**Context of 'January 7, 2001: Rumsfeld Report Echoes ‘New Pearl Harbor’ Language'**

This is a scalable context timeline. It contains events related to the event [**January 7, 2001: Rumsfeld Report Echoes ‘New Pearl Harbor’ Language**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor&scale=0#a010701spacepearlharbor). You can narrow or broaden the context of this timeline by adjusting the zoom level. The lower the scale, the more relevant the items on average will be, while the higher the scale, the less relevant the items, on average, will be.

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* [**2**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor&scale=2#a010701spacepearlharbor)
* [**3**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor&scale=3#a010701spacepearlharbor)
* [**4**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor&scale=4#a010701spacepearlharbor)
* [**5**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor&scale=5#a010701spacepearlharbor)
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**[June 3, 1997: PNAC Think Tank Issues Statement of Principles](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a060397pnacprinciples" \l "a060397pnacprinciples" \o "View in context)**



William Kristol, one of the founders and leaders of PNAC. *[Source: Public domain]*The Project for the New American Century (PNAC), a neoconservative think tank formed in the spring of 1997, issues its statement of principles. PNAC’s stated aims are:
to “shape a new century favorable to American principles and interests”
to achieve “a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad”
to “increase defense spending significantly”
to challenge “regimes hostile to US interests and values”
to “accept America’s unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles.” [[Project for the New American Century, 6/3/1997](http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm)] The Statement of Principles is significant, because it is signed by a group who will become “a roll call of today’s Bush inner circle.” [[Guardian, 2/26/2003](http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0%2C12271%2C903075%2C00.html)] ABC’s Ted Koppel will later say PNAC’s ideas have “been called a secret blueprint for US global domination.” [ABC News, 3/5/2003]

**Entity Tags:** [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [Ted Koppel](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=ted_koppel)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

**[February 19, 1998: Neoconservative Group Calls on US to Help Overthrow Hussein](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_75" \l "complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_75" \o "View in context)**



The Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf (CPSG), a bipartisan group made up largely of foreign policy specialists, sends an “Open Letter to the President” calling for President Clinton to use the US military to help Iraqi opposition groups overthrow Saddam Hussein and replace him with a US-friendly government. US law forbids such an operation. The group is led by, among others, former Representative Stephen Solarz (D-NY) and prominent Bush adviser Richard Perle, a former assistant secretary of defense.
Largely Neoconservative in Makeup - Many of its co-signers will become the core of the Bush administration’s neoconservative-driven national security apparatus. These co-signers include Elliott Abrams, Richard Armitage, John Bolton, Stephen Bryen, Douglas Feith, Frank Gaffney, Fred Ikle, Robert Kagan, Zalmay Khalilzad, William Kristol, Michael Ledeen, Bernard Lewis, Peter Rodman, Donald Rumsfeld, Gary Schmitt, Max Singer, Casper Weinberger, Paul Wolfowitz, David Wurmser, and Dov Zakheim. [[CNN, 2/20/1998](http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9802/20/iraq.war.presser/); [Middle East Policy Council, 6/2004](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0406_lang.asp)] The CPSG is closely affiliated with both the neoconservative Project for the New American Century (PNAC—see [June 3, 1997](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a060397pnacprinciples) and [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482)) and the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute (AEI), both of which boast Perle as a powerful and influential member. Jim Lobe of the Project Against the Present Danger later learns that the CPSG is funded in large part by a sizable grant from the right-wing Bradley Foundation, a key funding source for both the PNAC and the AEI. According to Counterpunch’s Kurt Nimmo, the plan for overthrowing Iraq later adopted by the Bush administration, and currently advocated by the CPSG, will be echoed in the PNAC’s September 2000 document, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)). [[CounterPunch, 11/19/2002](http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/credib/2002/1119bush.htm)]
Advocates Supporting Iraq-Based Insurgency - The letter reads in part: “Despite his defeat in the Gulf War, continuing sanctions, and the determined effort of UN inspectors to root out and destroy his weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein has been able to develop biological and chemical munitions.… This poses a danger to our friends, our allies, and to our nation.… In view of Saddam Hussein’s refusal to grant UN inspectors the right to conduct unfettered inspections of those sites where he is suspected of storing his still significant arsenal of chemical and biological munitions and his apparent determination never to relinquish his weapons of mass destruction, we call upon President Clinton to adopt and implement a plan of action designed to finally and fully resolve this utterly unacceptable threat to our most vital national interests.” The plan is almost identical to the “End Game” scenario proposed in 1993 (see [November 1993](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1193chalabioverthrow)) and carried out, without success, in 1995 (see [March 1995](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3220)). It is also virtually identical to the “Downing Plan,” released later in 1998 (see [Late 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3204)). In 2004, then-Defense Intelligence Agency official Patrick Lang will observe, “The letter was remarkable in that it adopted some of the very formulations that would later be used by Vice President [Dick] Cheney and other current administration officials to justify the preventive war in Iraq that commenced on March 20, 2003” (see [March 19, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1215)). The CPSG advocates:
US support for Ahmed Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress (INC—see [1992-1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3200)) as the provisional government to replace Hussein’s dictatorship;
Funding the INC with seized Iraqi assets, designating areas in the north and south as INC-controlled zones, and lifting sanctions in those areas;
Providing any ground assault by INC forces (see [October 31, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3215)) with a “systematic air campaign” by US forces;
Prepositioning US ground force equipment “so that, as a last resort, we have the capacity to protect and assist the anti-Saddam forces in the northern and southern parts of Iraq”;
Bringing Hussein before an international tribunal on war crimes charges.
Carrying out these actions, Solarz says, would completely eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction that he claims Iraq owns. [[Abrams et al., 2/19/1998](http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/index.jsp?section=papers&code=01-D_76); [CNN, 2/20/1998](http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9802/20/iraq.war.presser/); [Middle East Policy Council, 6/2004](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0406_lang.asp)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard Burt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_burt), [Richard Armitage](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_armitage), [Richard Perle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_perle), [Richard (“Dick”) Cheney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_(_dick_)_cheney), [Paula J. Dobriansky](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paula_j._dobriansky), [Peter Rosenblatt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=peter_rosenblatt), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [Richard V. Allen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_v._allen), [Peter Rodman](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=peter_rodman), [Robert A. Pastor](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_a._pastor), [Saddam Hussein](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=saddam_hussein), [Robert Kagan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_kagan), [William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=william_jefferson_(_bill_)_clinton), [William Kristol](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=william_kristol), [Zalmay M. Khalilzad](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=zalmay_m._khalilzad), [William B. Clark](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=william_b._clark), [Sven F. Kraemer](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=sven_f._kraemer), [Stephen Solarz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=stephen_solarz), [Roger Robinson](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=roger_robinson), [Paul Wolfowitz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paul_wolfowitz), [Stephen Bryen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=stephen_bryen), [Robert C. McFarlane](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_c._mcfarlane), [Michael Ledeen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=michael_ledeen), [Patrick Lang](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=patrick_lang), [Fred C. Ikle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=fred_c._ikle), [Dov S. Zakheim](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=dov_s._zakheim), [Elliott Abrams](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=elliott_abrams), [Frank Carlucci](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=frank_carlucci), [Douglas Feith](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=douglas_feith), [Frank Gaffney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=frank_gaffney), [Donald Rumsfeld](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=donald_rumsfeld), [Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=committee_for_peace_and_security_in_the_gulf_1), [American Enterprise Institute](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=american_enterprise_institute), [Ahmed Chalabi](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=ahmed_chalabi), [Max Singer](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=max_singer), [David Wurmser](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=david_wurmser), [Bernard Lewis](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=bernard_lewis), [Caspar Weinberger](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=caspar_weinberger), [Gary Schmitt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=gary_schmitt), [Kurt Nimmo](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=kurt_nimmo_1), [Leon Wienseltier](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=leon_wienseltier), [Martin Peretz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=martin_peretz), [Joshua Muravchik](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=joshua_muravchik), [Frederick L. Lewis](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=frederick_l._lewis), [John R. Bolton](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=john_r._bolton), [Jeffrey T. Bergner](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jeffrey_t._bergner), [Helmut Sonnenfeldt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=helmut_sonnenfeldt), [Jarvis Lynch](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jarvis_lynch), [Jeffrey Gedmin](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jeffrey_gedmin), [Jim Lobe](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jim_lobe_1), [Iraqi National Congress](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=iraqi_national_congress)

**Timeline Tags:** [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq), [Neoconservative Influence](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=neoconinfluence)

**[May 30, 2000: US Military Blueprint Calls for ‘Full-Spectrum Dominance’ of Entire World](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a053000fullspectrum" \l "a053000fullspectrum" \o "View in context)**



A Joint Vision graphic. *[Source: US Defense Department]* (click image to enlarge)The US Defense Department publishes its new long-term blueprint for the future, entitled “Joint Vision 2020.” As a Defense Department press release points out, “‘Full-spectrum dominance’ is the key term” in the plan. “Full-spectrum dominance means the ability of US forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations.” [[American Forces Press Service, 6/2/2000](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=45289)] The term comes from US Space Command’s “Vision for 2020” in 1998, which spoke of “dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment.” Author Peter Dale Scott will later note this represents an important shift from a policy of containing or rolling back the Soviet Union to “full-spectrum dominance of the globe” in order to achieve “global economic integration on American terms, [including] the opening of foreign markets to US investment.” [[Scott, 2007, pp. 19-20](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0520237730/centerforcoop-20)] Scott will also note that the similarity between this blueprint and a report published by the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) think tank several months later “was not coincidental,” since it was built on a 1992 draft report written by some of the same people involved in the PNAC report, such as Paul Wolfowitz and I. Lewis Libby. The PNAC report calls itself a “blueprint” for the “creation of a ‘global Pax Americana’” (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)). [[Scott, 2007, pp. 24](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0520237730/centerforcoop-20)]

**Entity Tags:** [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [Peter Dale Scott](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=peter_dale_scott_1), [US Department of Defense](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=us_department_of_defense), [US Space Command](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=us_space_command)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

**[September 2000: Neoconservative Think Tank Writes ‘Blueprint’ for ‘Global Pax Americana’](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a0900paxamericana" \l "a0900paxamericana" \o "View in context)**



People involved in the 2000 PNAC report (from top left): Vice President Cheney, Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Cheney Chief of Staff I. Lewis Libby, Undersecretary of State John Bolton, Undersecretary of Defense Dov Zakheim, and author Eliot Cohen. *[Source: Public domain]*The neoconservative think tank Project for the New American Century writes a “blueprint” for the “creation of a ‘global Pax Americana’” (see [June 3, 1997](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a060397pnacprinciples)). The document, titled *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century,* was written for the George W. Bush team even before the 2000 presidential election. It was written for future Vice President Cheney, future Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, future Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Florida Governor and Bush’s brother Jeb Bush, and Cheney’s future chief of staff Lewis Libby. [[Project for the New American Century, 9/2000, pp. iv and 51 ](http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf)]
Plans to Overthrow Iraqi Government - The report calls itself a “blueprint for maintaining global US preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests.” The plan shows that the Bush team intends to take military control of Persian Gulf oil whether or not Saddam Hussein was in power and should retain control of the region even if there is no threat. It says: “The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.” The report calls for the control of space through a new “US Space Forces,” the political control of the internet, the subversion of any growth in political power of even close allies, and advocates “regime change” in China, North Korea, Libya, Syria, Iran and other countries. It also mentions that “advanced forms of biological warfare that can ‘target’ specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool” (see [February 7, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_76)). [[Project for the New American Century, 9/2000 ](http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf); [Sunday Herald (Glasgow), 9/7/2002](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0915-01.htm)]
Greater Need for US Role in Persian Gulf - PNAC states further: “The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.”
'US Space Forces,' Control of Internet, Subversion of Allies - PNAC calls for the control of space through a new “US Space Forces,” the political control of the Internet, and the subversion of any growth in political power of even close allies, and advocates “regime change” in China, North Korea, Libya, Syria, Iran, and other countries.
Bioweapons Targeting Specific Genotypes 'Useful' - It also mentions that “advanced forms of biological warfare that can ‘target” specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool.”
'A New Pearl Harbor' - However, PNAC complains that thes changes are likely to take a long time, “absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.” [Los Angeles Times, 1/12/2003]
Bush Will Claim a 'Humble' Foreign Policy Stance - One month later during a presidential debate with Al Gore, Bush will assert that he wants a “humble” foreign policy in the Middle East and says he is against toppling Saddam Hussein in Iraq because it smacks of “nation building” (see [October 11, 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a101100bushforeignpolicy)). Around the same time, Cheney will similarly defend Bush’s position of maintaining President Clinton’s policy not to attack Iraq, asserting that the US should not act as though “we were an imperialist power, willy-nilly moving into capitals in that part of the world, taking down governments.” [[Washington Post, 1/12/2002](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A34490-2002Jan11&notFound=true)] Author Craig Unger will later comment, “Only a few people who had read the papers put forth by the Project for a New American Century might have guessed a far more radical policy had been developed.” [[Salon, 3/15/2004](http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2004/03/15/unger_3/index.html)] A British member of Parliament will later say of the PNAC report, “This is a blueprint for US world domination—a new world order of their making. These are the thought processes of fantasist Americans who want to control the world.” [[Sunday Herald (Glasgow), 9/7/2002](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0915-01.htm)] Both PNAC and its strategy plan for Bush are almost virtually ignored by the media until a few weeks before the start of the Iraq war (see [February-March 20, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0203pnacnews)).

**Entity Tags:** [Robert Kagan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_kagan), [Robert Martinage](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_martinage), [Richard (“Dick”) Cheney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_(_dick_)_cheney), [Robert Killebrew](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_killebrew), [Peter Rodman](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=peter_rodman), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [Roger Barnett](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=roger_barnett), [Paula J. Dobriansky](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paula_j._dobriansky), [Saddam Hussein](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=saddam_hussein), [William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=william_jefferson_(_bill_)_clinton), [Steve Forbes](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=steve_forbes), [Zalmay M. Khalilzad](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=zalmay_m._khalilzad), [William J. Bennett](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=william_j._bennett), [William Kristol](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=william_kristol), [Paul Wolfowitz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paul_wolfowitz), [Vin Weber](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=vin_weber), [Stephen A. Cambone](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=stephen_a._cambone), [Steve Rosen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=steve_rosen), [Thomas Donnelly](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=thomas_donnelly), [Norman Podhoretz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=norman_podhoretz), [Phil Meilinger](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=phil_meilinger), [Midge Decter](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=midge_decter), [Donald Kagan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=donald_kagan), [Donald Rumsfeld](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=donald_rumsfeld), [Dov S. Zakheim](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=dov_s._zakheim), [Devon Gaffney Cross](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=devon_gaffney_cross), [Aaron Friedberg](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=aaron_friedberg), [Abram Shulsky](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=abram_shulsky), [Michael Vickers](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=michael_vickers), [Dan Quayle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=dan_quayle), [Eliot A. Cohen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=eliot_a._cohen), [Dan Goure](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=dan_goure), [Alvin Bernstein](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=alvin_bernstein), [Barry Watts](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=barry_watts), [David Epstein](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=david_epstein), [Elliott Abrams](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=elliott_abrams), [Frank Gaffney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=frank_gaffney), [John Ellis (“Jeb”) Bush](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=john_ellis_(_jeb_)_bush), [James Lasswell](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=james_lasswell), [Lewis (“Scooter”) Libby](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=lewis_(_scooter_)_libby), [Mark P. Lagon](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mark_p._lagon), [Mackubin Owens](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mackubin_owens), [Francis Fukuyama](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=francis_fukuyama), [Henry S. Rowen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=henry_s._rowen), [Gary Schmitt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=gary_schmitt), [Fred C. Ikle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=fred_c._ikle), [Frederick Kagan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=fred_kagan), [David Fautua](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=david_fautua), [Hasam Amin](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=hasam_amin), [George Weigel](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_weigel)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline), [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq), [9/11 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=911timeline), [Neoconservative Influence](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=neoconinfluence)

**[October 11, 2000: Candidate Bush Falsely Asserts ‘Humble’ Middle East Foreign Policy](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a101100bushforeignpolicy" \l "a101100bushforeignpolicy" \o "View in context)**



Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush describes a Middle East foreign policy he would implement that is very different from the policy described in the papers that his advisers have drawn up. On this day, Bush takes part in the second presidential debate with Democratic candidate Al Gore. The topic is foreign policy. Questioned when it would be appropriate to use American military force, especially with regard to the Middle East, Bush responds, “Our nation stands alone right now in the world in terms of power. And that’s why we’ve got to be humble and yet project strength in a way that promotes freedom… If we’re an arrogant nation, they’ll view us that way, but if we’re a humble nation, they’ll respect us.” Bush dismisses toppling Saddam Hussein in Iraq because it smacks of what he calls “nation-building.” He criticizes the Clinton administration for not maintaining the multilateral anti-Iraq coalition Bush Sr. had built in the Gulf War. Author Craig Unger will later comment, “To the tens of millions of voters who had their eyes trained on their televisions, Bush had put forth a moderate foreign policy with regard to the Middle East that was not substantively different from the policy proposed by Al Gore, or, for that matter, from Bill Clinton’s. Only a few people who had read the papers put forth by the Project for a New American Century might have guessed a far more radical policy had been developed.” [[Salon, 3/15/2004](http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2004/03/15/unger_3/index.html)] Just one month before, the Project for a New American Century released a position paper that went completely unnoticed by the media at the time (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)). Many future Bush administration officials, including Vice President Cheney, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz are involved with the paper. It articulates a bold new policy to establish a more forceful US military presence in the Middle East. Regarding Iraq, it states, “The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.” [[Salon, 3/15/2004](http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2004/03/15/unger_3/index.html)] From Bush’s first cabinet meeting in January 2001, the focus will be on getting rid of Hussein. Secretary of Treasury Paul O’Neill will later recall, “From the very beginning, there was a conviction, that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go… From the very first instance, it was about Iraq. It was about what we can do to change this regime. Day one, these things were laid and sealed” (see [January 30, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_457)). Cheney similarly misstates his true foreign policy intentions. In an NBC interview during the 2000 presidential campaign, Cheney defends Bush’s position of maintaining Clinton’s policy not to attack Iraq, asserting that the US should not act as though “we were an imperialist power, willy-nilly moving into capitals in that part of the world, taking down governments.” [[Washington Post, 1/12/2002](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A34490-2002Jan11&notFound=true)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard (“Dick”) Cheney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_(_dick_)_cheney), [Albert Arnold (“Al”) Gore, Jr.](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=albert_arnold_(_al_)_gore,_jr.), [George W. Bush](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_w._bush), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

**[January 7, 2001: Rumsfeld Report Echoes ‘New Pearl Harbor’ Language](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor" \l "a010701spacepearlharbor" \o "View in context)**



Donald Rumsfeld publishes a report as chairperson of the Rumsfeld Commission that makes proposals for the US Space Command. Rumsfeld is in the process of becoming defense secretary for the incoming Bush administration. His commission’s report says with respect to attacks in space: “The question is whether the US will be wise enough to act responsibly and soon enough to reduce US space vulnerabilities. Or whether, as in the past, a disabling attack against the country and its people—a ‘Space Pearl Harbor’—will be the only event able to galvanize the nation and cause the US government to act.” Author Peter Dale Scott will later note the similarity between this language and that of a Project for the New American Century (PNAC) think tank report published several months before, signed by Rumsfeld and others, that warned of impediments to overhauling the US military “absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor” (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)). Scott will comment that such quotes indicate that the US oil industry and military had achieved a quiet consensus by this time that “America would need full-spectrum dominance to guarantee access to oil and other resources in the rest of the world. This program would require massive expenditures, perhaps as much as a trillion dollars, and this could not be expected from Congress—except in response to an attack as massive and frightening as Pearl Harbor.” [[Scott, 2007, pp. 24](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0520237730/centerforcoop-20)]

**Entity Tags:** [Donald Rumsfeld](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=donald_rumsfeld), [US Space Command](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=us_space_command), [Peter Dale Scott](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=peter_dale_scott_1)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

[**January 30, 2001: First National Security Council Meeting Focuses on Iraq and Israel, Not Terrorism**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_457#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_457)



The Bush White House holds its first National Security Council meeting. The focus is on Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. [[Bamford, 2004, pp. 261](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0385506724/centerforcoop-20)] This meeting sets the tone for how President Bush intends to handle foreign affairs. Counterterrorism chief Richard Clarke wants to focus on the threat from al-Qaeda and Islamist terrorism, especially in light of the recent attack on the USS *Cole* (see [October 12, 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a101200cole)). But Bush isn’t interested in terrorism. [[Unger, 2007, pp. 201](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/978-0743280754/centerforcoop-20)]
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to be 'Tilted Back Towards Israel' - Instead, Bush channels his neoconservative advisers, particularly incoming Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz (see [February 18, 1992](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_international_relations_41) and [April-May 1999](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a040599neoconpolicies)), in taking a new approach to Middle East affairs, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Referring to President Clinton’s efforts to make peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Bush declares: “Clinton overreached, and it all fell apart. That’s why we’re in trouble. If the two sides don’t want peace, there’s no way we can force them. I don’t see much we can do over there at this point. I think it’s time to pull out of the situation.… We’re going to correct the imbalance of the previous administration on the Mideast conflict. We’re going to tilt it back towards Israel.” His view is that the Israeli government, currently headed by Ariel Sharon, should be left alone to deal as it sees fit with the Palestinians. “I’m not going to go by past reputations when it comes to Sharon. I’m going to take him at face value. We’ll work on a relationship based on how things go.” Justifying his position, he recalls a recent trip he took to Israel with the Republican Jewish Coalition. “We flew over the Palestinian camps. Looked real bad down there.… I don’t see much we can do over there at this point.” Secretary of State Colin Powell, surprised by Bush’s intended policy towards the 50-year old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, objects. According to Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neil, Powell “stresse[s] that a pullback by the United States would unleash Sharon and the Israeli army.” When Powell warns the president that the “consequences of that [policy] could be dire, especially for the Palestinians,” Bush shrugs. “Sometimes a show of strength by one side can really clarify things,” he suggests. [[Bamford, 2004, pp. 265-266](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0385506724/centerforcoop-20); [Middle East Policy Council, 6/2004](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0406_lang.asp)] In this and subsequent meetings, Bush’s National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, “parrot[s]… the neocon line,” in author Craig Unger’s words, by discussing Iraq. “Iraq might be the key to reshaping the entire region,” she says, clearly alluding to regime change and overthrow in that nation (see [March 8, 1992](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a030892dominanceplan), [Autumn 1992](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=aautumn92rethinking), [July 8, 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_74), [Late Summer 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alatesum96neoconswar), [Late Summer 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alatesum96wurmsermiddle), [1997-1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3196), [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482), [February 19, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_75), [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana), [Late December 2000 and Early January 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate120101neocontransitions), and [Shortly after January 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_83)). [[Unger, 2007, pp. 201](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/978-0743280754/centerforcoop-20)]
Possible WMD Sites in Iraq Spark Bush to Order Plans for Ground Assaults - The meeting then moves on to the subject of Iraq. Rice begins noting “that Iraq might be the key to reshaping the entire region.” She turns the meeting over to CIA Director George Tenet who summarizes current intelligence on Iraq. He mentions a factory that “might” be producing “either chemical or biological materials for weapons manufacture.” The evidence he provides is a picture of the factory with some truck activity, a water tower, and railroad tracks going into a building. He admits that there is “no confirming intelligence” on just what is going on at these sites. Bush orders Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Hugh Shelton to begin preparing options for the use of US ground forces in Iraq’s northern and southern no-fly zones in support of a native-based insurgency against the Hussein regime. [[Bamford, 2004, pp. 267](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0385506724/centerforcoop-20); [Middle East Policy Council, 6/2004](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0406_lang.asp)] Author Ron Suskind later sums up the discussion: “Meeting adjourned. Ten days in, and it was about Iraq. Rumsfeld had said little, Cheney nothing at all, though both men clearly had long entertained the idea of overthrowing Saddam.” Defense Intelligence Agency official Patrick Lang later writes: “If this was a decision meeting, it was strange. It ended in a presidential order to prepare contingency plans for war in Iraq.” [[Middle East Policy Council, 6/2004](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0406_lang.asp)]
Regime Change Intended from the Outset - US Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neill, later recalls: “From the very beginning, there was a conviction, that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go.… From the very first instance, it was about Iraq. It was about what we can do to change this regime. Day one, these things were laid and sealed.” O’Neill will say officials never questioned the logic behind this policy. No one ever asked, “Why Saddam?” and “Why now?” Instead, the issue that needed to be resolved was how this could be accomplished. “It was all about finding a way to do it,” O’Neill will explain. “That was the tone of it. The president saying ‘Go find me a way to do this.’” [[CBS News, 1/10/2004](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0110-03.htm); [New York Times, 1/12/2004](http://foi.missouri.edu/polinfoprop/bushdisputes.html); [Guardian, 1/12/2004](http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0%2C12271%2C1120959%2C00.html); [Vanity Fair, 5/2004, pp. 234](http://www.bbsradio.com/cgi-bin/webbbs/webbbs_config.pl/noframes/read/664)] Another official who attends the meeting will later say that the tone of the meeting implied a policy much more aggressive than that of the previous administration. “The president told his Pentagon officials to explore the military options, including use of ground forces,” the official will tell ABC News. “That went beyond the Clinton administration’s halfhearted attempts to overthrow Hussein without force.” [[ABC News, 1/13/2004](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0113-09.htm)] Unger later writes, “These were the policies that even the Israeli right had not dared to implement.” One senior administration official says after the meeting, “The Likudniks are *really* in charge now.” [[Unger, 2007, pp. 201](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/978-0743280754/centerforcoop-20)]
Funding the Iraqi National Congress - The council does more than just discuss Iraq. It makes a decision to allow the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an Iraqi opposition group, to use $4 million to fund efforts inside Iraq to compile information relating to Baghdad’s war crimes, military operations, and other internal developments. The money had been authorized by Congress in late 2004. The US has not directly funded Iraqi opposition activities inside Iraq itself since 1996. [[Guardian, 2/3/2005](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0%2C2763%2C432865%2C00.html)]
White House Downplays Significance - After Paul O’Neill first provides his account of this meeting in 2004, the White House will attempt to downplay its significance. “The stated policy of my administration toward Saddam Hussein was very clear,” Bush will tell reporters during a visit to Mexico In January 2004. “Like the previous administration, we were for regime change.… And in the initial stages of the administration, as you might remember, we were dealing with desert badger or fly-overs and fly-betweens and looks, and so we were fashioning policy along those lines.” [[New York Times, 1/12/2004](http://foi.missouri.edu/polinfoprop/bushdisputes.html)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard B. Myers](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_b._myers), [Hugh Shelton](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=hugh_shelton), [Paul O’Neill](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paul_o_neill), [George W. Bush](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_w._bush), [Colin Powell](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=colin_powell), [Donald Rumsfeld](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=donald_rumsfeld), [George J. Tenet](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_j._tenet), [Condoleezza Rice](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=condoleezza_rice), [Craig Unger](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=craig_unger), [Iraqi National Congress](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=iraqi_national_congress)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline), [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq)

**[June 2001: Abrams, Other Think Tank Neoconservatives Move to Join White House](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a060101abramsnsc" \l "a060101abramsnsc" \o "View in context)**



Hardline neoconservative Elliott Abrams (see [June 2, 1987](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a060287abramstestify)) joins the National Security Council as senior director of Near East and North African affairs. A State Department official will later recall: “Elliott embodied the hubris of the neocon perspective. His attitude was, ‘All the rest of you are pygmies. You don’t have the scope and the vision we have. We are going to remake the world.’ His appointment meant that good sense had been overcome by ideology.”
Rush of Neoconservatives into Administration - Abrams’s entry into the White House heralds a rush of former Project for the New American Century members (PNAC—see [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482) and [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)) into the Bush administration, almost all of whom are staunch advocates of regime change in Iraq. “I don’t think that most people in State understood what was going on,” the State Department official will say later. “I understood what this was about, that PNAC was moving from outside the government to inside. In my mind, it was an unfriendly takeover.” [[Unger, 2007, pp. 205](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/978-0743280754/centerforcoop-20)]
Neoconservatives Well-Organized, Contemptuous of Congress - In June 2004, former intelligence official Patrick Lang will write: “It should have been a dire warning to the US Congress when the man who had been convicted of lying to Congress during the Iran-contra affair [Abrams] was put in charge of the Middle East section of the NSC staff. One underestimated talent of the neocon group in the run-up to this war was its ability to manipulate Congress. They were masters of the game, having made the team in Washington in the 1970s on the staffs of two of the most powerful senators in recent decades, New York’s Patrick Moynihan and Washington’s Henry ‘Scoop’ Jackson (see [Early 1970s](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=aearly70sscoop)). The old boy’s club—Abe Shulsky at OSP [the Office of Special Plans—see [September 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_78)], Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, Middle East Desk Officer at the NSC Abrams, Defense Policy Board Chairman Richard Perle—had not only worked together in their early government years in these two Senate offices, but they had stayed together as a network through the ensuing decades, floating around a small number of businesses and think tanks, including the American Enterprise Institute and the openly neoimperialist Project for a New American Century. The neocons were openly contemptuous of Congress, as they were of the UN Security Council.” [[Middle East Policy Council, 6/2004](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0406_lang.asp)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard Perle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_perle), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [United Nations Security Council](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=united_nations_security_council), [US Department of State](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=us_department_of_state), [Paul Wolfowitz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paul_wolfowitz), [Henry (“Scoop”) Jackson](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=henry_jackson), [Office of Special Plans](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=office_of_special_plans_1), [Bush administration (43)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=bush_administration), [American Enterprise Institute](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=american_enterprise_institute), [Patrick Lang](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=patrick_lang), [Douglas Feith](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=douglas_feith), [Abram Shulsky](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=abram_shulsky), [National Security Council](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=national_security_council), [Elliott Abrams](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=elliott_abrams), [Daniel Patrick Moynihan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=daniel_patrick_moynihan)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline), [US International Relations](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=us_international_relations), [Neoconservative Influence](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=neoconinfluence)

**[September 11, 2001: Bush Administration Said to Have No Clear Foreign Policy](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a091101nopolicy" \l "a091101nopolicy" \o "View in context)**



An editorial in the Washington Post published hours before the 9/11 attacks reads, “When it comes to foreign policy, we have a tongue-tied administration. After almost eight months in office, neither President Bush nor Secretary of State Colin Powell has made any comprehensive statement on foreign policy. It is hard to think of another administration that has done so little to explain what it wants to do in foreign policy.” [Washington Post, 9/11/2001] Two months before Bush’s election, many key members of Bush’s future administration signed a Project for the New American Century report that advocates a very aggressive US foreign policy. One British Member of Parliament will later call it a “blueprint for US world domination”(see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)). Yet there has been little sign of the foreign policy goals advocated in this report in the eight months before 9/11.

**Entity Tags:** [Bush administration (43)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=bush_administration), [George W. Bush](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_w._bush), [Colin Powell](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=colin_powell)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

**[September 24, 2001: Neoconservative Columnists Advocate Overthrow of Hussein as Part of a ‘Larger War’ to Reestablish US ‘Dominance’ in Middle East](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a092401largerwarmideast" \l "a092401largerwarmideast" \o "View in context)**



In an op-ed column for the neoconservative Weekly Standard, writers Thomas Donnelly and Gary Schmitt state that the US’s enemies “want to push the United States out of the Middle East. Our response must be to prevent that.” Donnelly and Schmitt, members of the Project for the New American Century think tank (PNAC—see [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482) and [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)), say that such an effort “will require more than a vague, unfocused ‘war on terrorism.‘… Last week’s strikes represent a new and more complex phase of this war. But this is not a new war. This is a ‘theater war’ in the classic sense. Neither [O]sama bin Laden nor Saddam [Hussein] cares much about America’s role in Europe or East Asia. They want us out of their region.”
Reasserting Dominance in Middle East - The US can win this “struggle for power in the Persian Gulf” by “reasserting our role as the region’s dominant power; as the guarantor of regional security; and as the protector of Israel, moderate Arab regimes, and the economic interests of the industrialized world.” Donnelly and Schmitt trace the US’s problems in the region back to the decision not to overthrow Hussein in 1991 (see [January 16, 1991 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1200)). “As Saddam has crawled back from defeat,” they write, “bin Laden has grown increasingly bold. Meanwhile, our regional allies have begun to hedge their bets, not only with the terrorists and Iraq, but with Iran as well.” The US should focus on routing both bin Laden and Hussein from the region, they say. It is unclear if Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks, they say, though they assert that Hussein was “implicated in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see [February 26, 1993](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a022693wtcbombing) and [October 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate2000studyofrevenge)).… But as with bin Laden, we have long known that Saddam is our enemy, and that he would strike us as hard as he could. And if we have learned anything at all from [the] past week, it is that adopting a defensive posture risks attacks with unacceptable consequences. The only reasonable course when faced with such foes is to preempt and to strike first.” Overthrowing Hussein “is the key to restoring our regional dominance and preventing our enemies from achieving their war aims.… When Bush administration officials speak of ‘ending’ regimes that participate in the war against America, they must mean Saddam Hussein’s Iraq” (see [Before January 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2230)).
Cowing Other Nations, Restoring 'Global Credibility' - Overthrowing the Iraqi government will also cow Iran, Syria, and other regional threats, the authors say, and “will restore the global credibility tarnished in the Clinton years. Both our friends and our enemies will be watching to see if we pass this test.” Although attacking Afghanistan is not necessary, toppling the Saddam regime will not be difficult in a military sense, and “the larger challenge will be occupying Iraq after the fighting is over.”
Surpluses Will Pay for Effort - The so-called “lockboxes”—Social Security funds and others—previously kept from being spent on other government programs are, the authors write, “yesterday’s news,” but the sharp increases in defense spending that this war effort will require will not be difficult to fund: “given the surpluses that exist, there is no impediment to such increases.” [[Weekly Standard, 9/24/2001](http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/000/025ocenr.asp)]

**Entity Tags:** [Thomas Donnelly](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=thomas_donnelly), [Gary Schmitt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=gary_schmitt), [Weekly Standard](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=weekly_standard_1), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century)

**Timeline Tags:** [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq), [Neoconservative Influence](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=neoconinfluence)

**[October 29, 2001: Rumsfeld Establishes Office of Force Transformation](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a102901forcetransformation" \l "a102901forcetransformation" \o "View in context)**



Arthur Cebrowski. *[Source: Publicity photo]*Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announces the establishment of a new unit within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, called the Office of Force Transformation (OFT). Rumsfeld had called for the establishment of this office “as part of President Bush’s broad mandate to transform the Department of Defense. This transformation process challenges the organizational status quo with a new architecture for American defense in order to ensure an overwhelming and continuing competitive advantage for America’s military for decades to come.” He appoints retired Navy Vice Admiral Arthur Cebrowski—the former president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island—as its director. [[US Department of Defense, 11/26/2001](http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=3166); [New York Times Magazine, 3/10/2002](http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/10/magazine/the-fighting-next-time.html?scp=7&sq=revolution%20military%20affairs&st=cse&pagewanted=all)] Also recruited for this new department, as assistant for strategic futures, is Thomas Barnett, a senior strategic researcher at the Naval War College. As the “vision guy,” Barnett’s job is “to generate and deliver a compelling brief that would mobilize the Defense Department toward generating the future fighting force demanded by the post-9/11 strategic environment.” Barnett claims that, over time, senior military officials will come to cite his brief as “a Rosetta stone for the Bush administration’s new national security strategy.” [[Barnett, 2004, pp. 5-6](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0399151753/centerforcoop-20/)] Prior to 9/11, Barnett was the director of a research partnership between the Naval War College and the Wall Street bond firm Cantor Fitzgerald, called the New Rule Sets Project (see [May 1, 2000-June 4, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a050100newrulesets)). Considering that the OFT is a personal initiative of the defense secretary, it is interesting that Rumsfeld was in the late 1990s one of the founders of the neoconservative think tank, Project for the New American Century (PNAC) (see [June 3, 1997](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a060397pnacprinciples)). [[BBC, 8/25/2005](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/analysis/4185678.stm); [Washington Post, 6/12/2006](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/11/AR2006061100739.html); [Federal Computer Week, 9/4/2006](http://www.fcw.com/article95931-09-04-06-Print)] In September 2000, PNAC published a strategy document called “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)). Among other things, this laid out the need to establish “four core missions” for US military forces, one of these being to “transform US forces to exploit the ‘revolution in military affairs.’” The OFT appears to be fulfilling this mission. However, the PNAC document had continued, “the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.” [[Project for the New American Century, 9/2000, pp. iv and 51 ](http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf)]

**Entity Tags:** [Donald Rumsfeld](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=donald_rumsfeld), [Thomas Barnett](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=thomas_barnett_1), [Office of Force Transformation](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=office_of_force_transformation_1), [Art Cebrowski](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=art_cebrowski)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

[**February 21, 2002-March 4, 2002: Former Ambassador Visits Niger to Investigate Allegations that Iraq Attempted to Purchase Uranium**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_106#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_106)



Joseph Wilson. *[Source: public domain]*The CIA sends Joseph C. Wilson, a retired US diplomat, to Niger to investigate claims that Iraq had sought to purchase uranium from that country (see [February 13, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3261)). The CIA pays Wilson’s expenses for the trip, but does not pay him in any other respect. The identity of the party who requests the mission is later disputed. While Wilson will claim the trip was requested directly by Dick Cheney’s office, other sources will indicate that the CIA had decided (see [February 19, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3157)) that a delegation to Niger was needed in order to investigate questions raised by one of Dick Cheney’s aides (see [(February 13, 2002)](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1810)). [[New York Times, 5/6/2003](http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0506-02.htm); [Washington Post, 6/12/2003 ](http://www.iraqwararchive.org/data/jun12/US/wp03.pdf); [Independent, 6/29/2003](http://www.truthout.org/docs_03/070103B.shtml); [New York Times, 7/6/2003](http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0706-02.htm); [US Congress, 7/7/2004](http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/congress/2004_rpt/iraq-wmd-intell_toc.htm)]
Reason behind Request - Former CIA analyst Melvin Goodman will later note that “Wilson was asked to go to Niger for one specific purpose. It was the CIA’s idea to get Cheney off their backs. Cheney would not get off their backs about the yellowcake documents. They couldn’t get Cheney to stop pressing the issue. He insisted that was the proof of reconstitution of [Iraq’s nuclear] program.” [[Dubose and Bernstein, 2006, pp. 214](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1-4000-6576-3/centerforcoop-20)]
Normal Skepticism - Wilson goes into the situation with a healthy dose of skepticism. “My skepticism was the same as it would have been with any unverified intelligence report, because there is a lot of stuff that comes over the transom every day,” he will recall in 2006. Wilson knows nothing of the influence of the Pentagon neoconservatives (see [July 8, 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_74), [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482), [July 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0798rumsfeldcommission), [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana), [Late December 2000 and Early January 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate120101neocontransitions), [Shortly after January 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_83), and [Shortly After September 11, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_82)) or the growing rift in the intelligence community over the reports: “I was aware that the neocons had a growing role in government and that they were interested in Iraq,” he will recall. “But the administration had not articulated a policy at this stage.” He is not given a copy of the Niger documents before leaving for Africa, nor is he told of their history. “To the best of my knowledge, the documents were not in the possession of the [CIA] at the time I was briefed,” he will recall. “The discussion was whether or not this report could be accurate. During this discussion, everyone who knew something shared stuff about how the uranium business worked, and I laid out what I knew about the government in Niger, what information they could provide.” With this rather sketchy preparation, Wilson leaves for Niger. [[Unger, 2007, pp. 240](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/978-0743280754/centerforcoop-20); [Wilson, 2007, pp. 113](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1416537627/centerforcoop-20)] Wilson’s wife, senior CIA case officer Valerie Plame Wilson, will later write, “He figured that if the vice president had asked a serious and legitimate question, it deserved a serious answer and he would try to help find it.” [[Wilson, 2007, pp. 111](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1416537627/centerforcoop-20)]
No Trouble Finding Information - Wilson, who knows the Nigerien government and many of its officials, has little trouble finding the information he needs in the following week. In 2006, he will recall: “Niger has a simplistic government structure. Both the minister of mines and the prime minister had gone through the mines. The French were managing partners of the international consortium [which handles Niger’s uranium]. The French mining company actually had its hands on the project. Nobody else in the consortium had operators on the ground.” Wilson also personally knows Wissam al-Zahawie, Iraq’s ambassador to the Vatican who supposedly negotiated the uranium deal with Niger (see [February 1999](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_94)). Wilson will later observe: “Wissam al-Zahawie was a world-class opera singer, and he went to the Vatican as his last post so he could be near the great European opera houses in Rome. He was not in the Ba’athist inner circle. He was not in Saddam [Hussein]‘s tribe. The idea that he would be entrusted with the super-secret mission to buy 500 tons of uranium from Niger is out of the question.” [[Unger, 2007, pp. 240-241](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/978-0743280754/centerforcoop-20)] Wilson meets with, among other officials, Niger’s former minister of mines, Mai Manga. As later reported by the Senate Intelligence Committee (see [July 9, 2004](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a070804prewarintel)), Manga tells Wilson “there were no sales outside of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) channels since the mid-1980s,” and he “knew of no contracts signed between Niger and any rogue states for the sale of uranium.” Manga says a “French mining consortium controls Nigerien uranium mining and keeps the uranium very tightly controlled from the time it is mined until the time it is loaded onto ships in Benin for transport overseas,” and, “it would be difficult, if not impossible, to arrange a special shipment of uranium to a pariah state given these controls.” [[CounterPunch, 11/9/2005](http://www.counterpunch.org/leupp11092005.html)]
Meeting with US Ambassador - Wilson arrives in Niger on February 26, two days after Marine General Carlton W. Fulford Jr.‘s meeting (see [February 24, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_110)) with Nigerien officials. Wilson first meets with US Ambassador to Niger Barbro Owens-Kirkpatrick, a veteran Foreign Service official, whom Wilson will later describe as “crisp” and well-informed. Over tea in the US Embassy offices in Niamey, Niger’s capital, Owens-Kirkpatrick tells Wilson that she has already concluded that the allegations of uranium sales to Iraq are unfounded. “She had already debunked them in her reports to Washington,” Wilson will later recall. “She said, yeah, she knew a lot about this particular report. She thought she had debunked it—and, oh, by the way, a four-star Marine Corps general had been down there as well—Carlton Fulford. And he had left satisfied there was nothing to report.” [[Wilson, 2004, pp. 20-22](http://www.amazon.com/Politics-Truth-Diplomats-Betrayed-Identity/dp/B000EMH5LQ/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1202233703&sr=8-1)]
Details of Alleged Uranium Production - Niger extracts uranium from two mines, both located in remote locations in the Sahara Desert. It takes well over a day to drive from the mines to Niamey. The mines are owned by a consortium of foreign companies and the Nigerien government, and managed by a French mining company, COGEMA. Because of a recent upswing in the production of Canadian uranium, Niger’s uranium is mined at a net loss, and its only customers are consortium members. Wilson will later write, “[T]he Nigerien government has sold no uranium outside the consortium for two decades.” If Iraq had bought 500 tons of uranium, as the story is told, that would have represented a 40 percent production increase. “There is no doubt,” Wilson will later write, “that such a significant shift from historic production schedules would have been absolutely impossible to hide from the other partners, and most certainly from the managing partner, COGEMA. Everyone involved would have known about it.” Any Nigerien government decision to produce such an amount of uranium would have involved numerous government officials and many well-documented meetings. Because the transaction would have been to a foreign country, Niger’s Foreign Ministry would also have been involved in the decision. To sell Iraq uranium during that time would have been a violation of international law and of UN sanctions against Iraq, a weighty decision that would have ultimately been made by the president of Niger in conjuction with the foreign minister and the minister of mines. Such a decision would have been published in the Nigerien equivalent of the Federal Register and would have dramatic tax and revenue implications. The unexpected huge infusion of cash from the sale would have had a strong impact on the Nigerien economy, and would have been much anticipated and talked about throughout the Nigerien business community. [[Wilson, 2004, pp. 22-25](http://www.amazon.com/Politics-Truth-Diplomats-Betrayed-Identity/dp/B000EMH5LQ/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1202233703&sr=8-1)]
Off-the-Books Production Virtually Impossible - It is conceivable that such an enormous operation could have been conducted entirely “off the books,” Wilson will write, but virtually impossible to pull off. True, a military junta was in power at the time of the alleged sale, one that felt no responsibility or accountability to the Nigerien people. But even a secret transaction would have been impossible to conceal. Such a transaction would have involved thousands of barrels of clandestinely shipped uranium, extensive and complex adjustments to shipping schedules, and other ramifications. “It simply could not have happened without a great many people knowing about it, and secrets widely known do not remain hidden for long. And again, COGEMA, as the managing partner, would have had to know and be complicit.” Add to that Niger’s dependence on US foreign economic aid and its unwillingness to threaten the loss of that aid by secretly shipping uranium to a country that the US considers a dangerous rogue nation. All told, Wilson concludes, the possibility of such a clandestine operation is remote in the extreme. [[Wilson, 2004](http://www.amazon.com/Politics-Truth-Diplomats-Betrayed-Identity/dp/B000EMH5LQ/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1202233703&sr=8-1); [Wilson, 2004](http://www.amazon.com/Politics-Truth-Diplomats-Betrayed-Identity/dp/B000EMH5LQ/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1202233703&sr=8-1)]
1999 Meeting with Iraqi Official - While speaking with a US Embassy official, Wilson learns about a 1999 meeting between the embassy official and an Iraqi representative in Algiers, perhaps in concert with a similar meeting between Iraqi officials and Niger’s prime minister (see [June 1999](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3260)). [[Wilson, 2004, pp. 27-28](http://www.amazon.com/Politics-Truth-Diplomats-Betrayed-Identity/dp/B000EMH5LQ/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1202233703&sr=8-1)]
Confirmation that Allegations are Unrealistic - After spending several days talking with current government officials, former government officials, and people associated with the country’s uranium business, Wilson concludes the rumors are completely false. He will later call the allegations “bogus and unrealistic.” [[Washington Post, 6/12/2003 ](http://www.iraqwararchive.org/data/jun12/US/wp03.pdf); [Knight Ridder, 6/13/2003](http://web.archive.org/web/20030615195342/http%3A/www.bayarea.com/mld/cctimes/news/6079211.htm); [Independent, 6/29/2003](http://www.truthout.org/docs_03/070103B.shtml); [New York Times, 7/6/2003](http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0706-02.htm); [CBS News, 7/11/2003](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/06/25/iraq/main560449.shtml?cmp=EM8705); [Vanity Fair, 1/2004](http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2004/01/plame200401); [Wilson, 2004, pp. 20-28, 424](http://www.amazon.com/Politics-Truth-Diplomats-Betrayed-Identity/dp/B000EMH5LQ/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1202233703&sr=8-1); [Vanity Fair, 5/2004, pp. 282](http://www.bbsradio.com/cgi-bin/webbbs/webbbs_config.pl/noframes/read/664); [Wilson, 2007, pp. 113](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1416537627/centerforcoop-20)]

**Entity Tags:** [Barbro Owens-Kirkpatrick](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=barbro_owens-kirkpatrick), [Wissam al-Zahawie](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=wissam_al-zahawie), [Carlton W. Fulford](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=carlton_w._fulford), [COGEMA](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=cogema_1), [Mai Manga](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mai_manga), [Valerie Plame Wilson](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=valerie_plame), [Muhammad Saeed al-Sahhaf](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=muhammad_saeed_al_sahhaf_1), [Melvin A. Goodman](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=melvin_a._goodman), [Central Intelligence Agency](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=central_intelligence_agency), [Richard (“Dick”) Cheney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_(_dick_)_cheney), [Joseph C. Wilson](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=joseph_c._wilson)

**Timeline Tags:** [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq), [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=niger_plame)

**[February-March 20, 2003: Stories About PNAC Global Domination Agenda Gets Some Media Coverage](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a0203pnacnews" \l "a0203pnacnews" \o "View in context)**



With war against Iraq imminent, numerous media outlets finally begin reporting on PNAC’s role in influencing Iraq policy specifically, and US foreign policy generally. PNAC’s plans for global domination had been noted before 9/11 [[Washington Post, 8/21/2001](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A37019-2001Aug20?language=printer)] , and PNAC’s 2000 report (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)) recommending the conquest of Iraq even if Saddam Hussein is not in power was first reported in September 2002 [[Sunday Herald (Glasgow), 9/7/2002](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0915-01.htm)] , but there are few follow-up mentions until February 2003. (Exceptions: [Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 9/29/2002; Bangor Daily News, 10/18/2002; [New Statesman, 12/16/2002](http://www.newstatesman.com/200212160005); Los Angeles Times, 1/12/2003] ) Many of these articles use PNAC to suggest that global and regional domination is the real reason for the Iraq war. Coverage increases as war gets nearer, but many media outlets still fail to do any reporting on this, and some of the reporting that is done is not prominently placed (a New York Times article on the topic is buried in the Arts section! [New York Times, 3/11/2003] ). One Newsweek editorial notes that “not until the last few days” before war have many reasons against the war been brought up. It calls this “too little, too late” to make an impact. [[Newsweek, 3/18/2003](http://www.msnbc.com/news/887220.asp?0sl=-12)] (Articles that discuss PNAC before war begins: [[Philadelphia Daily News, 1/27/2003](http://web.archive.org/web/20041011094214/http%3A/www.philly.com/mld/dailynews/2003/01/27/news/local/5025024.htm); New York Times, 2/1/2003; [PBS, 2/20/2003](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/script.html); [Observer, 2/23/2003](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0%2C2763%2C901117%2C00.html); [Bergen Record, 2/23/2003](http://www.bergen.com/page.php?qstr=eXJpcnk3ZjczN2Y3dnFlZUVFeXk0MDYmZmdiZWw3Zjd2cWVlRUV5eTYzNDQ5NjQmeXJpcnk3ZjcxN2Y3dnFlZUVFeXkxNA==); [Guardian, 2/26/2003](http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0%2C12271%2C903075%2C00.html); [Mother Jones, 3/2003](http://www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2003/10/ma_273_01.html); [BBC, 3/2/2003](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2801349.stm); [Observer, 3/2/2003](http://www.observer.co.uk/iraq/story/0%2C12239%2C905990%2C00.html); [Der Spiegel (Hamburg), 3/4/2003](http://smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/07/1046826528748.html); [ABC News, 3/5/2003](http://web.archive.org/web/20030306215015/http%3A/abcnews.go.com/sections/world/WorldNewsTonight/binladen030305.html); [Salon, 3/5/2003](http://www.salon.com/news/col/scheer/2003/03/05/bushlies/index.html); Independent, 3/8/2003; Toronto Star, 3/9/2003; [ABC News, 3/10/2003](http://web.archive.org/web/20030315110705/http%3A/abcnews.go.com/sections/nightline/DailyNews/pnac_030310.html); [Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 3/10/2003](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2003/transcripts/s801456.htm); [CNN, 3/10/2003](http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/03/10/cf.opinion.garofalo/); [Guardian, 3/11/2003](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0%2C5673%2C911700%2C00.html); New York Times, 3/11/2003; [American Prospect, 3/12/2003](http://www.prospect.org/print/V14/3/dreyfuss-r.html); Chicago Tribune, 3/12/2003; [Globe and Mail, 3/14/2003](http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20030314/COSALU14/TPColumnists/); [Japan Times, 3/14/2003](http://web.archive.org/web/20030408025512/http%3A/www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/geted.pl5?eo20030314bc.htm); [Sydney Morning Herald, 3/15/2003](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/14/1047583699995.html); Salt Lake Tribune, 3/15/2003; [Star-Tribune (Minneapolis), 3/16/2003](http://web.archive.org/web/20030618125123/http%3A/www.startribune.com/stories/1762/3758290.html); [Observer, 3/16/2003](http://www.observer.co.uk/worldview/story/0%2C11581%2C915358%2C00.html); [Sunday Herald (Glasgow), 3/16/2003](http://www.sundayherald.com/32185); Toronto Star, 3/16/2003; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 3/17/2003; [Globe and Mail, 3/19/2003](http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20030319.cosimp0319/BNStory/National); [Asia Times, 3/20/2003](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/EC20Ak07.html); [Age (Melbourne), 3/20/2003](http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/03/19/1047749824415.html)] )

**Entity Tags:** [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline), [Neoconservative Influence](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=neoconinfluence)

[**February 7, 2003: ’Dodgy Dossier’ a ‘Cut-and-Paste Job’ By Downing Street, Coalition Information Center; Authors Instructed to Focus on Obstruction**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_76#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_76)



The so-called “Dodgy Dossier,” a report on Iraqi attempts to deceive UN weapons inspectors recently released by the British government (see [February 3, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3255)), is discovered to be, in the words of The Guardian, a “journalistic cut-and-paste job” compiled largely from public sources, written by four junior officials in Alastair Campbell’s communications office, and published with “only cursory approval from intelligence or even Foreign Office sources.” [[Guardian, 2/7/2003](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0%2C2763%2C890916%2C00.html); [London Times, 2/8/2003](http://meria.idc.ac.il/scrapbookplagiarism/timesuk2.html)] A “well-placed source” tells The Guardian that the dossier is the work of Downing Street and the Coalition Information Center, the organization set up after 9/11 to push the US-British case for the war on terrorism. The source calls a key section of the dossier riddled with “silly errors.” The report was apparently not vetted by British intelligence. [[Guardian, 2/7/2003](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0%2C2763%2C890916%2C00.html)] A spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair says that neither he nor nor Alastair Campbell, one of his advisers, had actually seen the report before it was released, instead saying that it had been “seen by the relevant people.” Campbell’s aides told communications staffers that they wanted a report that drew together evidence “proving” Iraq was obstructing UN officials in finding Iraqi WMD; they did not want a more even-handed report acknowledging that UN weapons inspectors were nowhere near to finding a so-called “smoking gun” proving Iraq possesses such weapons. Former defense minister Peter Kilfoyle says: “It just adds to the general impression that what we have been treated to is a farrago of half-truths, assertions and over-the-top spin. I am afraid this is typical of the way in which the whole question of a potential war on Iraq is being treated.” [[London Times, 2/8/2003](http://meria.idc.ac.il/scrapbookplagiarism/timesuk2.html)] Responding to criticisms of the report as being propaganda, a Downing Street source says, “What we are absolutely determined is that this will not stop us sharing information with the public as and when we think we can.” [[Observer, 2/9/2003](http://meria.idc.ac.il/scrapbookplagiarism/observer.html)]

**Entity Tags:** [Paul Hamill](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paul_hamill_1), [Coalition Information Center](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=coalition_information_center_1), [John Pratt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=john_pratt_1), [Alastair Campbell](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=alastair_campbell), [Alison Blackstone](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=alison_blackstone_1), [British Foreign Office](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=british_foreign_office), [Murtaza Khan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=murtaza_khan_1), [Peter Kilfoyle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=peter_kilfoyle)

**Timeline Tags:** [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq), [Domestic Propaganda](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=military_analysts_tmln)

**[September 6, 2003: British Cabinet Minister Hints US Government Knew of 9/11 in Advance](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a090603meacher" \l "a090603meacher" \o "View in context)**



Michael Meacher. *[Source: Global Free Press]*British government minister Michael Meacher publishes an essay entitled, “The War on Terrorism is Bogus.” Meacher is a long time British Member of Parliament, and served as Environmental Minister for six years until three months before releasing this essay. The Guardian, which publishes the essay, states that Meacher claims “the war on terrorism is a smoke screen and that the US knew in advance about the September 11 attack on New York but, for strategic reasons, chose not to act on the warnings. He says the US goal is ‘world hegemony, built around securing by force command over the oil supplies’ and that this Pax Americana ‘provides a much better explanation of what actually happened before, during and after 9/11 than the global war on terrorism thesis.’ Mr. Meacher adds that the US has made ‘no serious attempt’ to catch the al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden.” [[Guardian, 9/6/2003](http://politics.guardian.co.uk/iraq/comment/0%2C12956%2C1036687%2C00.html)] Meacher provides no personal anecdotes based on his years in Tony Blair’s cabinet, but he cites numerous mainstream media accounts to support his thesis. He emphasizes the Project for the New American Century 2000 report (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)) as a “blueprint” for a mythical “global war on terrorism,” “propagated to pave the way for a wholly different agenda—the US goal of world hegemony, built around securing by force command over the oil supplies” in Afghanistan and Iraq. [[Guardian, 9/6/2003](http://politics.guardian.co.uk/iraq/story/0%2C12956%2C1036591%2C00.html)] Meacher’s stand causes a controversial debate in Britain, but the story is almost completely ignored by the mainstream US media.

**Entity Tags:** [Michael Meacher](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=michael_meacher), [Al-Qaeda](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=al-qaeda), [Osama bin Laden](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=osama_bin_laden)

**Timeline Tags:** [Complete 911 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline), [9/11 Timeline](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=911timeline)

[**November 2003: Former CIA Analyst Says Iraq War Largely Motivated by Israel’s Strategic Objectives**](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1393#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1393)



Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern says: “The war on Iraq was just as much prompted by the strategic objectives of the state of Israel as it was the strategic objectives of the United States of America. Indeed, the people running this war are people who have worked for the government of Israel in the past, people who have prepared position papers for former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others. These are people who are well attuned to Israel’s objectives. The authors of the Project for the New American Century [PNAC—see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)] have set out for the United States to become the dominant power in the world. And, Israel, for its own part, is hell bent on remaining the dominant power in the Middle East.” [[Sojourners, 11/2003](http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0311&article=031110x)]

**Entity Tags:** [Benjamin Netanyahu](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=benjamin_netanyahu), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [Ray McGovern](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=ray_mcgovern)

**Timeline Tags:** [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq)

**[June 16, 2006: Powell’s Former Chief of Staff: Cheney Runs US Foreign Policy; Former White House Staffer: Bush’s Staff ‘Terrified of Cheney’s People’](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a061606wilkersonterrrified" \l "a061606wilkersonterrrified" \o "View in context)**



In an interview, Larry Wilkerson, the former chief of staff to ex-Secretary of State Colin Powell, recalls learning that for all intents and purposes, Vice President Cheney and his staff, and not President Bush and his staff, runs the US government’s foreign policy (see [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana), [Late December 2000 and Early January 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate120101neocontransitions), and [Mid-September, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1134)). Wilkerson, a veteran politician with a strong understanding of bureaucracy, came to this understanding over the course of his four years in the State Department. Many procedures seemed peculiar to him, particularly the practice of Cheney’s national security staffers—part of Cheney’s shadow National Security Council, an unprecedented event in and of itself—reading all of the e-mail traffic between the White House and outside agencies and people. The reverse is not true; Cheney’s staff jealously guards its privacy, even from presidential aides. “Members of the president’s staff sometimes walk from office to office to avoid Cheney’s people monitoring their discussions,” Wilkerson recalls. “Or they use the phone.” A former White House staffer confirms Wilkerson’s perceptions. “Bush’s staff is terrified of Cheney’s people,” the former staffer says. Further, Cheney has liberally salted Bush’s staff with his own loyalists who report back to him about everything Bush’s staff does. Again, the reverse is not true; Cheney’s staff is small, tight, and intensely loyal to their boss. Two of Cheney’s “eyes and ears” in the White House are, or were, Stephen Hadley, formerly the deputy national security adviser before assuming the position himself; and Zalmay Khalilzad, formerly on the National Security Council before becoming the US ambassador to Baghdad. Other members of Cheney’s staff have undue influence over other agencies. One example is Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, who, despite being the nation’s top law enforcement officer, always defers to the legal judgment of Cheney’s former top legal counsel and current chief of staff David Addington. “Al Gonzales is not going to stand up to [Addington],” a former military officer who worked with both Gonzales and Addington says. [[Dubose and Bernstein, 2006, pp. 176-177](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1-4000-6576-3/centerforcoop-20)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard (“Dick”) Cheney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_(_dick_)_cheney), [Alberto R. Gonzales](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=alberto_r._gonzales), [Bush administration (43)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=bush_administration), [David S. Addington](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=david_s._addington), [Lawrence Wilkerson](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=larry_wilkerson), [Office of the Vice President](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=office_of_the_vice_president_1), [Zalmay M. Khalilzad](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=zalmay_m._khalilzad), [US Department of State](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=us_department_of_state), [Stephen J. Hadley](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=stephen_j._hadley)

**Timeline Tags:** [US International Relations](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=us_international_relations)

**[February 19, 2009: Perle Denies Any Neoconservative Influence in Bush Administration](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a021909perlerabbithole" \l "a021909perlerabbithole" \o "View in context)**



In a speech at the Nixon Center, neoconservative guru Richard Perle (see [1965](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0965wohlstetterrand) and [Early 1970s](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=aearly70sscoop)) attempts to drastically rewrite the history of the Bush administration and his role in the invasion of Iraq. The Washington Post’s Dana Milbank writes that listening to Perle gave him “a sense of falling down the rabbit hole.” Milbank notes: “In real life, Perle was the ideological architect of the Iraq war and of the Bush doctrine of preemptive attack (see [1987-2004](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=western_support_for_islamic_militancy_2063), [Late December 2000 and Early January 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate120101neocontransitions), [March, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_1133), [Shortly After September 11, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=PerleSaysIraqRespnsbl4911), [September 15, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a091501bushperle), [September 19-20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_62), [November 14, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a111401perleyourenext), [November 14, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2983), [November 18-19, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a111901perlecnn), [May 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0502wilsonatcspeak), [August 16, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a081602perlerhetoric), [November 20, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_309), [January 9, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_480), [February 25, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a022503perledeception), and [March 27, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a032703perleresignation)). But at yesterday’s forum of foreign policy intellectuals, he created a fantastic world in which:
Perle is not a neoconservative.
Neoconservatives do not exist.
Even if neoconservatives did exist, they certainly couldn’t be blamed for the disasters of the past eight years.” [[Washington Post, 2/20/2009](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/19/AR2009021903332.html?hpid=opinionsbox1)]
Perle had previously advanced his arguments in an article for National Interest magazine. [[National Interest, 1/21/2009](http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=20486)]
'No Such Thing as a Neoconservative Foreign Policy' - Perle tells the gathering, hosted by National Interest: “There is no such thing as a neoconservative foreign policy. It is a left critique of what is believed by the commentator to be a right-wing policy.” Perle has shaped the nation’s foreign policy since 1974 (see [August 15, 1974](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a081574neoconforeign), [Early 1976](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=aearly76teamb), [1976](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1976cpdneocons), and [Early 1981](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=western_support_for_islamic_militancy_2044)). He was a key player in the Reagan administration’s early attempts to foment a nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union (see [Early 1981 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1981reagannoarmscontrol), [1981 and Beyond](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1981cpdpoliticize), [September 1981 through November 1983](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a098183infagreement), [May 1982 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0582starttalks), and [October 11-12, 1986](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a10111286reykjaviksummit)). Perle denies any real involvement with the 1996 “Clean Break” document, which Milbank notes “is widely seen as the cornerstone of neoconservative foreign policy” (see [July 8, 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_74) and [March 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_international_relations_39)). Perle explains: “My name was on it because I signed up for the study group. I didn’t approve it. I didn’t read it.” In reality, Perle wrote the bulk of the “Clean Break” report. Perle sidesteps questions about the letters he wrote (or helped write) to Presidents Clinton and Bush demanding the overthrow of Saddam Hussein (see [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482), [February 19, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_75), and [September 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2014)), saying, “I don’t have the letters in front of me.” He denies having any influence on President Bush’s National Security Strategy, which, as Milbank notes, “enshrin[ed] the neoconservative themes of preemptive war and using American power to spread freedom” (see [May 1, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a050101newframe)), saying: “I don’t know whether President Bush ever read any of those statements [he wrote]. My guess is he didn’t.” Instead, as Perle tells the audience: “I see a number of people here who believe and have expressed themselves abundantly that there is a neoconservative foreign policy and it was the policy that dominated the Bush administration, and they ascribe to it responsibility for the deplorable state of the world. None of that is true, of course.” Bush’s foreign policy had “no philosophical underpinnings and certainly nothing like the demonic influence of neoconservatives that is alleged.” And Perle claims that no neoconservative ever insisted that the US military should be used to spread democratic values (see [1965](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0965wohlstetterrand), [Early 1970s](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=aearly70sscoop), [Summer 1972 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=asum72neoconspolicy), [August 15, 1974](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a081574neoconforeign), [1976](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1976cpdneocons), [November 1976](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1176teambversusteama), [Late November, 1976](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate1176teambsovietfears), [1977-1981](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=western_support_for_islamic_militancy_202708), [1981 and Beyond](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1981cpdpoliticize), [1984](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=western_support_for_islamic_militancy_2056), [Late March 1989 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alate0389cheneyregime), [1991-1997](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=western_support_for_islamic_militancy_2071), [March 8, 1992](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a030892dominanceplan), [July 1992](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=western_support_for_islamic_militancy_2836), [Autumn 1992](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=aautumn92rethinking), [July 8, 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_74), [Late Summer 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alatesum96neoconswar), [Late Summer 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alatesum96wurmsermiddle), [1997](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1997israelpalestineblood), [November 12, 1997](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_465), [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482), [February 19, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_75), [May 29, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2891), [July 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0798rumsfeldcommission), [February 1999](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2869), [2000](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3165), [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana), [November 1, 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2868), [January 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0101nippreport), [January 22, 2001 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a012201neoconsinvadeiraq), [March 12, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a031201kaplanabm), [Shortly After September 11, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_82), [September 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a112001ledeenscourge), [September 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2872), [September 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2014), [September 24, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a092401largerwarmideast), [September 25-26, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a09252601kristoltimes), [October 29, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a102901totalwar), [October 29, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a102901kagandominate), [November 14, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a111401perleyourenext), [November 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a112001cohenwwiv), [November 29-30, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a112901bletchleyii), [December 7, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3163), [February 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0202podhoretzmustattack), [April 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3179), [April 23, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a042302goldbergwall), [August 6, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a080602cauldron), [September 4, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_3164), [November 2002-December 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_350), [November 12, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a111202ledeeniraninvade), [February 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0203waroveriraq), [February 13, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a021303remaketheworld), [March 19, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a031903ledeeninvadeothers), [December 19, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_plans_to_use_military_force_against_iran_562), [March 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_occupation_of_iraq_tmln_273), [September 24, 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_plans_to_use_military_force_against_iran_347), and [October 28, 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_plans_to_use_military_force_against_iran_380)), saying, “I can’t find a single example of a neoconservative supposed to have influence over the Bush administration arguing that we should impose democracy by force.” His strident calls for forcible regime change in Iran were not what they seemed, he says: “I’ve never advocated attacking Iran. Regime change does not imply military force, at least not when I use the term” (see [July 8-10, 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a07081096cleanbreakcongress), [Late Summer 1996](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=alatesum96wurmsermiddle), [November 14, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a111401perleyourenext), and [January 24, 2004](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_plans_to_use_military_force_against_iran_62)).
Challenged by Skeptics - Former Reagan administration official Richard Burt (see [Early 1981 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1981reagannoarmscontrol) and [May 1982 and After](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0582starttalks)), who challenged Perle during his time in Washington, takes issue with what he calls the “argument that neoconservatism maybe actually doesn’t exist.” He reminds Perle of the longtime rift between foreign policy realists and neoconservative interventionists, and argues, “You’ve got to kind of acknowledge there is a neoconservative school of thought.” Perle replies, “I don’t accept the approach, not at all.” National Interest’s Jacob Heilbrunn asks Perle to justify his current position with the title of his 2003 book *An End to Evil.* Perle claims: “We had a publisher who chose the title. There’s hardly an ideology in that book.” (Milbank provides an excerpt from the book that reads: “There is no middle way for Americans: It is victory or holocaust. This book is a manual for victory.”) Perle blames the news media for “propagat[ing] this myth of neoconservative influence,” and says the term “neoconservative” itself is sometimes little more than an anti-Semitic slur. After the session, the moderator asks Perle how successful he has been in making his points. “I don’t know that I persuaded anyone,” he concedes. [[Washington Post, 2/20/2009](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/19/AR2009021903332.html?hpid=opinionsbox1)]
'Richard Perle Is a Liar' - Harvard professor Stephen Walt, a regular columnist for Foreign Policy magazine, writes flatly, “Richard Perle is a liar.” He continues: “[K]ey neoconservatives like Douglas Feith, I. Lewis ‘Scooter’ Libby, Paul Wolfowitz, and others [were] openly calling for regime change in Iraq since the late 1990s and… used their positions in the Bush administration to make the case for war after 9/11, aided by a chorus of sympathetic pundits at places like the American Enterprise Institute, and the Weekly Standard. The neocons were hardly some secret cabal or conspiracy, as they were making their case loudly and in public, and no serious scholar claims that they ‘bamboozled’ Bush and Cheney into a war. Rather, numerous accounts have documented that they had been openly pushing for war since 1998 and they continued to do so after 9/11.… The bottom line is simple: Richard Perle is lying. What is disturbing about this case is is not that a former official is trying to falsify the record in such a brazen fashion; Perle is hardly the first policymaker to kick up dust about his record and he certainly won’t be the last. The real cause for concern is that there are hardly any consequences for the critical role that Perle and the neoconservatives played for their pivotal role in causing one of the great foreign policy disasters in American history. If somebody can help engineer a foolish war and remain a respected Washington insider—as is the case with Perle—what harm is likely to befall them if they lie about it later?” [[Foreign Policy, 2/23/2009](http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/02/23/what_gene_kranz_could_teach_richard_perle_integrity)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard Perle](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_perle), [Jacob Heilbrunn](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jacob_heilbrunn), [Lewis (“Scooter”) Libby](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=lewis_(_scooter_)_libby), [George W. Bush](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_w._bush), [Douglas Feith](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=douglas_feith), [Dana Milbank](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=dana_milbank_1), [Bush administration (43)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=bush_administration), [Stephen Walt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=stephen_walt_1), [Paul Wolfowitz](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=paul_wolfowitz), [Richard Burt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_burt)

**Timeline Tags:** [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq), [Neoconservative Influence](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=neoconinfluence)

**[May 3, 2012: Republican Presidential Nominee Advised by Neoconservatives who Advocate Huge Military Spending Increases, War with Iran](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a050312romneyneocons" \l "a050312romneyneocons" \o "View in context)**



Some sources believe Romney may consider John Bolton for Secretary of State if elected president. *[Source: Getty Images / CNN]*Journalist Ari Berman, of the liberal magazine The Nation, writes that presumptive Republican presidential Mitt Romney (R-MA) seems to be relying on a large number of neoconservatives to help him formulate his foreign policy stance for the election. Berman believes it is safe to assume that Romney will appoint many of his neoconservative advisors to powerful positions in his administration should he win the November election. Berman writes: “Given Romney’s well-established penchant for flip-flopping and opportunism, it’s difficult to know what he really believes on any issue, including foreign affairs (the campaign did not respond to a request for comment). But a comprehensive review of his statements during the primary and his choice of advisers suggests a return to the hawkish, unilateral interventionism of the George W. Bush administration should he win the White House in November.” Conservative Christian leader Richard Land has said that Romney could shore up his sagging credibility with conservatives by “pre-naming” some key Cabinet selections: former Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) as Attorney General, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) as US ambassador to the United Nations, and former State Department official John Bolton as Secretary of State. Berman calls the prospect of those appointments “terrifying” and “more plausible than one might think.” Neoconservative blogger Jennifer Rubin recently wrote for the Washington Post that “[m]any conservatives hope” Bolton will accept “a senior national security post in a Romney administration.” For his point, Bolton has endorsed Romney, and has campaigned on his behalf. Romney is not well versed in foreign policy affairs, Berman writes, noting that in 2008 the presidential campaign of John McCain (R-AZ) found that at the time “Romney’s foreign affairs resume is extremely thin, leading to credibility problems.” Romney suffered the criticism of being “too liberal” in 2008, and in 2011-12 attempted to refute that criticism by publicly aligning himself with Bolton and other neoconservatives. Brian Katulis of the liberal Center for American Progress has said, “When you read the op-eds and listen to the speeches, it sounds like Romney’s listening to the John Bolton types more than anyone else.” [[Washington Post, 3/13/2012](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/romney-advisers-try-to-lay-groundwork-for-united-gop-against-obama/2012/03/13/gIQAdKS0GS_story.html); [Nation, 5/21/2012](http://www.thenation.com/article/167683/mitt-romneys-neocon-war-cabinet)]
The Project for the New American Century - Bolton and seven other Romney advisors are signers of a letter drafted by the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), an influential neoconservative advocacy group (see [June 3, 1997](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a060397pnacprinciples) and [September 2000](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#a0900paxamericana)) that urged both the Clinton and Bush administrations to attack Iraq (see [January 26, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_482), [February 19, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/context.jsp?item=a010701spacepearlharbor#complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_75) and [May 29, 1998](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_2891)). (The PNAC is defunct, but was replaced by a similar advocacy group, the Foreign Policy Initiative, or FPI—see [Before March 25, 2009](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a032509fpi)). PNAC co-founder Eliot Cohen, who served as counsel for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice from 2007-2009, wrote the foreward to Romney’s foreign policy white paper, entitled “An American Century.” Cohen has called the war on terror “World War IV” (see [November 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a112001cohenwwiv)), and helped push the Bush administration into going to war with Iraq after the 9/11 bombings. In 2009, Cohen reiterated his 2001 call for the US to overthrow the government of Iran (see [November 20, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_plans_to_use_military_force_against_iran_434)). Another PNAC co-founder, FPI’s Robert Kagan, a longtime advocate for widespread war in the Middle East (see [October 29, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a102901kagandominate)), helped Romney formulate his foreign policy. Romney’s foreign policy stance is based largely on negative attacks on the Obama administration, which it accuses of kowtowing to foreign governments, and a massive military buildup. [[Washington Post, 10/9/2011](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/post/romneys-white-paper-a-guide-to-a-post-obama-foreign-policy/2011/03/29/gIQA318wXL_blog.html); [Nation, 5/21/2012](http://www.thenation.com/article/167683/mitt-romneys-neocon-war-cabinet)]
Bush Administration Officials' Involvement - Many former Bush administration officials are involved with Romney’s foreign policy. Robert G. Joseph, a former National Security Council official who is primarily responsible for having then-President Bush claim that Iraq had tried to buy enriched uranium from Niger (see [January 26 or 27, 2003](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=complete_timeline_of_the_2003_invasion_of_iraq_115)), former Bush administration spokesman and FPI founder Dan Senor (see [October 2, 2005](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a100205senordirita)), and former Defense Department official Eric Edelman (see [July 16-20, 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_occupation_of_iraq_tmln_315)) are prominent members of Romney’s advisory team. Preble says of Romney’s foreign policy advisors: “I can’t name a single Romney foreign policy adviser who believes the Iraq War was a mistake. Two-thirds of the American people do believe the Iraq War was a mistake. So he has willingly chosen to align himself with that one-third of the population right out of the gate.” Edelman, like others on the Romney team, believes that the US should attack Iran, a position Romney himself apparently holds. Senor serves as a conduit between the Romney campaign and Israel’s far right, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Recently, Senor posted the following on Twitter: “Mitt-Bibi will be the new Reagan-Thatcher.” Lawrence Wilkerson, the chief of staff for then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, has said the Republican Party “has not a clue” how to extricate the US from its “state of interminable war,” and apparently little appetite for such extrication. “In fact, they want to deepen it, widen it and go further, on Chinese and Japanese dollars.” The influence of far-right neoconservatives “astonishe[s]” Wilkerson. Christopher Preble, a foreign policy expert for the Cato Institute, says that neoconservatives have remained influential even after the Iraq debacle because they have rewritten history. “They’ve crafted this narrative around the surge (see [January 10, 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=us_occupation_of_iraq_tmln_257)), claiming Iraq was, in fact, a success. They’ve ridden that ever since.”
Huge Spending Increases for Defense, Possible Recession - If Romney follows his current statements, a Romney administration under the tutelage of his neoconservative advisors would usher in a new era of massive defense spending increases. He advocates spending a minimum of 4 percent of the nation’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to increase spending on defense, which would increase the Pentagon’s budget by over $200 billion in 2016. That is 38% more than the Obama administration plans to spend on defense. Romney would pay for that increase with severe cuts in domestic spending. Fiscal Times columnist Merrill Goozner has written: “Romney’s proposal to embark on a second straight decade of escalating military spending would be the first time in American history that war preparation and defense spending had increased as a share of overall economic activity for such an extended period. When coupled with the 20 percent cut in taxes he promises, it would require shrinking domestic spending to levels not seen since the Great Depression—before programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid began.” Goozner wrote that Romney’s spending plan “would likely throw the US economy back into recession.” The proposed huge spending increases are in part the product of the Defending Defense coalition, a joint project of the FPI, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and the Heritage Foundation. [[Fiscal Times, 3/7/2012](http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/Columns/2012/03/07/Romneys-Iran-Policy-Would-Cripple-the-Economy.aspx#page1); [Nation, 5/21/2012](http://www.thenation.com/article/167683/mitt-romneys-neocon-war-cabinet)]
Cofer Black and Enhanced National Security - Romney’s counterterrorism advisor is J. Cofer Black, a former CIA operative and Bush-era security official. Black presented a plan to invade Afghanistan two days after the 9/11 attacks, and claimed that al-Qaeda could be defeated and the world made secure from terrorism in a matter of weeks (see [September 13, 2001](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a091301ciaplan)). Black was fired from the CIA in 2002 for publicly criticizing the Bush administration’s failure to capture or kill Osama bin Laden (see [May 17, 2002](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a051702blackfired)). In 2005, Black became a senior official for the private mercenary firm Blackwater (see [February 2005](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0205BlackBlackwater)). He has been a Romney advisor since 2007 (see [April 2007](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a0407BlackRomney)). Black advised Romney not to consider waterboarding as torture, and has touted his CIA experience with that agency’s illegal “extraordinary rendition” program, which sent prisoners to foreign countries for abuse and torture. Romney relies on Black for security assessments of security assessments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and Iran, including Iran’s nuclear program. Preble says, “Romney’s likely to be in the mold of George W. Bush when it comes to foreign policy if he were elected.” Berman writes that “[o]n some key issues, like Iran, Romney and his team are to the right of Bush.” Berman goes on to write that if Romney adheres to his statements on the campaign trail, “a Romney presidency would move toward war against Iran; closely align Washington with the Israeli right; leave troops in Afghanistan at least until 2014 and refuse to negotiate with the Taliban; reset the Obama administration’s ‘reset’ with Russia; and pursue a Reagan-like military buildup at home.”
Moderates Sidelined - The moderates on Romney’s team have been shunted aside in favor of the hardliners. Mitchell Reiss, Romney’s principal foreign policy advisor in 2008 and a former State Department official under Powell, no longer enjoys favored access to the candidate. In December 2011 Romney publicly contradicted Reiss’s advocacy of US negotiations with the Taliban, instead advocating the total military defeat of the Taliban and criticizing the Obama administration’s plan to “draw down” US troops from Afghanistan. Vice President Joseph Biden has said that Romney and his neoconservative advisors “see the world through a cold war prism that is totally out of touch with the realities of the twenty-first century.” Romney began tacking to the right during the early days of the Republican primaries, aligning himself with candidates such as Gingrich, Herman Cain (R-GA), and Michele Bachmann (R-MN), and away from moderate candidate Jon Huntsman (R-UT) and isolationist candidate Ron Paul (R-TX). Heather Hurlburt of the centrist National Security Network says: “The foreign policy experts who represent old-school, small-c conservatism and internationalism have been pushed out of the party. Who in the Republican Party still listens to Brent Scowcroft?” (see [October 2004](http://www.historycommons.org/item.jsp?item=a1004scowcroftdismissed)). Wilkerson says moderate conservatives such as Powell and Scowcroft are “very worried about their ability to restore moderation and sobriety to the party’s foreign and domestic policies.” Berman writes, “In 2012 Obama is running as Bush 41 and Romney as Bush 43.” [[Nation, 5/21/2012](http://www.thenation.com/article/167683/mitt-romneys-neocon-war-cabinet)]

**Entity Tags:** [Cofer Black](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=cofer_black), [Christopher Preble](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=christopher_preble_1), [Richard Land](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=richard_land_1), [Project for the New American Century](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=project_for_the_new_american_century), [Obama administration](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=obama_administration_1), [Bush administration (43)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=bush_administration), [Robert G. Joseph](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_g._joseph), [Robert Kagan](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=robert_kagan), [Ron Paul](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=ron_paul_1), [Willard Mitt Romney](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mitt_romney_1), [Ari Berman](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=ari_berman_1), [Barack Obama](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=barack_obama), [Benjamin Netanyahu](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=benjamin_netanyahu), [Brent Scowcroft](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=brent_scowcroft), [Brian Katulis](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=brian_katulis_1), [Mitt Romney presidential campaign (2012)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mitt_romney_presidential_campaign__2012__1), [Mitchell Reiss](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=mitchell_reiss_1), [Rick Santorum](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=rick_santorum), [Merrill Goozner](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=merrill_goozner_1), [Foreign Policy Initiative](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=foreign_policy_initiative_1), [Eric Edelman](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=eric_edelman_1), [Michele Bachmann](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=michelle_bachmann_1), [Eliot A. Cohen](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=eliot_a._cohen), [Dan Senor](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=dan_senor_1), [Colin Powell](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=colin_powell), [Defending Defense](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=defending_defense_1), [George W. Bush](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=george_w._bush), [Newt Gingrich](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=newt_gingrich), [John R. Bolton](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=john_r._bolton), [Jennifer Rubin](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jennifer_rubin_1), [John McCain presidential campaign (2008)](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=john_mccain_presidential_campaign__2008__1), [Herman Cain](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=herman_cain_1), [Heather Hurlburt](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=heather_hurlburt_1), [Jon Huntsman](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=jon_huntsman_1), [Lawrence Wilkerson](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=larry_wilkerson), [Joseph Biden](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=joseph_biden)

**Timeline Tags:** [2012 Elections](http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=2012preselec)