good Fight* as an offering in the political arena, not really as a book. It is a little bit like policy prescription books offered by candidates at election time—not intended as books, really, not intended as anything other than a momentary blip in the political conversation.

But even as a polemic of the moment—a perfectly honorable genre of political discourse from Jonathan Swift to Christopher Hitchens—it proceeds confusingly, offering a jumble of arguments about seemingly any topic, foreign or domestic, that need to be sorted out more systematically than Beinart seems interested in

doing.⁴⁷ The book's good qualities are also frequently buried beneath partisan sneers at the Bush administration by which Beinart seems to aim to maintain his credibility with his Democratic readers. Beinart and Fukuyama cover much the same ground—the history of neoconservatism, the Iraq war, the roots of terror, counterterrorism policy, international development, and the virtues of multilateralism. Reading *The Good Fight* causes one to appreciate just how clear and analytically precise a writer Fukuyama is. *After the Neocons* will be around for a long time, because it offers an analytically compelling account of neoconservatism even as it thoroughly critiques it, and this will be valuable to future historians seeking to understand the years immediately following 9/11. *The Good Fight* is the work of a moment, a move in an on-going, rapidly shifting political drama; it is something like information being absorbed into the market—once absorbed, once priced in, the original source of information is not really very important as the market in political positions moves on.

But the problem of *The Good Fight* is much more than style—after all, if Beinart's purpose is not to offer an analysis for the ages, but simply to influence the current debate, then style is not really a problem at all. The deeper problem, the one that affects whether and how Beinart is able to affect the current debate, lies in the fundamental conception of Beinart's political project, the drive to reinvigorate the Democratic Party's political center on issues of security and terror. Insofar as Beinart insists on linking jihad and American conservatism—whether in the “soft” form, the ambiguous form, the innuendo form, or else the hard form, the assertion that jihad and the American right are separate branches of the totalitarian family—it codes its own breakdown within its very DNA. It is one thing to characterize jihad as evil and American conservatism as wrong or misguided. Beinart, seemingly in the interests of

47. By way of example, consider the impassioned discussion about income inequality in America in the conclusion of the book. BEINART, *supra* note 33, at 201–04. Income inequality in the peroration of a book about terrorism, the Iraq war, WMD, etc.? Yes, of course, you can see how it all fits if you work hard enough at it—income inequality is a function of globalization, globalization is a destabilizing force that creates conditions of terrorism, and so on. But by that standard, pretty much anything that Beinart wants to talk about fits within this book, and that is how it reads. Fukuyama, by contrast, is highly disciplined and only introduces new elements as they fit his argument.

maintaining a connection to where, regrettably, the heart of the Democratic Party currently stands—and perhaps Beinart actually believes it, I do not know—instead puts jihadism and the Bush administration together on a *continuum* of evil, the former evil and the latter less, but still, evil. Perhaps even totalitarian, it is hard definitively to say. This, however, is not a revived Truman policy, not the Vital Center, not America's Cold War, not the view of the majority of the country that voted for George W. Bush in 2004—even those who abandoned him to vote Democrat in 2006 or might vote Democrat in 2008—and, most important of all, not true. Unnoticed by nearly all the commentators, who somehow have seen in *The Good Fight* only a vigorous call for the Democratic Party to reclaim the political center on national security, Beinart's book in fact sets a trap for the Democratic Party, one which is liable, in the end, merely to increase the partisan bitterness. It is a poisoned chalice at the heart of *The Good Fight* that ought to give considerable pause to Democratic Party intellectuals considering its prescriptions in the run-up to the 2008 presidential election.⁴⁸

VII

Yet the call made here to return to the American political center is not the call for a return to some mythical bi-partisan “consensus” that many mistake it to be. True, a return to the Trumanesque center would require the acknowledgment, which Beinart seems curiously unable to make, that the other side acts in good faith, too, and is both less stupid and less wicked than the theatre of partisanship requires. True, also, it does require the acknowledgment of shared values—in the case of Truman's Cold War, a shared commitment to liberty and democratic freedoms and their defense.

What the genuinely Trumanesque center does *not* require is governing from a putative bipartisan consensus. There are moments—short moments always in American political life—where all close ranks: the weeks following 9/11, following Pearl Harbor,

48. See, e.g., the Truman National Security Project, <http://www.trumanproject.org/index.php> (last visited Nov. 19, 2006) (explaining their belief that the United States faces great threats and must respond with a strong, cohesive plan for national security formed on the values long-held by Democrats).

following the Kennedy assassination, moments of crisis.⁴⁹ But the United States is not a parliamentary democracy, and just as we do not form and un-form governments through votes of no-confidence, we do not form governments of national unity. The fall of Chamberlain's government was precipitated by crisis; Churchill came to power by reason of crisis. That is not our American constitutional design. We hold elections on a regular schedule, come war, come peace, come what may. Perhaps that is a failing of our constitutional system, but even in moments of crisis, when we close ranks, we do so behind the *existing* government and *existing* leadership. It ensures that such closed ranks cannot last in an electoral democracy; the political unity occasioned by the crisis must inevitably decay. But reliance upon the existing government, whichever it is, also ensures that the existing leadership must be accountable to the electorate for how it acts in the crisis, or else it will lose the next election and be replaced.⁵⁰ The virtue of a national unity government is that it erases the ranks of partisanship and sends a signal to enemies at the gate that the political community marches to battle as one. But it also significantly lessens accountability within that community by erasing the clear choice between one government and its policies and another.

The result is that even America's Vital Center is not consensually bi-partisan on actual policies and politics. It involves significant, sometimes bitter debates and political choices between policies and

49. The New York Times editorial page thought that precisely such a moment had come when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of George W. Bush in the 2000 election, calling upon Bush to govern as a sort of national unity government, as recognition of what that newspaper saw as his illegitimacy. But of course that is not how the American political system works. See Editorial, *What Mr. Bush Can Do*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 15, 2000, at A38.

50. The issue of elections upon their regular constitutional schedule even during national emergencies, such as war, was settled in this country in Abraham Lincoln's second election campaign, in the very midst of the Civil War. Lincoln insisted that "the election was a necessity" and that the country could not "have free government without elections; and if the rebellion could force us to forego, or postpone a national election, it might fairly claim to have already conquered and ruined us." Jill Elaine Hasday, Comment, *Civil War as Paradigm: Reestablishing the Rule of Law at the End of the Cold War*, 5 KAN. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y 129, 134 (1996) (quoting Abraham Lincoln, Response to a Serenade (Nov. 10, 1864), in 8 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN 101 (Roy P. Basler et al. eds., 1953)).

governments and leadership. When it falls to a conservative Republican administration to face the choices forced by 9/11, it must be expected to do so in a conservative Republican way. The same will of course one day be true of a future liberal Democratic administration. The voters will reckon with the results and make their own choices. That is democracy. So, for example, many aspects of the current war on terror—which many Democrats would prefer to see disappear as a “war”—such as the policy for trying detainees at Guantanamo and elsewhere, now face battles over enabling legislation and its possible revision by the new Democratic Congress.⁵¹ The battles over proper policy are not, in the American political system, matters of a specious “consensus”—they are political battles, policies to be enacted as law by legislative majorities, in accordance with the priorities and preferences of the majorities. As majorities shift, those policies will shift; that has happened today in the 2006 midterm elections shifting legislative power to the Democrats and it might happen in the 2008 presidential elections—or it might not. There is a core of values that indeed cuts across the parties, but they have to do with the commitment to accepting the bona fides of one’s political opponents, the legitimacy of their role and standing in our political community.⁵² It is not about

51. Partly, of course, as a result of the Supreme Court decision in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, 126 S. Ct. 2749, 2798, 2808 (2006) (finding that the Bush administration’s military commissions violated both the Uniform Code of Military Justice and Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions), but the discussion over legislating the war on terror goes back further than that. *See, e.g.*, American Enterprise Institute, *Outsourcing of American Law* (Feb. 21, 2006), (transcript available at <http://www.aei.org/events/filter..eventID.1256/transcript.asp>) (debating what form Congressional legislation governing the war on terror might take); Washington College of Law & Hoover Institution, *Institutionalizing The War On Terror Through Congressional Legislation* (Apr. 10, 2006), (video available through <http://www.wcl.american.edu/secle/video.cfm#>). *See also*, Kenneth Anderson, *Law and Terror*, *supra* note 35, at 17, 24 (“This is a democracy. . . . Congress must have important things to say and enact.”); Kenneth Anderson, *It’s Congress’ War Too*, N.Y. TIMES MAG., Sept. 3, 2006, at 20–22 (arguing that congressional legislation is “the only legitimate mechanism” for the formation of counterterrorism policy in a democracy).

52. It is also true, to be sure, that such a system can only work where historically the two leading political parties have operated within close distance of the political center. This seems to have been the history of democratic Western Europe after the Second World War, for example, as well as the United States. It is an argument made persuasively with respect to post-war Europe by Tony Judt in his masterful *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (2005)—representative

accepting any particular policy, at least over the long term as shifting majorities shift policy. Political appeals—so beloved of newspaper editorialists, for example—for unity and consensus about particular policies are doomed to failure because ours is a system of majority rule. And they *should* be doomed to failure, because they reduce the clarity of our choices and hence democratic accountability.

It cannot be said that Beinart undertakes the misguided quest for consensus. He, after all, effectively excommunicates Republican foreign policy—at least insofar as it does not match his own—from the intellectual playing field. But it is a temptation that others should recognize and reject, while still rejecting the temptation to excommunicate the other side. For the value of genuinely alternative foreign policy projects that do not aim at a mythological consensus is not merely accountability and choice for voters, it is also the possibility of learning from each other, even while remaining distinct and alternative intellectual possibilities. Neither neoconservatism, nor realism, nor Trumanesque Democratic foreign policy, nor any other alternative, is fixed and immutable. They too are evolving, and their intellectual adherents, one hopes, are drawing upon both new ideas and experience to reshape doctrines. Even the neoconservatives have learned from the experience that began with the Iraq war, but that learning would be seriously impaired if the intellectual critique and alternatives were all mushed together in a mistaken effort at consensus.

VIII

Like Beinart, Fukuyama has a great deal to say about the neoconservative run-up to the Iraq war; unlike the liberal Beinart, he opposed it from the beginning, and on impeccably conservative grounds. Perhaps his Burkean instincts—deriving from the work he had done since 2000 on the rigors of state-building and the profound difficulties of creating from scratch conditions of democracy in the world outside of Eastern Europe—began to kick in. Moreover, neoconservatives seem not to have read his books on nation-building

democracy has been a success in Western Europe because the main parties, and the voters, in all their leading do not stray very widely from the center, represented by a leading center-right and center-left party. The lessons of the Weimar Republic have not been forgotten in Western Europe.

and international development, in which he moved well beyond the abstract beauty, the simplicity, of *The End of History* to comprehend the Burkean organic complexity and difficulty of nation-building. The arguments in the book over what was known and not known prior to commencing the Iraq war, over weapons of mass destruction and preemption, will likely not be lasting ones; they are already being overtaken by events and newly revealed information. The same is true of *The Good Fight*. Elites, in any case, have largely made up their minds about the Iraq war, one way or the other; analyses these days appear largely to fit pre-conceived narratives and are frankly not very interesting.

So Fukuyama is largely right in his stinging critique of naïve neo-conservatism and its belief that the liberation of Eastern Europe would repeat itself in Iraq. The problem is that naïve neoconservatism, while possibly a necessary rhetorical target, is not the sophisticated target whose support appears to have been necessary to get the Bush administration to the Iraq war. Naïve neoconservatives appear—it is early, Fukuyama cautions, for declaring definitive history—to have been a crucial part of the coalition for war within the Bush administration; likewise, he says, the Jacksonian nationalists. But, as Fukuyama explains, these Jacksonians are *not* the traditional realists of Scowcroft and Kissinger's ilk, but realists of a distinctly different stripe, characterized, for example, by Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. The traditional conservative realists said no to the neoconservative venture; the conservative Jacksonian nationalists said yes. But neither Cheney nor Rumsfeld can be characterized as an idealist or a moralist—or as a naïve neoconservative.

There is a piece missing, therefore, from Fukuyama's account of the Bush administration's war coalition. It is the transformation of at least some of these realists or Jacksonian nationalists *into* neo-conservatives—or, better said, the convergence of realism and idealism. Case-in-point is Condoleezza Rice, who, as is well known, started out as a realist protégé of Scowcroft but emerged as architect of the Bush doctrine of democracy and universal values as the only genuinely long-term *realist* strategy. The realist doctrines of containment, accommodation, stability, and narrow national interest are what got us into the current predicament. Idealism is the new

realism—it is a phrase that has appeared repeatedly in conservative defenses of the Iraq war.

On this view, which is *not* the same as naïve neoconservatism, war for regime change and democratic transformation becomes, in the instrumentalist calculus of realists, a bet—not naïve certainties, but a calculated realist bet—on the possibilities of political transformation weighed against the realist alternative of doing what the United States had long been doing, and magnified by a certain estimation of the long-term threat of cooperation with global terrorists in the transfer of WMD technology. Different people may weigh the probabilities differently, make different estimations, arrive at different bets, including the bet on doing nothing much at all. The bet made in favor of the Iraq war in 2003 today appears to have fewer and fewer possibilities of payoff, even among those who still support it, and a necessarily lowered expectation of what “winning” that bet could even mean. Yet losing the bet does not necessarily mean that it was an imprudent one; all decisions are easy post-hoc. Call it a form of neoconservatism, call it moral realism—it is on something like this calculus that I, for one, supported and continue to support the Iraq war, writing in Fall 2006. It seems to me a form of argument that Fukuyama conspicuously fails to address. It is not that Fukuyama slays a straw man—there were indeed plenty of naïve neo-conservatives—presumably now much chastened by events. But there are also plenty of not-so-naïve realist-into-idealists for whom the bet remains very much live, even as the possibilities and definitions of winning decline. Fukuyama does not really take them—us—on. And in any case, although as policymakers and participating democratic citizens we must weigh possibilities and make estimations in real time, the time for evaluating the outcome of events on grand political strategy as a matter of *history*—the settling of accounts of whose bets paid off and whose did not—will inevitably be longer than many are willing to wait.

But Fukuyama has a second, perhaps even more important, argument against the Iraq war and transformative politics in the Middle East as a strategy in the war on terror. Drawing, as earlier noted, on such writers as Olivier Roy, Fukuyama says that democratic regime transformation in the Middle East will not address the problems of Islamist extremism and terrorism because they are phenomena not principally of the Middle East, but of Muslims

confronting loss of identity once in the West, and in Western Europe in particular. Even assuming that transformative strategy in the Middle East precipitated by forcible regime change managed to stabilize Iraq, so runs Fukuyama's argument, the social precursors of terrorism are fundamentally drawn from places we cannot attack with military force—Hamburg, Birmingham, Lyon, Stockholm, Berlin, Amsterdam, Oslo, Madrid, Marseilles, Manchester, Rotterdam, the Paris *banlieues*, Londonistan. The phenomenon of Islamist terror is not precisely a sociological problem—it is, rather, the accumulation of individual psychologies, massed together in shared and yet still highly individual narratives of resentment, exclusion, and the search for universals in *blended* pre-modern and post-modern Islamist religion, rather than in pluralist modernity. Islamism is a syncretic blend of pre-modern and post-modern, of traditional Islam and Western ideology, bathed in resentment—and its petri dish is the West and not the Middle East. Even if the birthplaces of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudi Arabia and Egypt, their jihadist spiritual formation was in Western Europe. The Bush administration launched, on this account, a war that quite missed the point—targeting the wrong region and, indeed, the wrong country—a country that was, for all the evil of its regime, relatively secular.

IX

I do not deny the strength of Fukuyama's psychological observations. On the contrary, they are an indispensable part of any deep understanding of the *esprit de corps* of the terrorists we fight. The psychological element *is* indispensable. Understanding the syncretic nature, the multiple syncretisms, of the enemy's Islamism is essential to a successful strategy against it. Its psychology and that of the larger Muslim world, as its adherents array themselves in relation to modernity, one person at a time as well as by social group, are keys to long-term counterterrorism policy, as well as the closely linked path of social integration. It is a powerful prescription, in fact, for deep-seated ideological changes in Western societies and their states—although not exactly, perhaps, the ones Fukuyama had in mind. The diagnosis of syncretism is a powerful prescription, in fact, for the explicit, public abandonment of the doctrines of multiculturalism in Western societies that have so damaged them, because they reward resentment, legitimize separation, and fuel a

spiraling demand for special social privileges that amount to exemption from society's rules for the resentful and a constriction of the liberties of the resented. A powerful argument, indeed, for a vigorous reassertion in its stead of traditional liberalism, and above all its guarantees of free expression even—*of course*, rather—for blasphemy, and the reassertion of a traditional liberal refusal to tolerate the demands of the intolerant that their intolerance be tolerated. *Allah Akbar*? No, on the contrary, as things stand now, the God of Muslims in the West is *not* great; his greatness, once brought into Western societies, has deteriorated into merely a move in a game, has become merely the grounds for the assertion of religious privilege wrapped in complaints of discrimination and intolerance by larger secular society, a means of feeding psychological and spiritual *ressentiment*. The *real* god of the dialectic of Muslims in the West, alas, the one which confers blessings and answers prayers, turns out to be the state and its one-way multiculturalism.⁵³

During a visit to Paris a few months ago, I took my daughter to the Pantheon, where we laid flowers at Voltaire's tomb. Voltaire? Why Voltaire? At some point, Europe and America will have to defend their broadly liberal inheritance.⁵⁴ The core of that defense is that 'moderate' Islam, Islam that can take its place alongside other religions in a pluralistic Western society, can only exist, paradoxically, within an iron cage that insists without apology or reservation that Islam and Muslims tolerate, as Mormons, Catholics, Jews, Wiccans, Scientologists, and Episcopalians must, the liberal secular order of public life, without special privileges derived from arguments of multiculturalism and asserted through carefully cultivated Western *ressentiment*. The liberal secular order, the rule of

53. Compare, by contrast, the wisdom of Martin Luther King, who urged his oppressed followers *not* to give into resentment, finding in it a certain un-Christian arrogance as well as the psychological condition of permanent spiritual servitude. See CHRISTOPHER LASCH, *THE TRUE AND ONLY HEAVEN: PROGRESS AND ITS CRITICS* 369–411 (1991) for a discussion of Martin Luther King's "spiritual discipline against resentment." Recognizing "that racial hatred feeds off self-righteousness and acquiescence," King fought segregation "without appealing to [a] history of victimization in order to claim a position of moral superiority." *Id.* at 393.

54. An inheritance which is, in America, liberal religious pluralism, to be precise, rather than the liberal secularism, descended from anti-clericalism, of Europe.

law, must be willing simultaneously to protect, with force if need be, the ability of Muslims to *be* moderate as against the Islamists, the extremists and the terrorists. Only a Muslim community which knows that larger society will not compromise its demands that it be pluralistic and that it respect and embrace the universal values of a liberal society, and above all that society's freedom of expression including in matters of religion, sexuality, and morality, to blaspheme and rudely criticize—but which knows also that it *will be protected* against the demands of extremists that it acquiesce in their Islamism, has even the possibility of being moderate. Moderation, that is, as an active religious doctrine, a positive value a religion teaches to its children, rather than resting merely silently and sullenly passive, even as the extremists fantasize and dream, steeped in the unlimited resentments and unlimited field of action that fantasy allows, of war, jihad, and terror.

Yet even embracing Fukuyama's psychological argument, it is nonetheless wrong to conclude that the psychological argument removes the argument for war for regime change or the attempt to open possibilities for democratic transformation in the Middle East. It does not, even if the Iraq war turns out to have been a disastrous bet on transformative history. One reason among several is that the location of terrorism's spiritual development in the West is not all there is to the story; psychology is not all there is to the story. The dismaying role of corrupt, authoritarian Middle Eastern regimes propping themselves up through ideological and religious appeal is *also* an indispensable part of the story; it cannot be elided. The corrosion of Saudi-financed Wahhabism across the world as the only true Muslim faith likewise cannot be discounted. The manipulation of Muslim masses by radical imams in Western Europe working with Middle Eastern regimes in, for example, the Danish cartoon affair—how did all those Danish flags so conveniently and quickly appear for burning?⁵⁵—is a small demonstration of the interaction between individual alienation and the institutional failure of so many Muslim, and particularly Arab, regimes. And along with, today, a massive

55. See Kenneth Anderson, *Remarks by an Idealist on the Realism of the Limits of International Law*, 34 GA. J. INT'L & COMP. L. 253, 267 n.28 (2006) (discussing the publication of the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in Danish newspapers, liberal values, and multiculturalism).

influx of oil money. The political conditions of the Middle East do matter, both for themselves and for the flow-through to European Muslim communities and elsewhere. The push for democracy in the region produces consequences foreseeable and foreseen. The *democratic* rise of Hamas and Hezbollah, both terrorist organizations, is one.⁵⁶ Another, Egyptian legal scholar Hesham Nasr points out, is the rise of shari'a law among populations which, having seen the failure of socialism and neo-liberalism to better their lives, are willing to give at least parliamentary Islamism a chance.⁵⁷ The issue, Nasr points out, is not so much whether they should be allowed to give it a try but whether, having tried it and perhaps not liking it, they will still have a political system that allows them to give it up again; how, exactly, does a society give up God's own legal system? The bet on democratic transformation in the Middle East might be good, might be bad, but contrary to what Fukuyama thinks, it is not ruled off the table by his argument.

X

One of Fukuyama's most telling observations in *After the Neocons* is that neoconservatives, nurtured on security issues and preoccupied with a narrow definition of American power, have not proved to be very interested in or knowledgeable about international development or, more broadly in a political rather than strictly economic context, nation-building. Nation-building was pooh-poohed by Bush

56. I use the term "terrorist" here in its narrowest, least controversial meaning—the one found, for example, in the High Level Panel's Report to the Secretary General on United Nations reform—the direct targeting of civilians. The Report suggested that the definition of terrorism should include a number of elements including a

description of terrorism as any action . . . that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

Chairman, High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, *Report Of The High-Level Panel On Threats, Challenges And Change, Entitled "A More Secure World : Our Shared Responsibility"*, ¶ 164, in The Secretary-General, *Note*, U.N. Doc A/59/565 (Dec. 2, 2004).

57. Hesham Nasr, *Legal Reform and Modernization in the Arab Region* (Apr. 5, 2006), (video available through <http://www.wcl.american.edu/podcast/podcast.cfm?q=nasr>).

administration realists prior to 9/11, memorably by Secretary Rice herself as then-foreign policy advisor to candidate Bush.⁵⁸ The poverty of neoconservative nation-building theory was all too unfortunately on display in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam in Iraq—the theory being based on a dismayingly naïve belief that nation-building would take care itself, as it more or less had in Eastern Europe, if only society were freed from dictatorship and tyranny.

As for international development, neoconservatives have tended to view it as either simply uninteresting or perhaps even with some suspicion as an activity of international welfare, doomed to failure and inefficiency, along with rent-seeking international organizations that spend—that is to say, misspend—the monies. To the extent that neoconservatives have views on international development, they are merely extensions of conventional market-oriented, neo-liberal, and free-trade economics, not deeply thought through and not considered especially important in larger neoconservative political theory. Following 9/11, too, there was a sense among neoconservatives—certainly this was true in my conversations—that discussion of international economic development in relation to terrorism was to indulge the fallacy of thinking that terrorism was the result of poverty. This was a sentiment which, to be sure, was indeed widely indulged, especially on the left and even more among international development organizations who would benefit from increased budgetary attention. Still, among neoconservatives there has been a certain inhibition in discussing development as a part of the strategy of the war on terror specifically or American predominance in a globalized world generally.

58. See Michael R. Gordon, *Bush Would Stop U.S. Peacekeeping in Balkan Fights*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 20, 2000, at A1 (quoting Secretary Rice as saying, “[c]arrying out civil administration and police functions is simply going to degrade the American capability to do the things America has to do. We don’t need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten”). While Al Gore described himself as “a nation-builder and proud of it,” George Bush, in the second presidential debate in October 2000 was skeptical: “I’m not so sure the role of the United States is to go around the world and say ‘This is the way it’s got to be . . . I just don’t think it’s the role of the United States to walk into a country, say, ‘We do it this way; so should you.’” David E. Sanger, *A Delicate Dance of the Interventionist and the Reluctant Internationalist*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 12, 2000, at A25.

Fukuyama argues that this double failure of neoconservatism to have a theory of either nation-building or international development is not only disappointing on its own—it is also tightly connected with the failures of neoconservatism in Iraq and in the broader war on terror. He is in a strong position to make this argument, having devoted years to these issues, writing books and articles on both subjects.⁵⁹ So what, then, is the connection for Fukuyama between each of these, the Iraq war, and Islamist terror?

It is not a surprise that Fukuyama titles his chapter on these problems “Social Engineering and the Problem of Development” (F 2). Starting with the issue of nation-building and democratization, Fukuyama is clear that the fundamental problem is that fostering political institutions from the outside is an enormously difficult task, if it is achievable at all within any particular society—and, we might add, for all the reasons that Burke might have told us. It is an instance of the neoconservative view that large-scale social engineering, whether domestic or international, is an enterprise highly fraught with a tendency toward unanticipated bad consequences. Where such institutional growth *has* taken place, as in post Cold War Eastern Europe, it was really the recovery of a tradition and a culture put on hold, atrophied and stunted, but not altogether lost, during the Soviet imperialism. The issue of Western roots of the bourgeois-capitalist-democratic nexus is important, but not always decisive—Japan and South Korea for example—and the connection with a specifically British colonial inheritance might likewise play a role (India for example) but not necessarily. Whatever the complex cultural interplay that leads to political systems characterized by market economies, bourgeois middle class political predominance, democracy, individual rights and liberties, and civil society—the impetus fundamentally comes from inside. Assistance from the outside can help fund civil society, help fund elections and election monitoring, assist in many tasks, but it cannot take the place of cultural and social drivers from within.

59. Most recently, Fukuyama has made this as an argument for U.S. international social and development initiatives to counter Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez. See Francis Fukuyama, Op-Ed., *Keeping Up With the Chávèzes*, WALL ST. J., Feb. 1, 2007, at A17.

Fukuyama's conclusions roughly mirror my own experience working over the years for the Open Society Institute, Human Rights Watch, the Media Development Loan Fund, and other organizations of civil society support. The results of outside military intervention followed by massive infusions of aid both economic and civil to build stable societies are exceedingly mixed. The results are mixed whether the outside actor is the United States, the European Union, NATO, the United Nations, or anyone else. Even the places in which conditions should have been reasonably bright—in which outside intervention removed an outside military oppressor, such as in Kosovo or East Timor, where outside intervention was welcomed by the local population—have been dismaying. Kosovo, even as it moves toward political independence, remains a basket case, economically and socially, a permanent protectorate of the European Union, and even East Timor—which was supposed to have been the monument to the memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the great Brazilian U.N. diplomat and peace-builder, who died in the 2003 terrorist attack on the United Nation's Baghdad mission⁶⁰—has erupted in violence requiring the re-intervention of outside military forces.⁶¹ The places in the 1990s that have permanently stabilized and revitalized following wars is a short list: Croatia and Slovenia, for example. It is not entirely clear that even Macedonia will remain stable, and Serbia continues to be caught in the grip of a degenerate fusion of left-over Milosevism and gangsterism. It is very hard to square the paucity of success in nation-building in the post-Cold War era with the large-scale successes that characterized the post-Second World War—Germany and Japan, of course, but also India and Spain.

Fukuyama emphasizes that building stable political and social institutions is not just a question of political stability for its own

60. For a discussion of the conceptual problems underlying the U.N. operation in Baghdad, see generally Kenneth Anderson, *Humanitarian Inviolability in Crisis: The Meaning of Impartiality and Neutrality for U.N. and NGO Agencies Following the 2003–2004 Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts*, 17 HARV. HUM. RTS. J. 41, 44–54 (2004).

61. Reports of the re-intervention of Australian troops to quell the recent social unrest in East Timor can be found in Jane Perlez, *Australian Forces Intervene to Halt Fighting in East Timor*, N.Y. TIMES, May 26, 2006, at A1, and Shawn Donnan & Sundeep Tucker, *Australian Troops Land in East Timor*, FIN. TIMES, May 26, 2006, at 10.

sake. Leading theories of economic development increasingly stress the role of stable, reasonably low-corruption national governments in bringing about long-term economic development. Long-term poverty reduction requires jobs, which require sustained economic growth, which in turn requires large scale private investment, often from diaspora capital⁶²—vital lessons from China and India—which in turn require some stability in the form of protection from rampant corruption, and protection of property rights and the ability to realize a real return on investment. Political instability of any kind causes the flow of private investment to dry up with astonishing speed. Large-scale international economic aid in public goods—education, vaccination, public health, AIDS and malaria prevention and treatment, electric power generation, etc.—are indispensable, but by themselves they do not produce long-term sustainable economic growth or income growth unless they have laid the foundation for private direct investment. The two leading paradigms of international economic development today—Jeffrey Sachs’ top-down model and William Easterly’s bottom-up model—disagree on many points, but they are in agreement on the basic proposition that the development of stable national institutions is essential for long-term poverty reduction; it cannot be by-passed on the way to permanent growth.⁶³

62. See generally AMY CHUA, *WORLD ON FIRE* (2003) (describing how global capitalism and the diaspora of expatriates working in foreign countries fuels ethnic tension and creates instability).

63. The difference between Sachs and Easterly might be characterized metaphorically as the difference between the arterial system and the capillary system in the body. Sachs believes that the main arterial systems of the economic body, the large scale mechanisms for delivering aid, especially money, can flow through to the desired economic micro-destinations. See JEFFREY SACHS, *THE END OF POVERTY* (2005). Easterly, by contrast, believes that the capillary system is essentially broken, and that flowing through more and more aid through the large scale pipes will not get it to the specific locations where it can do the most good. He therefore stresses the micro, retail, capillary by capillary approach to poverty reduction. See WILLIAM EASTERLY, *THE ELUSIVE QUEST FOR GROWTH* (2002); WILLIAM EASTERLY, *THE WHITE MAN’S BURDEN* (2006). My own view, based on my work over the past decade with the non-profit Media Development Loan Fund—<http://www.mdlf.org>—which has developed a portfolio of investments in developing world media of some U.S. \$50 million, suggests to me that Easterly’s bottom-up model is the better approach. For a discussion of what happens at the “capillary,” micro-level of development, see Kenneth Anderson, *Microcredit: Fulfilling Or Belying The Universalist Morality Of Globalizing Markets?*, 5 YALE HUM. RTS. & DEV. L.J. 85 (2002).

The fact that neoconservatism has no special view on these questions reveals, for Fukuyama, an inability of neoconservatism to address a vital question of American security at the macro-level. In an era of globalization, worldwide flows of capital, intellectual capital, and labor, America's place in the world—*security* in the largest sense—must take account of the condition of the world's poorest people and poorest societies. If one needs a self-interested reason, well, people will move from poor and insecure places to rich ones—shifting demography and the large-scale migration of people being one of the great narratives of the new century—with unpredictable, and potentially destabilizing, results. Even at the micro-level of security, failed states in particular represent a very real threat to the United States, the threat of terrorist havens, as Afghanistan under the Taliban demonstrated. Somalia, among other places, might eventually come to be another. Even in a narrow security sense, therefore, failed and failing states represent a significant risk to security. The failure of neoconservatism to have a real theory of either nation-building or international development is ultimately a failure of security strategy.

It should be emphasized, however, that this is not to buy into the poverty-breeds-terrorism paradigm. That paradigm has been widely discredited by empirical research, and Fukuyama does not indulge it. His view tracks instead that of Olivier Roy and others, locating Islamist terror in the disjunction of Islam and modernity, not poverty. Islamism is a function of *ressentiment*, not indigence. Poverty is important as a characteristic of weak and failed states that provide terrorism with the secure bases that any guerrilla movement needs in order to thrive. The difficulty, which Fukuyama does not shy away from, is that nation-building is a largely unproven exercise, at least if it involves forces from the outside, and economic development is a very long-term, fragile process which also involves significant institutional factors that can only come from within a society. In many cases, the United States cannot directly do this work—for political and social reasons—and needs a proxy that is at once aimed at the goals of nation-building and international development but is not directly an agency or perceived as an agent of the United States.⁶⁴

64. The contradictions of such a policy—contradictions between the values of humanitarian neutrality and nation-building, among others—are discussed in

Fukuyama recognizes that, however justified one's reservations about international organizations, public or non-governmental, as rent-seeking, corrupt, inefficient, or simply anti-American, in many circumstances only they can play that role. The United States needs to learn how to better work with and fund them, and the failure of neoconservatism to recognize this, in theory or practice, has meant that it has ignored a vital question of U.S. foreign policy.

And yet I, at least, cannot find in this, by itself, a sufficient reason to damn the Iraq venture out of hand. Iraq was not a failed state in the classic sense, like Afghanistan, and the issue there was not economic development, the needs of the world's poorest people as such. It was, rather, nation-building in the political sense. Neoconservatism was here perhaps at its most inadequate and mistaken—whatever else Iraq was, it was not Hungary, Poland, or Czechoslovakia at the fall of the Wall, and only ideological blinders could lead one to think it was. On the other hand, ought one to liberate only those places in which the forces of internal civil society are likely to produce today's Hungary, Poland, or Czech Republic? Or ought one to consider that it is the worst tyrants who should be deposed, or at least be eligible to be deposed, particularly when they threaten your security—I leave aside the factual arguments over that proposition—even if it is not certain that the society that comes afterwards has the internal tools by which to build a stable democracy? The lack, or even the unlikelihood, of internal civil society and latent institutions of liberal democracy should not necessarily preclude a decision to remove the dictator—especially a dictator whose evil against his own people and against other nations has been, so to speak, world-class, and who has both been a threat to you and threatens to do so again in the future. Why is not the time to take him out in his moment of weakness—even if this turns out to be, *because* of his weakness, precisely the moment when you might conclude you least need to do so, or the moment when internal civil society is also weak and the possibility of a stable future society thereby the less?⁶⁵

Anderson, *supra* note 60, at 64–71.

65. This leads directly, of course, into the debate over preemption and preventative war. Fukuyama is not impressed with the arguments for prevention—partly on principle, but largely because he thinks that the predicates are too easily manipulated one way or the other. The most persuasive case for standards of

XI

Each of the four steps in Fukuyama's argument so far described have very considerable merit as a critique of neoconservatism—a genuinely comprehensive description and critique—even if they do not decisively undermine, as Fukuyama believes they do, the rationale for the Iraq war and a great deal of the “war” part of the war on terror. Fukuyama's final move, on the other hand—his answer to what post-neoconservative policy should be—is surprisingly unpersuasive. The book's final section, at least by comparison to the deft, precise argumentation that came before, seems to wander and feel unsure of itself.

Fukuyama calls for a new American foreign policy paradigm that—aware of the limitations of such sound bite terms but still in need of a label—he calls “realistic Wilsonianism” (F 9). The terminology seeks to conjoin differing aims of foreign policy, idealist and realist strands; in that sense the term takes from other paradigms, including moral realism and even neoconservatism itself, that seek the good parts of both realism and idealism in foreign affairs. In practice, however, what Fukuyama describes is almost indistinguishable from familiar old liberal internationalism—but with modestly less emphasis on formal international organizations—as he makes a call for the United States to drop its muscular unilateralism and ad hoc “coalitions of the willing.” Indeed, he even calls it that, in a footnote saying that what is called “realistic Wilsonianism could be alternatively described as a hard-headed liberal internationalism” (F 215 n.2). The deep contradictions of neoconservative foreign policy, he says, can best—he understands that the fit will not be perfect, of course, and so he carefully trims and hedges—be addressed by a renewed and invigorated multilateralism.

What is hard-headed about this revived liberal internationalism? First, he says, “the United States should work toward a multi-lateral world, not give special emphasis to the United Nations” (F 215 n.2). He therefore locates the source of multilateral legitimacy not in U.N.

preventative action, in a variety of settings and not just armed conflict, is ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ, *PREEMPTION: A KNIFE THAT CUTS BOTH WAYS* (2006). Dershowitz examines preventative actions such as preemptive war, restrictions on speech, and detention, and claims that absent any legal foundation, these actions pose a threat to state sovereignty as well as civil liberty.

institutions but in a looser configuration that is most easily described by what it is not: more tightly multilateral than U.S.-led coalitions of the willing but less so than the institutional United Nations. What this actually amounts to in practice, however, is hard to say. Certainly Fukuyama favors what many multilateralist critics of the U.N. system have called for—the development of competing and alternative systems of multilateral legitimacy, such as the so-called “caucus of democracies.” Second, the goal of foreign policy should not be the “transcendence of sovereignty and power politics but its regularization through institutional constraints”(F 215 n.2). Thus, while expressing reservations about the United Nations as being the vehicle of that multilateralism, Fukuyama urges something that amounts, in practice, to a special kind of multilateralism not in thrall to existing international organizations. He says that the aim of this multilateralism is not the transcendence of sovereignty. But the rest of his argument about global governance—hard-headed liberal internationalism—believes that or at least makes it appear, as the saying goes, that he wants ten contradictory things before breakfast. Well, which is it—democratic sovereignty or liberal internationalism? Can you really have the best of both at once?

Every attractive foreign policy paradigm wants at least some contradictory things, and is willing to risk some intellectual and policy inconsistency in pursuit of the benefits of both idealism and realism. The issue is when it crosses from forgivable inconsistency to merely wishful thinking, foreign policy fantasy. It is easy to see how Fukuyama’s dissection of the contradictions internal to neoconservatism leads him to seek something new. But even granting the force of his critique, it is hard to see how this “realistic Wilsonianism,” amounting to internationalist idealism, actually addresses the problems of neoconservatism while preserving its strengths. It seems, rather, that Fukuyama is desperate for a new paradigm whose purpose at bottom is simply to constrain American neoconservatism from doing anything more. It is not a solution to neoconservative contradictions, but an effort to quarantine it. While many might applaud precisely such a move, it neither preserves neoconservatism’s virtues which, even amidst a relentless critique, Fukuyama is careful to catalogue, nor presents an alternative that, well, amounts to anything. Renewed multilateralism? Greater cooperation with our allies? Well and good and what else? It surely

does not amount to a new paradigm. And anyway, neoconservatism is unlikely to do anything more—it is effectively dead.

XII

With the 2006 Lebanon conflict and the growing crisis in Iran, however, we enter a new phase in which seemingly nothing but the hardest realism counts. The arguments over foreign policy idealism suddenly seem as though from the distant past and far away. Democracy? Who are we kidding?⁶⁶ This “time of damned algebra,” as the modernist poet and Resistance fighter Rene Char once remarked of war in general and the Second World War in particular.⁶⁷ Iran acts through its proxy, Hezbollah, having tested and found Western powers tired and weak; it has discovered in multilateralism—multilateralism about security, rather than the far less fraught multilateralism of trade and economic exchange—what game theorists have long noted: vulnerability to free-riding players, risks of tough but finally insincere diplomatic talk, and disastrous defections from multilateral coalitions at key moments. Iran already bets on the prestige of nuclear weapons it has yet actually to complete; Syria likewise has tested and found the difference a year makes in the will of international institutions.

The worn-down Bush administration sees today in multilateralism and diplomacy—not just with Iran and Syria, but North Korea, too—a way to sleep-walk through its remaining two years with the full blessing of its multilateralist partners. It desperately wants nothing more than to pass along any remaining foreign policy crises to the next administration, and if it acts alone on Iran or North Korea, rest assured it is not willingly. Quiescent Western Europe, for its part, sees in multilateralism a way to make it through its old age without

66. Fukuyama has very recently warned that in the Iran debate, we risk a repeat of what I have termed naïve neoconservatism—the conjoined beliefs that war against the nuclear program of the Iranian regime can both cripple that program and, moreover, that such a war would release the oppressed Iranian population from the mullahs, for which they would presumably dance in the streets and thank us. See Francis Fukuyama, Comment & Debate, *The Neocons Have Learned Nothing From Five Years of Catastrophe*, GUARDIAN, Jan. 31, 2007, at 27.

67. RENE CHAR, LEAVES OF HYPNOS 20 (Cid Corman, trans., Grossman Publishers 1973) (1946) (detailing his reflections during his time in the French Underground in poetic form, Char’s Resistance code-name was Hypnos).

its naptime dreams of a progressivist Golden Age led by the civilized European Union being unduly disturbed by shooting in the global streets or restiveness among its Muslim helot class. Israel has through war called Hezbollah to account for its rocket attacks on civilians and kidnapping of its soldiers, but the role of multilateralism—of Europe and the United Nations—in this is merely to forget about earlier Security Council resolutions sternly calling to disarm Hezbollah and reach a ceasefire. The hard calculations following the Hezbollah war have been whether a multilateral force will be a means to quarantine, cordon off, and disarm Hezbollah, or merely a wall behind which Hezbollah can propagate its Katyushas—and still longer range rockets—unmolested. Few expect that a cease-fire will hold in the long term on the Lebanon-Israel border. Whatever in fact happens, these are not the arguments of idealism. The billiard balls seemingly rebound as realism would predict. No one, apparently, has time anymore for idealism; neoconservative arguments over democracy and freedom and transformative moral and political change of even a year ago seem quite quaint, dead in the midst of disasters in Iraq, a new Middle East war, and Iranian nuclearization.

Neoconservatism, let us be absolutely clear, is over as an intellectual and moral movement. The king is dead. Foreign policy *idealism* is not dead, to be sure, on the right or the left—and by all means, let us resist *la barbarie a visage humain* of the new liberal realism⁶⁸—but neoconservatism is over. It has died partly from its failures in Iraq, its failure to plan for nation-building and not just regime-change, and its failure to anticipate the primacy of ethnicity, religion, tribe, and clan over modernity's political categories; partly from the new circumstances of hard-headed, hard-hearted war in the Middle East; partly from the exhaustion of its intellectuals trying to hold together the internal contradictions of the theory (as happens eventually, of course, with *every* paradigm); and partly because its core strengths have actually been absorbed by other paradigms of foreign policy that are not so publicly connected with its failures. Intellectuals at first edged away from it—too quickly would have been unseemly, but the whiff of naiveté that envelops it is deadly to

68. Borrowing from BERNARD-HENRI LEVY, *BARBARISM WITH A HUMAN FACE* (George Holloch, trans., Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. 1979) (1977).

intellectual reputation, and so now the herd has hurried on—even as they carry with them large parts of it into other, newer foreign policy models.⁶⁹ The king is dead—nevertheless, long live the king. Neoconservative ideas will live on, in other words, and in some seemingly unlikely places, places where idealists continue to gather, even if under other names.

And it would be a profound mistake, not to mention intellectually dishonest, to write off neoconservatism's insights too quickly. Does anyone anymore doubt, for example, that the internal character of a regime matters, often decisively, in assessing the external threats it presents to the world? Does anyone really believe—*really* believe—that the threat of North Korea's nuclear and missile program, for example, will ever be finally solved except by what Nicholas Eberstadt, in his eponymous book, called simply *The End of North Korea*?⁷⁰ Neoconservatism has many failings, yes, but it does have the virtue of knowing that "containment"—today so beloved as the narrative of What Went Wrong In Iraq, especially in *The Good Fight*—must mean something more than mere accommodation, *permanent* accommodation, of tyranny and brutality. Otherwise it is containment that becomes merely liberation in theory, never in practice, eschatological liberation, liberation never today, but only liberation in the end-time, liberation at (shall we say it?) the end of history and the last man.

Where in either Fukuyama or Beinart do we see a hint of criteria for distinguishing one from the other? What in their theories indicates that containment must someday cease to be accommodation and come to an end in transformation? Only when Russia, China, France, and Britain all agree with the United States while sitting together at U.N. headquarters? For otherwise we have arrived at

69. Consider the use, for example, to which Timothy Garton Ash—scarcely a neoconservative—puts the pro-Middle East democracy argument in this *Guardian* column, *A Little Democracy is a Dangerous Thing*, *GUARDIAN*, Aug. 3, 2006, at 31. His point is that the "next US president may give up on democratization. But we shouldn't. It's still our best hope." *Id.* He, however, means that as reason to negotiate with Hamas and Hezbollah, which is not precisely what American neoconservatives have in mind.

70. NICHOLAS EBERSTADT, *THE END OF NORTH KOREA* (1999). Eberstadt argues that the bifurcation of Korea is unsustainable, and, therefore, the two Koreas are destined to reunite, bringing the end of North Korea.

nothing more than Kissingerian realism, declinism, and the endlessly cynical accommodation of dictators, forever Truman and never Reagan.⁷¹ All this intellectual and moral energy, for that? The insight, after all, which neoconservatism shares with all the other idealisms, is that we are all idealists now. Even the realists among us put their realism at the service of *some* form of idealism—to temper fatal idealist enthusiasm, yes, but not to deny it altogether.⁷² The problem is, the idealism that Fukuyama puts forth—this “realistic Wilsonianism”—seems to combine merely the vices of multilateralism and liberal internationalism with the vices of realism. And this is when one can figure out what it actually means in practice, rather than being simply a description of what it is *not*, viz., neoconservatism.⁷³

It is—and this is a harsh judgment, but no harsher than Fukuyama’s judgment on neoconservatism—best described as ineffectual internationalism, internationalism taking refuge in its ineffectuality. It is an idealism that seems doomed from the outset to be stalwartly, heroically internationalist in precisely the ways that most ensure its ineffectiveness. Darfur? The *New York Times Magazine* a few months ago ran perhaps its saddest cover story in years—the international community will not prevent genocide in Darfur, it said, so instead let us get on with preparing criminal trials for the perpetrators we were unwilling to stop in the first place.⁷⁴ I

71. Fukuyama, watching his back, as it were, is careful to argue that, contrary to neoconservative hagiography, Reagan was not really responsible for winning the Cold War and bringing down Soviet Communism. FUKUYAMA, *supra* note 2, at 58–59 (describing a multitude of factors in addition to Reagan’s “principled anticommunism,” such as “the illegitimacy of the governing ideology” and “the untimely death of Yuri Andropov and the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev,” that contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union).

72. See the discussion of the range of forms of idealism in Kenneth Anderson, *Squaring The Circle: Reconciling Sovereignty And Global Governance Through Global Government Networks*, 118 HARV. L. REV. 1255, 1259–68 (2005).

73. And if this is true of Fukuyama, it is only that much more true of the far less sophisticated Beinart.

74. Elizabeth Rubin, *If Not Peace, Then Justice*, N.Y. TIMES MAG., Apr. 2, 2006, at 42. The cover page of the issue lamented, “[t]he U.N. is not going to stop the genocide in Darfur. The African Union is not going to stop the genocide in Darfur. The U.S. is not going to stop the genocide in Darfur. NATO is not going to stop the genocide in Darfur. The European Union is not going to stop the genocide in Darfur. But someday, Luis Moreno-Ocampo is going to bring those who committed the genocide to justice.” *Id.* at front cover. More recently and

say, why bother? It is morally corrupt, wicked even, to stand and watch genocide go by, while comforting oneself with a stern but vague promise to arrest some people after it is over. It is, however, a stellar example of the vices of internationalism, on the one hand—dithering with much hortatory diplomacy barely concealing great power interests—and realism, on the other—the billiard balls cannot possibly rebound to the good, and trying to make it so will only make it worse. Which is to say, neoconservatism may be dead, and its autopsy expertly and clinically performed, but neither Fukuyama nor Beinart offers a remotely plausible or attractive alternative to the corpse: theirs, too, are dead on arrival.

A British foreign secretary, so I once read, addressed a Commons debate on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, remarking that there “are two kinds of sanctions—the ineffective, which are not worth putting on, and the effective, which lead to war. Which, gentlemen, do you prefer?”⁷⁵ Paraphrasing Churchill, they preferred the first and got the second. Neoconservatism, by contrast, preferred war in Iraq—naively confusing the removal of an evil regime with quick and painless democratic transformation, which it has not found. But *some* neoconservatives not so naively believed that, over the long run, the realist strategy of accommodation and containment of corrupt, authoritarian Middle East regimes—stability at all the moral costs of the past thirty years—merely feeds the beast.

disturbingly, some have argued that this very threat has been a factor in causing the Sudan government to resist an international force in Darfur. See David Rademaker, *Unwitting Party to Genocide*, WASH. POST, Jan. 11, 2007, at A25.

75. Having read this in a law review footnote many years ago, I am unable to locate a cite for it. I therefore refer to it here not as history but as a parable. If any reader is aware of a source for this perhaps apocryphal incident, I would be grateful to learn of it.