

SECOND GENERATION NEOCONSERVATISM

ON *THE WEEKLY STANDARD* FROM ITS INCEPTION TO THE SECOND
DEATH OF NEOCONSERVATISM

Author: Alexander Öhrn

Supervisor: Jonathan Friedman

Institution: Department of Social Anthropology, University of Lund

Abstract

Neoconservatism developed in the context of liberal anti-communism from the 1940s. The key intellectuals of this early period of neoconservatism, centred around Irving Kristol, occupied themselves with issues such as the threat of communism, anti-Americanism at home, adversary culture and the problems of social engineering. However, by the mid 1990s as the end of the Cold War removed their main focus point they declared neoconservatism dead.

The Weekly Standard represents a second generation of neoconservatives. This second generation are not 'liberals mugged by reality' but are rather firmly conservative albeit with different angles. Furthermore, this second generation have generated far more attention than Irving Kristol and his fellow travellers ever did, and are closely associated with the Bush Doctrine and the war on terror.

This paper studies the neoconservatives through a reading of *The Weekly Standard* that seeks to identify the broad trends in neoconservative thought since the end of the Cold War through to and during the War on Terror. *The Weekly Standard* offers such a possibility as it was launched in 1995, when other neoconservative media outlets were in decline.

This paper finds that that many of the mainstream critiques of the movement can be supported by material from the magazine. However, a narrow focus on foreign policy related to the War on Terror is insufficient to grasp the width of neoconservative thought as well as its internal inconsistencies. As such this paper investigates a number of issues not typically discussed but which resonate a neoconservative legacy that stretches back through the decades.

Index	Page
0.1 Abstract	1
0.2 Index	2
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Theme	3
1.2 Structure	6
1.3 Hypothesis and Method	8
2 The History of Neoconservatism	10
2.1 The Early Neoconservatives	11
2.2 Neoconservative Economics and Other Issues	15
2.3 Anti-Communist Liberals and the Culture of Appeasement	18
2.4 The Legacy of the Early Neoconservatives	19
3 <i>The Weekly Standard</i> 1995-2005	23
3.1 Readership, Owner and Frequent Contributors	23
3.2 Foreign Policy and Defence Issues 1995-2001	25
3.2.1 Case Example: China	26
3.2.2 Case Example: Iraq	29
3.2.3 Defence	33
3.2.4 Multilateralism	38
3.3 The Culture War: The Moral Fabric of America 1995-2001	40
3.3.1 Education	40
3.3.2 Abortion and Euthanasia	42
3.3.3 Crime and Capital Punishment	45
3.3.4 Anti-Americanism	47
3.4 Deriving 'Idealistic Hawkishness' from <i>The Weekly Standard</i> 2001-2005	49
3.4.1 War on Terror	51
3.4.1.1 The New Rules: Illegal Combatants	54
3.4.1.2 Weapons of Mass Destruction	57
3.4.1.3 Pre-Emption and Appeasement	59
3.4.2 Towards Imperial Self Awareness	63
4 Widening the Context and Concluding Remarks	65
5 Bibliography	77
5.1 Primary Literature	77
5.2 Secondary Literature	78

1 Introduction

“...the threat for the future is not American power and American strength; it would be American weakness and American withdrawal”

- William Kristol¹

1.1 Theme

In recent years, neoconservatism has become part of the popular consciousness. In editorials and articles throughout the media we are told how a cabal of neoconservatives convinced the George W Bush administration to go to war in Iraq. For the first time there is a broad based agreement as to what Neocons believe and what their agenda is.

In fact, in the popular sense, neoconservatism can be summarised as the belief that America has a duty to make the world a better place through active intervention. However, neoconservatism used to be a far more ambiguous concept that would not succumb to straightforward definitions such as ‘hawkish interventionism’ or ‘a hard Wilson doctrine’. Rather, Irving Kristol, known as ‘the godfather of neoconservatism’ argued that this was so because it was not an ideology but a ‘persuasion’ or a philosophical outlook.

Be that as it may, the early neoconservatives came together from a range of backgrounds and their writing was extremely prolific, discussing a seemingly endless range of topics. Originating in liberal anti-communism, they have criticised social engineering, the adversary culture of the 1960s and the ‘culture of appeasement’ in foreign policy, as well as a myriad of issues such as family structure, affirmative action and economics.

Not so today. Practically everything published by self proclaimed neoconservatives these days, is likely to be on subjects such as the Iraq, Iran or North Korea. Works such as *An End to Evil* (2003) in which David Frum and Richard Perle formulate a strategy for winning the war on terror, or Robert Kagan’s *Paradise & Power* (2003), which explains the righteousness of utilising the might of the US military, have become the standard by which the neoconservatives are known to the general public.²

When the neoconservatives are understood only from a foreign policy perspective, as does Max Boot, reluctantly self professed neoconservative, the continuity in neoconservative thought from the Cold War to the war on terror can be described as ‘hard Wilsonianism’:

“Advocates of this view embrace Woodrow Wilson’s championing of American ideals but reject his reliance on international organizations and treaties to accomplish our objectives.”³

This is however a false continuity. Wilsonian idealism had little to do with the Cold War neoconservatives, even if it too some degree is a fair description of today’s neoconservatives.

¹ William Kristol interviewed in documentary, Director/Writer: Eugene Jarecki, ‘Why We Fight’ 2005 (US: Sony Pictures Classics, UK: BBC Storyville)

² David Frum and Richard Perle, ‘An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror’ 2003 (New York: Random House) Robert Kagan, ‘Paradise & Power: America and Europe in the New World Order’ 2003 (London: Atlantic Books)

³ Max Boot, ‘What the Heck is a ‘Neocon?’ *The Wall Street Journal*, December 30 2002, reprinted in *OpinionJournal*, <http://www.opinionjournal.com> (accessed on March 12 2006)

Rather, Wilsonian foreign policy rested heavily on principles of social engineering, something which the early neoconservatives vehemently contested. The advocacy of 'regime change' and 'nation building' as integral parts of the war on terror seems at odds with the earlier project of refuting the appropriateness of social engineering.

This paper rests on the hypothesis that neoconservatism has changed dramatically in focus over the past decade. Whereas it would have been easy to conclude that the events of September 11 2001 would have acted as a transformer of the neoconservative focus, this paper highlights how these attacks are better understood as a catalyst. The roots of 'hawkish interventionism' go deeper, and can be traced back through the years preceding September 11 2001.

The medium through which this paper investigates the changing neoconservative agenda is *The Weekly Standard*. Founded and edited by William Kristol, the son of aforementioned Irving Kristol, this political magazine provides the backdrop, or ethnographic material, for this study. As such it becomes impossibly tempting to not think of the contemporary neoconservatives as a second generation, and posit their different outlook against idea that they are not 'liberals mugged by reality' as Irving Kristol described himself and his fellow neoconservatives, but that these later neoconservatives they were in a sense raised neoconservatively.

Contrary to much of the criticism of the neoconservatives, this paper does not seek to place them within the context of a conspiracy to dominate the world, where they play the role of behind the scenes puppeteer shaping the opinions of influential politicians. Rather it seeks to shed some light on the values and ideas of these neoconservatives. In particular, this paper attempts to investigate the second generation of neoconservatives.

As a group, the neoconservatives are obviously difficult to study in a strictly anthropological manner. The by now outdated method of participant observation would not have been applicable as the neoconservatives do not live in isolated communities, nor is it possible to identify any accessible venues that frequent. Whereas early anthropologists could rely on their socio-political position to gain access to their subjects, the power balance is in this case far from such in the case of this anthropologist.

There is however an arena where intellectual ideas and worldviews are voiced and discussed, the world of journals.

Whereas the early neoconservatives are closely associated with the two journals *Commentary* and *Public Interest*, *Weekly Standard* has to a significant extent taken over this role. With the termination of Irving Kristol's *Public Interest* in 2005, William Kristol's *Weekly Standard* even more clearly carries on the neoconservative legacy.

This paper is an investigation of *The Weekly Standard* from its inception in 1995, across the turn of the century, through its first ten years of being published, to 2005. The choice of time period is not only a convenient even decade, but it covers a most interesting period of neoconservative thought. It starts at a time when prominent neoconservatives such as Norman Podhoretz had just announced the death of neoconservatism and had proclaimed that it had by then been consumed by the wider conservative movement. The

neoconservative Cold Warriors had, it seemed, lost their cause as the iron wall crumbled and former enemies transformed into tentative fellow capitalists. Notable neoconservative Francis Fukuyama drew the conclusion that with the disappearance of the Soviet Union no real threats now existed to the project of liberal democracy, and predicted in *The End of History and the Last Man* that perpetual peace and prosperity was shortly forthcoming.

The Weekly Standard thus picks up where its predecessors concluded and with the width of topics that the neoconservative 'persuasion' had long been associated with, found no lack of subjects for its weekly issues.

Whilst it continued the legacy of promoting a hard line foreign policy, foreign policy was far from its major concern in the early years of its publication. Far more attention was devoted to domestic issues such as affirmative action, education and gender relations. Not until 1998 does *The Weekly Standard* begin to show signs of what is now known as the Neocon agenda, the role of America as promoter and enforcer of liberal democracy on a global scale. The famous editorial *Saddam Must Go* in late 1997, most likely synchronised with an open letter by the Project for a New American Century, also headed by William Kristol, often referred to as the Neocon Manifesto, marked the beginning of a series of articles and editorials advocating regime changing intervention in Iraq.

This 'idealistic hawkishness' has since the events of September 11 2001 dominated the attention of *The Weekly Standard* and the term Neocon are by now solidly associated with an aggressive interventionist foreign policy. This paper seeks to show how the contemporary Neocon foreign policy position was not created by the attacks against the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon building, but was if significantly accelerated by these events. Furthermore, this paper also intends to show how the current image of the Neocons, the 'idealistic hawkishness' is further strengthened by the almost complete crowding out of any other issues from its major mouthpiece, *The Weekly Standard*.

1.2 Structure

The first section of this paper outlines the history of neoconservatism, from its conception in the 1940s until its alleged demise in the mid 1990s. The purpose of this historical overview is to present the plethora of issues and topics addressed by the neoconservative ‘cabal’ over a half century. This is at best a condensed version of the efforts of a number of historians, nor is it intended to provide thorough coverage of even major issues. Rather, the emphasis is on topics that are on the periphery of the anti-communist mainstream of neoconservatism. Considerable effort has been made to not present an overly simplified account, but for more in-depth analyses and presentations please refer to, amongst other, the following works. Mark Gerson’s *The Neoconservative Vision* (1996) reviews the neoconservatives from a positive perspective and is as such able to deduce strands of intellectual curiosity that more critical readers trivialise. Murray Friedman’s *The Neoconservative Revolution* (2003) is written from a perspective of dissent yet acknowledges the influence of the neoconservatives. Gary Dorrien is critical of the neoconservatives and *The Neoconservative Mind* (1993) provides biographical portraits of some of the main characters of the early neoconservatives. Two volumes that provide convenient access to some of the main texts by neoconservatives are Irving Kristol’s *Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea* (1995) and *The Neocon Reader* (2004) edited by Irwin Stelzer.⁴

The second section investigates the material published by *The Weekly Standard* over six years, from 1995 through 2001. This is a period in which William Kristol and his co-editors Fred Barnes and John Podhoretz can be seen to continue down the path set by earlier neoconservatives, dealing with much the same issues, less the threat of the Soviet Union. A noteworthy difference is also its strong Republican standpoint, something their predecessors were reluctant to take given their background as liberals and supposedly even as Trotskyites. This is not to say that the seeds of ‘hawkish interventionism’ were not there, if anything this is the period in which they were conceived. In a number of different foreign policy scenarios commentators such as Robert Kagan and Charles Krauthammer lamented the Clinton administration for its inability to order significant military action. Finally in 1998 the campaign to get rid of Saddam Hussein was started, but even this was a short lived engagement and a year after the *Saddam Must Go* editorial by Kristol the stream of articles advocating regime change dried up.

The third section presents the ‘idealistic hawkishness’ of this second generation of neoconservatives and highlights the stark differences in outlook compared to its predecessor. This section covers principally the period from September 2001 to the summer of 2005. Particular attention is paid to the concept of regime change itself given the paradox that neoconservatives would become the most fervent advocates of social engineering in the Middle East when it has been a key issue to fight specifically social engineering in domestic policy.

⁴ Mark Gerson, ‘The Neoconservative Vision: from the Cold War to the culture wars’ 1996 (Lanham, MD: Madison Books)
 Murray Friedman, ‘The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish intellectuals and the shaping of public policy’ 2003 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
 Gary Dorrien, ‘The Neoconservative Mind – Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology’ 1993 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press)
 Irving Kristol, ‘Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea’ 1995 (New York: Free Press)
 Irwin Stelzer, ‘The Neocon Reader’ 2004 (New York: Grove Press)

The final section offers some concluding remarks. It has already been made clear that this paper finds that the neoconservative persuasion of the present day is drastically different from that of the liberal anti-communists who formed neoconservatism's early subscribers. The particular difference that is highlighted and expanded upon in this section is the paradox that the school of thought that housed some of the most fervent critics of social engineering in the 1950s and 60s have by now become home to some of the most enthusiastic promoters of analogous projects abroad. The final section is also where this paper attempts to widen the context and attempts are made at consolidating the findings of this paper with other commentators' perspectives.

1.3 Hypothesis and Method

At the same time as this paper got under way, the neoconservative consensus that had seemed so coherent during the past few years was rocked. The publication of Francis Fukuyama's book *America at the Crossroads* (2006), on the invasion of Iraq and USA's role in global politics was the first major sign of dissent amongst the neoconservatives. Published as *After the Neocons* (2006) in the United Kingdom, the neoconservatives have come under considerable attack and given the weight of the literature and other investigative material pointing to the hollowness of the case presented as cause for military action in Iraq, the neoconservatives are currently far from at their prime.⁵

It has already been mentioned that this paper rests on the hypothesis that the neoconservatives of the last few years are distinctly different from their predecessors. In terms of a mission statement, it ought be said that it is the purpose of this paper to show how 'idealistic hawkishness' for which the neoconservatives have become known represents a departure from early neoconservatism, and that it makes sense to think of the neoconservatives of *The Weekly Standard* as a second generation of neoconservatives.

It is the intention of this paper to demonstrate such 'idealistic hawkishness' through a thorough reading of *The Weekly Standard* and highlight key issues within the neoconservative agenda.

The methodology of this investigation is as such a literary study, where the primary source of ethnographic material consists of 483 issues of the magazine published between September 18 1995 and September 5 2005. All these issues have been covered and whereas not all are referred to in the text below, the notes taken from the reading and in particular the frequency of recurrence of particular themes have guided this anthropologist in understanding the significance of particular topics.

Literature studies are associated with a number of problems for anthropologists.

The lack of dialogue is such a disadvantage. Whilst it is not advised to rely on what the subject of study say about themselves without qualification, dialogue offers an opportunity to check and verify what importance the anthropologist gives to particular topics in comparison to the subject's perception of their importance.

In a literature study the role of the anthropologist is that of editor. To select what material to include and what weight to give particular issues is a discretionary process. This study has attempted to present something of a cross section of *The Weekly Standard*. Nonetheless, undoubtedly others may find the focus skewed and unrepresentative of the ethnographic material.

Written culture is to a significant extent well edited and finely tuned for the purposes it is intended to serve. It would therefore be an unsuitable medium to ask questions such as 'What do the Neocons really think?', 'Why do the Neocons so fiercely defend the ideal of liberal democracy and at the same time shun the counterculture associated with it?' or other

⁵ Fukuyama, Francis, 'After the Neocons – America at the Crossroads' 2006 (London: Profile Books); 'America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy' 2006 (New Haven: Yale University Press)

questions that seek to explore psychological root causes. The self-image of the Neoconservative intellectual that could be deduced from *The Weekly Standard* is much too finely crafted to succumb to ready analysis. For the purposes of this paper, which attempts to investigate the changes in neoconservative causes, that is the contradictory changes in their agenda, the sheer bulk of literary material that is *The Weekly Standard* has proven quite useful.

The advantage then of a literature study is that the material remains intact and open for review. Whereas a remote village is not the same as the second ethnographer arrives, the material of this study will remain unchanged. This does of course not guard it, nor should it, from the wisdom offered by hindsight and further review would no doubt offer additional perspectives.

2 The History of Neoconservatism

In understanding the neoconservatives of today, it will be useful to initially situate the first generation of neocons historically. That is to say that the ideas harboured within what can broadly be called neoconservatism as well as the individual neoconservatives themselves must be understood within the context in which they emerged and the history they drew upon. This section attempts to present the key ideas, individuals and institutions connected with neoconservatism as they emerged in the 1940s and 1950s, and the particular events and social phenomena against which they developed.

This section is not intended to give neither a detailed narrative nor a thorough analysis of the first half century of neoconservatism, but rather to introduce some of the main characters, the major issues of concern for them as well as to assess the legacy of their intellectual and political endeavours. For a more in-depth historical review of the neoconservatives several books are readily available, including but not only the works referred to in this section. Mark Gerson's *The Neoconservative Vision* (1996) reviews the neoconservatives from a positive perspective and is as such able to deduce strands of intellectual curiosity that more critical readers trivialise. Murray Friedman's *The Neoconservative Revolution* (2003) is written from a perspective of dissent yet acknowledges the influence of the neoconservatives. Gary Dorrien is critical of the neoconservatives and *The Neoconservative Mind* (1993) provides biographical portraits of some of the main characters of the early neoconservatives. Two volumes that provide convenient access to some of the main texts by neoconservatives are Irving Kristol's *Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea* (1995) and *The Neocon Reader* (2004) edited by Irwin Stelzer. For a more complete account of the history of neoconservatism I refer to these works. Below is my abbreviation of that history.⁶

⁶ Mark Gerson, 'The Neoconservative Vision: from the Cold War to the culture wars' 1996 (Lanham, MD: Madison Books)
 Murray Friedman, 'The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish intellectuals and the shaping of public policy' 2003 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
 Gary Dorrien, 'The Neoconservative Mind – Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology' 1993 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press)
 Irving Kristol, 'Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea' 1995 (New York: Free Press)
 Irwin Stelzer, 'The Neocon Reader' 2004 (New York: Grove Press)

2.1 The Early Neoconservatives

It is not possible to select any one event or even a single issue against which the emergence of neoconservatism can be understood. Rather several issues must be explored, and whilst individual neoconservatives may perhaps focus on a singular issue, for the broader movement it is impossible to narrow it down to such.

However, it is interesting to note, and most of the literature on the neoconservatives place considerable emphasis on it, that several of the founders of some of the key journals and think tanks that would later be associated with neoconservatism attended City College of New York together. Most of the literature also emphasises that Irving Kristol, Irving Howe, Daniel Bell and Nathan Glazer, were politically radical as students, with Kristol and Howe supporting Leon Trotsky.⁷ As Micklethwait and Wooldridge puts it they "...where too poor and too Jewish to attend the Ivy League..."⁸, which makes their original political position on the left of the spectrum fairly straightforward as this conformed to the working class' and many immigrants' values at the time.

Not all the early neoconservatives had a background similar to those of the New York intellectuals from City College. It has become common for journalists and indeed scholars to refer to neoconservatism as a Jewish movement as many neoconservatives are of Jewish heritage and have often been staunch supporters of Israel.⁹

The term 'neoconservative' itself was not invented by anyone to whom it applied, as political categories seldom are. The term was reportedly first used by Michael Harrington, and it was adopted by the critics of the liberal anti-communists moving further away from the liberal left on more issues than the US policies related to the Cold War and the struggle against communism.¹⁰

Clearly the most colourful of the early neoconservatives were Irving Kristol. His role as a sort of centre for the relatively small group within the liberal anti-communist intellectual movement, which was later to constitute the neoconservative movement, though Kristol himself preferred to think of it as a 'persuasion', cannot be overstated. The nickname donned to him by his fellow travellers, the 'Godfather' of neoconservatism is an indicator of his success in generating resources and aiding other neoconservative intellectuals in securing grants and media exposure.

In Irving Kristol's memoirs, *Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea* (1995), a collection of some of his papers, the width of the topics addressed by neoconservative thinkers during the 20th century is well illustrated. By reviewing the concerns raised in his compilation gives us an overview of the main concerns of Kristol's writings, keeping in mind that whilst its preface claims it to be a neutral collection of essays it no doubt reflects the carefully crafted self-image of Kristol.¹¹

⁷ Murray Friedman, 'The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish intellectuals and the shaping of public policy' (2003), Page 28

⁸ John Micklethwait & Adrian Wooldridge, 'The Right Nation' (London: Penguin Books) 2004, Page 72

⁹ Michael Lind, 'A Tragedy of Errors' *The Nation*, February 23 2004 <http://www.thenation.com> (accessed on November 8 2006)

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Irving Kristol, 'Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea' 1995 (New York: Free Press)

On the subject of ‘adversary culture’, Kristol identifies a contradiction within liberal democracy, namely that it seems to breed an intellectual elite that is deeply critical of the ideals and values upon which society rests. As such Bourgeois society to Kristol has seized to go hand in hand with Bourgeois culture, that is to say that despite the American economy being firmly capitalist, and having been so almost exclusively for a long time, the intellectual elite does no longer propagate Bourgeois values, but nihilism.

These sentiments however, are according to Kristol not limited to the intellectual elite, but are strongly inhabited amongst those belonging to a new class of professionals created by liberal capitalism. This ‘new class’ consists of public sector professionals such as scientists, teachers and journalists, as well as the lawyers and doctors benefiting from the expansion of the public sector.¹² The emergence of this new class was a consequence of the expansion of higher education in the post-war period intended to provide skilled labour for the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial America.¹³

Kristol’s strong opinions on the negative influence and contradictory nature of ‘adversary culture’ have led some historians to conclude that it was the neoconservatives’ dissatisfaction with the questioning of societies ideals that cemented the abandonment of liberal or left wing politics and accelerated the move towards conservatism. To Micklethwait and Wooldridge it was the early neoconservative’s background in poor immigrant households and for whom higher education provided an opportunity to leave poverty, that led them to take particular affront in anti-Americanism and the destruction of university property.¹⁴

Michael Novak in particular has pointed to the paradox of the ethics of the New Class, an ethics based on denial of self-interest, whilst being direct beneficiaries of the political application of their ideals of big government.

When discussing social reform, Kristol argues that discussions that depend on a definition of justice are necessarily political. In an essay on social reform in the 1970s two problems in particular are highlighted. Firstly, there is always a problem in defining the poor, and any applicable poverty cut-off point is by default arbitrary. Secondly, a poverty reduction scheme that hands out money risks causing a poverty trap in which incentives to better one’s situation are offset by the disincentives of in the process losing handouts.¹⁵

The conclusions that Kristol draws from his analysis of social reform are in themselves twofold. Firstly, the lessons from the failure of the Great Society and War on Poverty of the 1960s, suggest to him that social initiatives that divide the American people are misdirected and “the mark of a successful social reform [...] is to create greater comity among the people.”¹⁶ Examples of initiatives that he would favour are such as a children’s allowance scheme and a national healthcare system, both applied equally over all income groups. Secondly, Kristol concludes that all social reforms are more than anything political activities,

¹² *ibid.* p.209

¹³ *ibid.* p.221

¹⁴ John Micklethwait & Adrian Wooldridge, ‘The Right Nation’ (London: Penguin Books) 2004, Pages 72-73

¹⁵ Irving Kristol, ‘Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea’ Pages 202-203

¹⁶ *ibid.* p.202

and as such the success of social policies in the eyes of politicians are not measured in the poverty reducing effect, but in the loyalties said policies create.¹⁷

In a different essay on social justice, Kristol identifies the inherent conflict in the discussion on income distribution and the fairness of equality as the same as the conflict between liberty and lack thereof. Even the concept of ‘social justice’ is politically charged in that ‘social’ in this case does not mean that society ought to direct incomes towards a ‘fair’ distribution set by society, but rather that the government should promote a particular income distribution. The conflict therefore can be summed up as that the distribution of incomes in the liberal capitalist economy only makes sense if liberty is the highest value or political goal in itself.¹⁸ This is however not how Kristol views the intellectual elite favouring equality as social justice. To Kristol they are as antagonists of liberty and the free society. In conclusion then, what specific income distribution that is considered ‘fair’ depend, according to Kristol, on the particular history and traditions of the society in which the discussion takes place.

The adversary culture, and its cultural nihilism, that Kristol strongly dislikes is however not of the kind that a post-marxist perspective might have envisioned, of an intellectual elite that leads the masses in the struggle against capitalism. Rather, Kristol argues that the experiences of common people contradict those of intellectuals and act as ‘antibodies’ to the cultural degradation favoured by the intellectuals.¹⁹

This in turn helps us understand how Kristol understands the invulnerability of liberal democracy and the capitalist mode of production. A recurrent theme in Kristol’s texts is that capitalism was the mode of production intended by the founding fathers, even though they of course never used that particular term.²⁰ The American way of life, what Kristol calls ‘bourgeois ethos’, closely resembling the frugality Max Weber used to explain the success of capitalism in North America in *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, is according to Kristol not necessarily, and certainly not in the 1960s, found harboured by the intellectual elite, but is rather to be found amongst common people.²¹

In Kristol’s commentaries on moral values in his contemporary America, there is a certain reverence for ‘bourgeois values’ as he understands them. Whether he is discussing family relations, sexual promiscuity or welfare, there is a sense that rather than looking for new solutions to new situations, Kristol would rather reverse the processes and make new situations less new, and as such the old and tested mechanism already embedded in local culture can once again function.

What is clear from much of Kristol’s discussions is that he finds the proliferation of the title ‘intellectual’ highly disturbing, perhaps even offensive, and at the root of what is wrong with his contemporary America. The way in which he uses it is almost exclusively to designate someone as a liberal, and not primarily as someone with a philosophical predisposition. This seems to be the position against which Kristol understands himself, namely that of a liberal, but of a philosophical origin other than that of his contemporary liberals. In understanding

¹⁷ *ibid.* p.204

¹⁸ *ibid.* p.256

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.134

²⁰ *ibid.* p.211,258

²¹ *ibid.* p.172

American conservatism as in seeking to conserve the institutions of liberal democracy, he conversely understands his contemporary liberals as “neosocialists” in that they seek “to achieve ever greater equality at the expense of liberty”²². The category, or title, of neoconservative in this sense would be to denote a thinker in between a liberal not holding liberty as a value worth defending, and a conservative failing to see how the institutions of the state could help improving the human condition when utilised appropriately. As a definition this is much too vague and sounds much too like any definition of *realpolitik* too help us understand the first generation of neoconservatives.

²² *ibid.* p.230

2.2 Neoconservative Economics and Other Issues

It is within the context of opposing communism that the neoconservatives' interest in economics can be understood. There are two interlinked reasons to understand it as such. Firstly, by the 1970s when the neoconservatives, with Irving Kristol in the lead, took an interest in economics, the only alternative to capitalism that seemed real to them was communism. With that as the alternative, a neoconservative support for capitalism was a given. Secondly, following the schism between the early neoconservatives and liberal intellectuals, whom the neoconservatives had come to view as barely disguised communitarians and a driving force behind the 'new class' and adversary culture, the neoconservatives did not believe social or economic planning was even possible, given the complexity of economic theory.

Neoconservatives have written on many aspects of economics, but the concept that is perhaps best known and most influential is that of supply side economics and the Laffer curve.

Jude Wanniski became friends with Arthur Laffer and his assistant Robert Mundell in the early 1970s. As a political writer, for the *Wall Street Journal* he published an interview with Mundell titled 'It's Time to Cut Taxes'. This attracted the attention of the neoconservatives and in 1975 Irving Kristol published Wanniski's essay 'The Mundell-Laffer Hypothesis: A New View of the World Economy' in *The Public Interest*, in which the principles of supply-side economics were presented. Gerson emphasises the simplicity of the theory, which unlike most of its contemporary economics, appealed "directly to human ingenuity"²³. But it was in one of the footnotes of that essay, that the 'law of diminishing returns', that at a certain tax rate, tax revenue ceases to increase as people work less hard when they get to keep less of their wage, was explained, a concept that was to be later known as the 'Laffer curve'. The curve itself was not featured in the original essay, but was supposedly conceived on a napkin when Wanniski and Laffer had dinner with Richard Cheney, an aide to President Gerald Ford's assistant Donald Rumsfeld.²⁴ Gerson argues that supply side economics was well suited to the neoconservatives because it seemed to embrace common sense and transferring "...the power of creative economic possibility into the hands of ordinary citizen with the vision and the determination to transform a vision into a reality"²⁵. Gerson also argues that more than an economic theory, supply side economics was a way of presenting capitalism as a communitarian vision and "spoke to the aspirations of the ordinary citizen and manifested the American dream"²⁶.

This is where the writing of Michael Novak comes into play. His *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (1982) is an attempt to show how democracy is the consequence of capitalism. Drawing on Daniel Bell's model for society in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976) in which a techno-economic structure of society is intimately linked to its polity and culture, Novak took this to mean that only particular combinations of political systems, economical modes of production and cultural fabrics were compatible.²⁷ The only mode of production

²³ Mark Gerson, 'The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to the Culture Wars' (Lanham, MD: Madison Books) 1996, Page 203

²⁴ *ibid.* pp.203-204

²⁵ *ibid.* p.206

²⁶ *ibid.* p.206

²⁷ Michael Novak, 'The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism' 1982 (New York: Simon and Schuster)

that was compatible with the plurality of democracy proved to be modern capitalism, and as such Novak refuted what he perceived as the mainstream view of the historical coincidence of capitalism's pairing up with liberal democracy and suggested that the two were more closely linked than that. In fact, the two are almost synonymous in Novak's account. The question then was what are the cultural traits associated with the two, and what can be done to prevent cultural degradation which would logically upset the bond between the three.²⁸

To Bell there were in capitalism forces at play which themselves acted negatively against the cultural and personal traits that he associated with a successful bourgeois society, namely "hard work, prudence, thrift, deferred gratification, family loyalty, and a sense of the sacred"²⁹ seemingly quoted straight from Max Weber's *The Spirit of Capitalism and the Protestant Ethics*. It is against this background that the neoconservative criticism of the New Class, adversary culture and American Liberalism must be understood. It is not because of the specific issues pursued by these other movements that they awoke such harsh criticism from the neoconservatives but because they threatened the balance between capitalism and liberal democracy within the context of Novak's democratic democracy. Economics to the neoconservatives was not only a matter of finding methods for production or distributing income, but rather directly linked to the political system of liberal capitalism. Liberal in the sense favoured by the neoconservatives of course.

One of the issues within which the neoconservatives generated considerable infamy was that of Norman Podhoretz stance vis-à-vis ethnic and racial relations. As an editor of *Commentary* he had shifted the focus towards issues of family, but it was with the article *My Negro Problem – And Ours* that he evoked intellectuals' anger and stirred public opinion. The idea raised by Podhoretz in a polemic setting of 'Us' against 'Them', no doubt as the African American readership of *Commentary* could not have been significant, was based on observations from his own childhood. He notes that 'they', as in black children and youths, could do as they pleased and were never punished for misbehaving whilst Podhoretz and his fellow white schoolmates were schooled in obeying authority and were punished if they failed to do so. To Podhoretz, this differed greatly from mainstream intelligentsia's idea that as descendants of slaves the African American population was oppressed, as in his own experience it was he and other white youths who were afraid whilst the black youths did as they pleased.³⁰

In the following controversy Podhoretz claimed to have simply praised the virtues of African Americans, but as Gary Dorrien points out this praise is limited to an admiration of their athletic bodies and as such one is more likely to think of dichotomies otherwise associated with colonialist perspectives, Mind v Body, Culture v Nature, Us v Them. Dorrien also suggests that much of the controversy arose because of the liberal setting in which these opinions were presented. Had they instead been published in a right wing journal such as *National Interest* the article would most likely not gained much attention. The reason this particular article is worth mentioning is because it helps show how the neoconservatives differed from traditional conservatives in that they were eager to substantiate their claims. In this case it was done through Moynihan's article on the African American family, where it

Daniel Bell, 'The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism' 1976 (New York: Basic Books)

²⁸ Gary Dorrien, 'The Neoconservative mind: Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology' (Philadelphia: Temple University Press) 1993

²⁹ *ibid.* p.226

³⁰ *ibid.*

was pointed out that a large proportion of black children were raised without the presence of their father.³¹ As such the argument moved beyond Podhoretz observation, and leaving the liberal idea that racial conflict was due to the white man's debt to their former slaves behind, and pointed rather at one of the neoconservatives' old reliable social explanations, a breakdown of traditional institutions, in this case the family.

³¹ *ibid.*

2.3 Anti-communist Liberals and the Culture of Appeasement

The ‘culture of appeasement’ to Podhoretz and other neoconservatives was the idea that your enemy could be reasoned with and that it was possible to have peace and friendly relations without a clear hierarchy between nations. In the case applied to by Podhoretz the enemy was the Soviet Union and the appeaser Jimmy Carter, but during the Second World War the enemy was Nazi Germany and the appeaser Richard Chamberlain.³²

Carter failed to appreciate the need for strategic superiority as a consequence of this ‘culture of appeasement’. Podhoretz fear was that US relations with the Soviet Unions were deteriorating from one of hostility to one of naively imagined peace, a process of ‘Finlandization’ in that the unacknowledged fear of the Soviet Union lets governments negotiate treaties with the enemy and subsequently dismantling their military capacity to enforce those agreements. As in the case of Britain after the First World War, Podhoretz attributed the ‘culture of appeasement’ in his contemporary United States to the influence of homosexual writers. The choice of homosexuals as the culprits seem to be based on an argument akin to the one above, that is that the defining trait of homosexual men according to Podhoretz was their refusal to be fathers, and as such the refusal to accept the responsibilities of fatherhood, metaphorically related to leading a country in times of crisis or war.³³

The problems in US foreign policy were as such not so much about military spending as of ideology. Podhoretz logic was that it did not matter how much was spent on military resources if there was no intention or will to put them to use. That was the real problem of the ‘culture of appeasement’, that war became unthinkable not a serious policy alternative. To Podhoretz this was the situation Carter inherited and exacerbated, and it was definitely the case of Europe which had become addicted to American military assistance. Towards the end of the Cold War, Podhoretz like most intellectuals and policy makers failed to foresee the extent of decline in the Soviet Union. As such Podhoretz perceived Gorbachev’s policies of ‘glasnost’ and ‘perestroika’ with suspicion. It was clear to Podhoretz that this was part of an agenda to exploit the ‘culture of appeasement’ if it indeed was not complete and irreversible ‘Finlandization’.³⁴

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

2.4 The Legacy of the Early Neoconservatives

By the mid 1990 several of the leading neoconservatives considered neoconservatism an obsolete concept. Irving Kristol supposed that the ‘neoconservative persuasion’ was generational and Norman Podhoretz suggested that it had by 1996 been incorporated by the wider conservative movement.

What then of the neoconservative legacy? Murray Friedman suggests that such a legacy is best understood in terms of the influence the early neoconservatives had on a younger generation of conservative thinkers. In that sense the legacy of neoconservatism is to have invigorated the conservative movement by influencing thinkers able to utilise the language of social science, but with a deeper understanding of social issues than paleoconservatives, and most importantly, with the ability to project their ideas and arguments to a wider audience than through traditional conservative institutions.

Following the Republican Party’s election victory in 1994, Mark Gerson notes that whilst there was no direct between the neoconservative journal *The Public Interest* and the victory as George Will declared, the neoconservative influence cannot be denied. Gerson argues that: “...in the speeches of politicians such as Newt Gingrich, Bill Bradley, and even Bill Clinton, there is far more than an echo of old articles sitting in bound volumes of *Commentary* and *The Public Interest*”.³⁵ It could also be argued that the popularity of President George W. Bush’s ‘compassionate conservatism’ with which he won the 2000 presidential election is an indicator of the legacy of neoconservatism left for American conservatism, the ability to speak with confidence on social issues without defaulting to the American constitution and traditionally conservative arguments.

In Gerson’s review of neoconservatism up until the mid 1990s, he deduces four principles that have gone as a red line throughout neoconservative thinking.

First, that “*Life is infinitely complex*”³⁶, which is to say that the neoconservatives regarded the complexity of the world to be beyond the manageability of even the individuals themselves, and much less that of the government. Social engineering and political blueprints are external, as opposed to the human problems, and therefore fail to produce the intended effect without serious side effects.

Second, that “*Man can be good, but man can also be evil*”³⁷, a concept derived from Edmund Burke and Reinhold Niebuhr, which Michael Novak presented in *Commentary* in 1972. The sharp division between good and evil is used to illustrate the ideals and nature of humans, and that whilst most humans want to live good lives they are capable of evil. In this sense, those who try to live according to good values become the victims of those who are evil as those who are good see goodness in everyone. If this weakness is overcome, then identifying evil as evil is not enough, but physical force must be an option.

³⁵ Mark Gerson, ‘The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to the Culture Wars’ (Lanham, MD: Madison Books) 1996, Page 350

³⁶ *ibid.* p.16

³⁷ *ibid.* p.17

Third, that “*Man is a social animal*”³⁸, derived from Tocqueville, is to say that the neoconservatives attach great value to the social institutions that have developed over long periods of time. This can be seen in contrast with social engineering and large scale remodelling of societies. For the neoconservatives therefore, a well functioning society is built by encouraging the institutions that “inculcate virtue and prepare man to live the good life both in private and as a citizen of the public sphere...” and as “...Politics and economics are functions of culture”³⁹ neither is separable from the other.

Forth, Gerson argues that to the neoconservatives “*Ideas rule the world*”⁴⁰. Whilst their contemporary intellectuals saw the world as progressing through, economic-, racial-, gender- or sexual determinism, the neoconservatives consider ideas the most important determinant. A society will only survive and progress if it has the ideological “self-confidence to defend its principles”⁴¹.

Keeping in mind the disagreement in the early 1990s whether neoconservatism was by then in its final stage and largely incorporated into a modernised American conservatism as Irving Kristol and others of the early neoconservatives have argued or invigorated by a second generation of neoconservatives from a conservative background as Dorrien suggests, we now turn our investigation to the later half of the 1990s up until the present moment. Despite the suggested influence of the first generation of neoconservatives it was after the events of September 11 2001 that the neoconservatives entered the popular sphere as a concept. As ‘Neocons’, this latest generation of neoconservatives have been considered responsible for the United States responses to the attacks, not so much for the intervention in Afghanistan, but for the larger War on Terror. This influence is largely attributed to two institutions founded by the literal heir to Irving Kristol, his son William. The think tank Project for the New American Century founded in 1998 and the journal *Weekly Standard* first issued in 1995 have both published letters and articles urging the US government to take action against Iraq in general and Saddam Hussein in particular preceding the September 11 attacks, thus creating the perception that the US invasion of Iraq was not a response to terrorism or an immediate threat, but a consequence of neoconservative lobbying. The following section, constituting the bulk of this paper, is devoted to investigating *The Weekly Standard* during the years 1995 through 2005, thus spanning the years preceding September 11 2001, the build-up to the declaration of a War on Terror, the intervention in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq. But before dealing specifically with *The Weekly Standard* and where useful with the Project for the New American Century, we will briefly look at the reasons for considering the influence of the neoconservatives part of a conspiracy to circumvent the democratic process of the United States.

The neoconservatives were not only intellectual thinkers, but influential ones at that, and this is in part why they are presently being described as the puppet masters of American foreign policy. It is often suggested that intellectuals live in a world connected only through journals, and this is certainly true for the neoconservatives with the correction that it is also a world of think tanks.

³⁸ *ibid.* p.17

³⁹ *ibid.* p.18

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p.18

⁴¹ *ibid.* p.19

The early neoconservatives were to a large extent associated with journals such as *Commentary* and *The Public Interest*, and think tanks such as American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and Heritage Foundation as has already been touched upon above, and whilst these by no means have lost their importance, it is in the Project for the New American Century and *The Weekly Standard* that we find the more recent generation of neoconservatives.

The two are both Washington based, and even have offices in the same building as American Enterprise Institute, on 1150 Seventeenth Street. With the sheer number of former co-workers in these think tanks and journal having ended up working for the George W. Bush presidential administration it is not surprising that conspiracy theories have emerged. Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2004) find that more than a dozen former AEI co-workers have jobs there and Project for the New American Century have had their letters to President Clinton, concerning the toppling to Saddam Hussein signed by amongst others Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz.

But it is not these people in themselves that are the concern of this paper. It is their ideas. As this section concludes this paper's historical overview it may be useful to sum up the key ideas of the early neoconservatives in order to compare these to the influence that is attributed to the later ones.

This overview has only touched briefly on the influence of the writing of Leo Strauss on the neoconservatives, but others attach far more importance to this particular feature. This translates into the conspiracy theory in two interdependent ways. Firstly, in the conspiracy sense the discourse emphasises the reading of Strauss that suggests that the Straussians favour a class of Plato's philosopher kings, ruling the world from behind the scenes and through lies and subterfuge. The Bush administration's claim that Saddam Hussein had access to weapons of mass destruction and the ability to threaten America with these, which by now is commonly considered a lie, is held as an example of Straussian inspired politicking. Secondly, the number of Straussians in the Bush administration is significant, the most prominent being Paul Wolfowitz, who was a student of Allan Bloom, Leo Strauss' protégé.⁴²

This paper does not concern itself significantly with the neoconservatives' connection to Leo Strauss. This connection is made forcefully by Shadia B. Drury. Her 1988 book *The political Ideas of Leo Strauss* was an attempt at exposing the teachings of Leo Strauss. To her, Leo Strauss advocated manipulative politics, where lies and deception were methods for achieving a political agenda that opposed such vices. Virtues are as such only symbols around which the population can rally, and to the political elite, these can be used successfully. In her 1997 book *Leo Strauss and the American Right* she connects neoconservatives such as Irving Kristol to the teachings of Strauss and argues that the influence on Kristol, and as such on neoconservatism, is significant.⁴³

⁴² John Micklethwait & Adrian Wooldridge, 'The Right Nation' 2004 (London: Penguin Press) Pages 156-157

⁴³ Shadia B. Drury, 'The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss' 1988 (New York: St. Martin's Press); 'Leo Strauss and the American Right' 1997 (New York: St. Martin's Press)

Neil G. Robertson, in his review of *Leo Strauss and the American Right*, highlights that the influence of Strauss on Kristol does not need to be exposed as Kristol has often cited Leo Strauss as a major influence. Furthermore, Robertson suggests that the nihilism that Drury attaches to Strauss seems contradictory with Kristol's staunch criticism of precisely nihilism. Robertson does not argue that Drury is necessarily wrong about Strauss, but he argues that it is not therefore the case that Kristol understands the nuances of Strauss' teaching in the same way as she does.⁴⁴

As such the influence of Leo Strauss on neoconservatism is beyond the scope of this paper.

By way of concluding this brief historical overview of neoconservatism, this paper has shown how the early neoconservatives dealt with numerous topics across the American political landscape. Whilst they may have originated predominantly from anti-communist liberals, the Cold War was far from the only issue of importance to them. Rather, as this section has shown, their project was a defence of a wider ideal, that of 'liberal democracy'.

As such, threats were not only external, as the Soviet Union, but internal, as adversary culture. Social engineering grew popular amongst politicians in the post-war period and the neoconservatives vehemently opposed such policies on the basis that society was far too complex to be micro managed by politicians. Rather, they promoted long standing cultural values drawn from the Judeo-Christian tradition, which they perceived as more in line with the morals of the people.

The early neoconservatives have been well documented and thoroughly analysed in academia and the popular press, and this paper has suggested a number of sources above in addition to this brief review.

⁴⁴ Neil G. Robertson, 'Leo Strauss and the American Right' (review) *The Journal of Politics*, 1999 Vol. 61, No. 1, Pages 261-263

3 The Weekly Standard 1995-2005

3.1 Readership, Owner and Frequent Contributors

The Weekly Standard was first published on 18 September 1995. The founding editors were William Kristol and Fred Barnes, supported by largely the same writers that will be drawn upon throughout the rest of this paper. This section gives a brief overview of the magazine's general structure in terms of funding, readership, distribution and its frequent contributors.

The Weekly Standard is a current events magazine offering comments on primarily American domestic and foreign policy. This makes it an interesting source for the purposes of this paper as it forces its writers and editors to engage with issues at a more superficial level than in academic literature. This also distinguishes the magazine format of publication from that of the think tanks associated with neoconservatism which have a much greater editorial control over their material as they publish only a fraction of the volume in open letters and research papers. The *modus operandi* of think tanks is clearly less transparent than that of a weekly magazine.

The following sections discuss some of the issues that have been addressed in *The Weekly Standard* with fairly high frequency. As a current events magazine focused on American politics the overwhelming focus has since its first issue, with the exception of the immediate post-September 11 period, been on the struggle between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. This is however not the focus of this paper, and the focus here is primarily on neoconservative positions with respect to specific issues. This allows the paper to explore not primarily the bipartisan politics of Washington D.C., but rather the ideas, values and priorities favoured by the contributors of *The Weekly Standard*.

The Weekly Standard's readership is not the focus of this paper, yet it may be useful to say a few words on the subject. *The Weekly Standard* itself announces on its webpage as information for prospective advertisers some basic demographic details of the readership. In short the readership according to *The Weekly Standard's* 2003 subscriber survey is well educated (Some College or more: 95%; College Degree or beyond: 76%) and affluent (Average HHI: \$193,000; Average Net Worth: \$1,364,000; Own primary Residence: 92%; Average Market Value: \$453,000; Percent owning securities: 93%; Average value of securities holdings: \$787,000; Average value of life insurance holdings: \$535,000). *The Weekly Standard* claims to have an unrivalled distribution system, where issues are hand delivered to "...the most powerful men and women in government, politics and the media..." to ensure that "...every important player in the city gets a copy."⁴⁵

Even if the demographic and socio-economic information provided by the magazine is inadequate to draw conclusions as to who the readership is, a brief look at the magazine's advertisement confirms its claim of being read by the political elite of Washington. The typical ads included in the magazine is not aimed at general consumers, but is directed at a different segment of society. A large portion of ads are policy advocating, suggesting that the advertisers are convinced that the magazine's sphere of influence include policymakers and their staff and think tanks drafting policy suggestions.

⁴⁵ <http://www.weeklystandard.com> (accessed on November 2 2006)

Another important type of advertisement is for the armament industry. Ads for troop transport helicopters or paramilitary security companies are clearly not aimed at consumers but to those people in a position to decide on public spending or in interlinked positions.

The Weekly Standard is owned by News Corporation, one of the world's largest media conglomerates. Conspiracy prone websites have written about how Rupert Murdoch, News Corp's CEO and owner, funded the magazine's setup and still retains it despite it running at a loss. Whether Murdoch influences the magazine in any way is unclear. Formally however, William Kristol has an agreement giving him editorial independence.⁴⁶

The extent to which a magazine or other publication can be associated with an ideology or political movement depend on a number of variables and must be assessed on a case by case basis. Even where this paper refers to the editors and writers of *The Weekly Standard* as 'the neoconservatives', this is not intended to be confused with a wider neoconservative movement. It would not be within the scope of this paper to assess the extent to which *The Weekly Standard* takes the same position as other neoconservative publications.

However, many of the people associated with *The Weekly Standard* are self professed neoconservatives, and given the relatively small number of writers and editors that have been published in the magazine since its inception in 1995 there is reason to think of *The Weekly Standard* as a coherent political unit. This is not to say that this paper perceives it as either a political movement or an outright lobbying group, but it is rather to acknowledge the influence of the very small group of contributors and editors who have been with the magazine from the very start. William Kristol, Fred Barnes, David Tell, David Brooks, David Frum, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Richard Starr and Matt Labash, constitute the core of *The Weekly Standard*. Consequently, the following sections of this paper will repeatedly reference and quote these men, in outlining the issues that have concerned *The Weekly Standard* over its first ten years of publication.

If anything, they are the neoconservatives of today. As an institution in this sense, *The Weekly Standard* is not immune to change, and in many respects this is what this investigation has shown. Neoconservatism as it was understood in the context of Irving Kristol and his contemporaries writing is distinctly different from the neoconservatism now associated with William Kristol and *The Weekly Standard*.

⁴⁶ John Cassidy, 'Murdoch's Game' *The New Yorker*, October 16 2006, <http://www.newyorker.com> (accessed on November 1 2006)

3.2 Foreign Policy and Defence Issues 1995-2001

Foreign policy is the area where ‘Neocons’ have become a mainstream term to understand how such policies as pre-emptive strikes, illegal combatants and the now seeming lies about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, became implemented by the George W. Bush Administration in the wake of September 11. This section investigates how foreign policy was discussed prior to those events, and attempts to show how whilst some of the policies advocated during the period 1995-2001 are reiterated in the post-September 11 period, the magazine deals with a range of issues in this period that does not later fit in the framework of the War on Terror. What this section seeks to illustrate is how the width of neoconservative foreign policy advocacy is far wider than often claimed, and that whilst a military intervention in Iraq, with the explicit purpose of toppling the government of Saddam Hussein, was advocated during this period it was far from the only, or the most prominent, policy concern of *The Weekly Standard*.

Neoconservatives had of course made a name for themselves in foreign policy before *The Weekly Standard* was launched in 1995. As several of the sections above demonstrate the early neoconservatives were in many ways centred on the threat of the spread of communism. The end of the Cold War has forced the neoconservatives as well as many other foreign policy thinkers to rethink their positions.

This paper gives two extensive examples in order to demonstrate how neoconservatives differentiate between conflicts in two major ways. Under certain circumstances, threats can be deterred, as was conservative policy during the Cold War. Under other circumstances threats must be neutralised as was the case with Nazi Germany. These lessons, and from others in neoconservatives’ reading of history back to ancient Greece, are crucial to understanding neoconservative foreign policy recommendations.

3.2.1 Case Example: China

The country perhaps most frequently discussed in *The Weekly Standard* is China, and in the editorial to an issue devoted almost completely to the country and its role in the world, the editors explain their take on the Chinese economic success story as one of uneven development. Whilst China has indeed gotten richer, it is an economic development that is accomplished without democratic reform. As such the editors of *The Weekly Standard* identify China as the next potential ‘rogue superpower’ in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

Whereas most commentators on China tend to emphasise the tremendous economic development of the country since the late 1980s, but the neoconservatives attach little value to economic growth without the democratic reforms they associate with true development. The presentation of China as a booming economy in the hands of a dictatorial regime is clearly a frightening image to the neoconservatives.⁴⁸

Just as China’s economy has managed to transform itself, the neoconservatives of *The Weekly Standard* attach the moral values of liberal democracy as intimately linked to the practice of capitalism, as did the early neoconservatives, and they suggest that the Chinese population is ready for a democratic transformation. Arthur Waldron compares the case of China to that of Indonesia and suggests that the anger currently vented in the form of anti-Americanism, under the direction of the regime, could easily be redirected towards the regime itself. A democratic transformation through such means would clearly not be non-violent, and Waldron suggests that it would be in the best interest of the Chinese government to yield to popular dissent and reform on its own accord. Recently however, such a breakthrough was resisted by the replacement on Zhao Ziyang’s reform friendly government.⁴⁹

The mainstream policy package that *The Weekly Standard* is attacking is that of the Clinton administration’s ‘engagement’ policy. The idea is that by trading with China ideas of liberty would be conveyed parallel to commerce.⁵⁰ Aaron Friedberg suggests that whilst engagement with China is not so much wrong on principle, it is simply not likely to succeed. He suggests that similarly to the welfare programmes and society building efforts criticised by neoconservatives in the 1950s and 1960s, the engagement policy is attractive in theory but unlikely to succeed in practice. In its practical implementation it needs to reward ‘good’ behaviour and penalise ‘bad’ behaviour, which is far too intricate to stand a likely chance of success.⁵¹ Christopher Cox, reiterates Robert Kagan’s criticism of ‘engagement’ and its similarities with Marxist economic determinism⁵² and points out that this notion is further flawed as he does not recognise any ‘free-market communism’ with which such an exchange would take place.⁵³

⁴⁷ Editorial, ‘China: The Issue’ *Weekly Standard*, February 24 1997, Page 10

⁴⁸ David Tell, For the Editors, ‘None Dare Call It Tyranny’ *Weekly Standard*, April 16 2001, Pages 16-17

⁴⁹ Arthur Waldron, ‘A Regime in Crisis’ *Weekly Standard*, May 24 1999, Pages 27-29

⁵⁰ Editorial, ‘China: The Issue’ *Weekly Standard*, February 24 1997, Page 11

⁵¹ Aaron Friedberg, ‘Broken Engagement’ *Weekly Standard*, February 24 1997, Pages 12-13

⁵² Robert Kagan, ‘What China Knows That We Don’t’ *Weekly Standard*, January 20 1997, Pages 22-27

⁵³ Christopher Cox, ‘Land of the Un-Free’ *Weekly Standard*, February 24 1997, Pages 20-22

Robert Kagan, ‘The End of Engagement’ *Weekly Standard*, November 10 1997, Pages 20-22

Editorial, ‘Clinton’s China Syndrome’ *Weekly Standard*, April 27 1998, Pages 7-8

Arthur Waldron, ‘Wishful Thinking on China’ *Weekly Standard*, June 29 1998, Pages 25-29

'Engagement' is clearly not a favoured policy programme, and whilst occasional articles expand on alternative strategies there is no clear consensus as to what American foreign policy should entail.

In several articles of *The Weekly Standard* an unconventional policy programme is advocated, significantly different in format, but not necessarily in attitude, to what the neoconservatives would later be associated with in mainstream press and popular critiques. John Derbyshire proposes a strategy that takes the form of back talking the Chinese regime and taking a stand on key issues. As such he suggests that Chinese culture is shame driven as opposed to by guilt as Western culture. A Chinese person will in this sense feel much more at ease with doing something he himself considers wrong and getting away with it, than a Westerner would. On the contrary, the sense of shame derived from public humiliation in the case of an honest mistake or a mundane accident, is that much worse for the Chinese than the Westerner. Stereotypical as it may seem, Derbyshire suggests that public humiliation of the Chinese regime and exposure of the lies of the government, would likely spur popular dissent and thus fuel the movement to transform and democratise China.⁵⁴

Derbyshire also advocates a strong American standpoint against Chinese interests in places such as Nepal and Taiwan.⁵⁵ As key issues for the Chinese they offer opportunities to show strength that resonates through Chinese society, which leads us to how the example of China helps in an understanding of the neoconservatives' of *The Weekly Standard* attitude towards foreign policy, namely their adverse feelings towards appeasement.

In an editorial following the American surveillance aircraft essentially captured by the Chinese air force, though the specific circumstances remain obscured, Robert Kagan and William Kristol argue that the national humiliation of the United States that was the George W. Bush administration's apologetic response to China is too closely akin to appeasement for comfort. As their argument goes, and this will be a recurrent feature in their take on foreign policy, is that as the world's sole superpower they have a responsibility to assert their influence on other countries to promote values associated with liberal democracy. In the position as sole superpower, humiliation is not something to be taken lightly, but is in fact a form of appeasement. Appeasement, to Kagan and Kristol, is the first step towards armed conflict as it projects the impression, in this case to China, of weakness which provides incentive to further challenge the authority of the United States.⁵⁶

"Needless to say, we do not seek war with China. That is what advocates of appeasement always say about those who argue for standing up to an international bully. But it is the appeasers who wind up leading us into war."⁵⁷

Promoting democracy in China is what can be understood as the major neoconservative policy prescription for American relations with China. Rather than defending contemporary American economic interests in and with China, such as trade and production, these are seen

⁵⁴ John Derbyshire, 'The Chinese, Too, Deserve to Be Free' *Weekly Standard*, February 14 2000, Pages 24-29

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'A National Humiliation' *Weekly Standard*, April 16 2001, Pages 11-16

⁵⁷ *ibid.* p.16

as obstacles to a firm line of action.⁵⁸ The failure of the United States government to connect Chinese politics with American-Chinese trade, is to leading neoconservatives a key reason as to why China has failed to transform into a liberal democracy. In short, the democratic reform movement in China is the victim of American appeasement.⁵⁹

Whereas there is no consensus on what should be done, there is clearly a broad based consensus on what should *not* be done, to appease the Chinese dictatorial regime. 'Containment' is often advocated as the prudent strategy in dealing with China, but there is a certain lack of clarity as to how containment leads to the goal of democratisation.

⁵⁸ William Kristol, 'Democracy in China' *Weekly Standard*, June 25 2001, Page 11

⁵⁹ Michael A. Ledeen, 'No Tyrants Allowed' *Weekly Standard*, February 24 1997, Pages 28-29

Matthew Rees, 'Clinton's China Commerce' *Weekly Standard*, June 1 1998, Pages 24-26

Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'Will China Pay No Price?' *Weekly Standard*, April 30 2001, Pages 9-10

David Tell, For the Editors, 'An Engagement with Tyranny' *Weekly Standard*, April 30 2001, Pages 10-11

3.2.2 Case Example: Iraq

The country that the neoconservatives at *The Weekly Standard* would come to be most closely associated with in the post 9-11 period was Iraq. Following the first Gulf War, the Clinton administrations of 1992-2000 did not pursue as hard lined foreign policy programme towards Iraq as many neoconservatives would have preferred. Consequently *The Weekly Standard* devotes considerable space to advocating alternative strategies to containment, and based on the 1997 editorial and later theme issue entitled ‘Saddam Must Go’ many critics have argued that the neoconservatives used the events of September 11 2001 as catalyst in promoting an as of earlier established agenda. This section reviews the ideas and arguments presented on the topic of Iraq in *The Weekly Standard* over the years 1995-2001 so as to provide a background for comparison when we return to the case of Iraq in the post 9-11 period in a later section.

The Weekly Standard began to take an interest in Iraq in the late 1996 when the Iraqi regime showed an increasing defiance to the international embargo and the partial foreign control of their territory through the ‘no-flight’ areas in the south and the north of Iraq.

Aaron Friedberg expresses the opinion that the Bush administration of the first Gulf War made a mistake in not toppling Saddam Hussein’s government after ousting its forces from Kuwait. Friedberg does not expect the US government or its allies to go into Iraq to finish the job in a foreseeable future. Nor does he see any reason as to why it could be expected that Saddam Hussein’s regime would transform. Rather he suggests that:

“...there is nothing in his long and bloodstained past to suggest that can somehow be transformed or transformed. Saddam is like a shark; he needs to keep moving forward in order to survive.”⁶⁰

Friedberg argues that retaliatory action by the United States and its allies, such as the launching of 44 cruise missiles in response to the Iraqi regime sending forces into Kurdish territories in the north, an event Friedberg’s article is centred around. Friedberg argues that the United States should not seek to justify its actions, but should the need arise, Iraq’s breach of Resolution 688 ought to suffice. To him action of this sort is necessary, and had the risk of civilian casualties not threatened to impair US coalitions, a larger and more decisive attack would have been preferable. To not send a signal of this sort to Saddam Hussein would itself be a sign of appeasement and weakness, which is apparent in Friedberg’s comparison of Saddam Hussein’s troop movements to Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler’s reoccupation of Rhineland in 1936.⁶¹

Two weeks later, the analysis Friedberg proposed, that the air strikes against targets in Iraq was a proper course of action, is questioned in an editorial. What is not questioned is the appropriateness of retaliatory action, but the choice of targets. Whilst the Iraqi actions had been threatening, the American response ought to have been ‘disproportionate’:

⁶⁰ Aaron Friedberg, ‘A Proper Course in Iraq’ *Weekly Standard*, September 16 1996, Page 15

⁶¹ *ibid.* pp.12-15

“...It should have been designed not just to warn and contain Saddam but to hurt him and undermine his control.”⁶²

Another week later, when it becomes clear that what had transpired a month earlier in Iraq had been a collaborative effort between Kurds and the Iraqi National Congress to overthrow Saddam Hussein, that had been stopped dead in its tracks by Iraqi forces, the indignation at *The Weekly Standard* is thinly veiled. Citing Paul Wolfowitz, Michael Ledeen compares the events to those at the Bay of Pigs, and accuses the Clinton administration of failing to provide support for their allies in northern Iraq. Ledeen suggests that American support, such as air strikes against armoured vehicles, would not only have significantly increased the chances of the *coup d'état* to succeed, it would have sent the signal to other opposition groups that the United States were serious about transforming the Middle East.⁶³

The issue mentioned above, where the infamous editorial ‘Saddam Must Go’ which was followed two weeks later by a theme issue with the same title, were published on November 17 and December 1 1997, respectively. *The Weekly Standard* had been largely quiet about issues relating to Iraq for about a year when they returned to the topic with a vengeance. The argument presented in the editorials and articles in these issues goes as follows.

In the editorial entitled ‘Saddam Must Go’ two points are combined to lead to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein needs to be removed from power in Iraq. Firstly, they argue that Saddam Hussein’s government is actively seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Second, they argue that containment of Iraq is becoming increasingly difficult as Saddam Hussein successfully manages to manipulate the United States and its coalition partners from the Gulf War into making concessions that weaken their possibilities of oversight.⁶⁴

Unlike previous issues, where arguments in favour of air strikes and support of local opposition groups, the editorial ‘Saddam Must Go’ argues in favour of the deployment of ground forces. As has already been mentioned, *The Weekly Standard* has argued that the first Gulf War ended prematurely and that the proper course ought to have been to have taken Baghdad.

“We know it seems unthinkable to propose another ground attack to take Baghdad. But it’s time to start thinking the unthinkable.”⁶⁵

The issue of December 1 1997, was itself entitled *Saddam Must Go*, and its editorial *The End of Containment* explicitly argues that in light of the negotiations going on between the Iraqi government and the international community it is clear to *The Weekly Standard* that containment is clearly not working. They argue that what may appear to be a negotiation around a status quo, Iraq is clearly achieving its target which is to decrease foreign oversight of its weapons programmes.

⁶² Editorial, ‘Between Iraq and A Hard Place’ *Weekly Standard*, September 30 1996, Page 11

⁶³ Michael Ledeen, ‘Bill Clinton’s Bay of Pigs’ *Weekly Standard*, October 7 1996, Pages 29-31

⁶⁴ Editorial, ‘Saddam Must Go’ *Weekly Standard*, November 17 1997, Pages 11-12

⁶⁵ *ibid.* p.12

“Containment is no longer enough. Rather than try to contain Saddam, a strategy that has failed, our policy should now aim to remove him from power by any and all means necessary.”⁶⁶

In the issue at hand, on top of the hard lined editorial, a row of contributors make additional points in strengthening the argument as to why the United States should act with force in Iraq. Zalmay M. Khalilzad and Paul Wolfowitz present a six point blueprint as to how the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s government could be achieved. Frederick W. Kagan reiterates the need for ground forces, and Peter W. Rodman explains why the United Nations cannot be expected to play a useful role in the campaign. Fred Barnes, finally, indicts the Republican Party for not taking a stronger stand against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and in favour of action against it.⁶⁷

This marks the beginning of a series of articles on Iraq over the rest of the following year, before *The Weekly Standard* once again goes relatively quiet on the subject.

Apart from a few anonymous editorials, and even fewer articles by frequent contributors, the bulk of *The Weekly Standard*’s writing on the topic of Iraq comes from a single source. Six articles by John R. Bolton during this period therefore stand out. Not so much in content as in frequency, almost half the articles dealing directly with Iraq in the third year of *The Weekly Standard*’s publication are written by Bolton, which is augmented by the fact that Bolton is senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute as well as a former staffer of the George Bush administration.

Bolton’s argument is essentially an attack on the United Nations and on the Clinton administration for its preference for multilateralism over unilateralism. What he suggests boils down to a critique of the shift of policymaking with respect to the Persian Gulf from the White House to the United Nations and its Secretary General Kofi Annan. The problem identified in that transition is that the United Nations is not willing to apply force to Iraq, nor is it serving the interests of the United States.⁶⁸

The charge that the United Nations is unwilling to under any circumstance use force is played out by Bolton as a direct attack on Secretary General Annan. The argument is that of appeasement, that any negotiation with Saddam Hussein is in fact strengthening the Iraqi position and gives the regime legitimacy, thus allowing it to further chip away at the sanctions the coalition forces and the international community imposed following the Gulf War.⁶⁹ Secretary General Annan is even depicted as a marionette dancing at the skilled hands of Saddam Hussein as his puppeteer.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Editorial, ‘The End of Containment’ *Weekly Standard*, December 1 1997, Page 13

⁶⁷ Zalmay M. Khalilzad and Paul Wolfowitz, ‘Overthrow Him’ *Weekly Standard*, December 1, Pages 14-15

Frederick W. Kagan, ‘Not By Air Alone’ *Weekly Standard*, December 1, Pages 15-16

Peter W. Rodman, ‘U.N. Paralysis’ *Weekly Standard*, December 1, Pages 17-18

Fred Barnes, ‘The GOP, M.I.A.’ *Weekly Standard*, December 1, Pages 18-19

⁶⁸ John R. Bolton, ‘Adrift in the Gulf’ *Weekly Standard*, March 23 1998, Pages 10-14

⁶⁹ John R. Bolton, ‘Kofi Hour’ *Weekly Standard*, March 9 1998, Pages 12-13

⁷⁰ John R. Bolton, ‘Adrift in the Gulf’ *Weekly Standard*, March 23 1998, Page 12

Against the alleviation of the economic sanctions against Iraq that were imposed during the Gulf War, Bolton argues that the purpose of the sanctions is to assist the UN Special Commission and the weapon inspection programme. However, Bolton argues that the international community and the Clinton administration fails to understand this mutually supportive role of sanctions and inspections, and when viewed as discrete programmes the conclusion that economic sanctions are highly repressive and the cause of suffering for innocent Iraqis is close at hand. Rather than alleviating sanctions, Bolton argues that the suffering is caused by the policy choices of the Baath regime in that their allocation of revenue from 'oil-for-food' schemes is discriminating and instrumental. These choices are thus rewarded by the United Nations when sanctions further undermined.⁷¹

The United Nations is not the only party involved that is criticised by Bolton. The US Congress along with the Clinton administration are both accused of an inability to act. To Bolton, Congress has done little to reprimand a president that is failing to act in the interest of his country.⁷² In short, what is at risk in negotiating with an adversary is credibility, and Bolton clearly fears that this is once again an attribute that American foreign policy is losing.

“If we are seen bending the knee to Iraq, our credibility, restored by President Reagan’s rearmament and President Bush’s military and diplomatic conduct of Desert Storm, will again be tarnished. To allies and opponents alike, it will seem that the United States, in a flashback to the Carter administration 20 years ago, is undergoing another humiliation in the desert.”⁷³

To Bolton then, Saddam Hussein is clearly winning the game played between him, President Clinton and Secretary General Kofi Annan. He suggests that there are three approaches to dealing with Iraq, two of which are doomed to fail. ‘Containment’, deterring weapons proliferation and limiting such access, and the so called ‘Whack-a-Mole’ approach, the Clinton administration policy of support for weapons inspection and economic sanctions enforced by occasional air strikes when the above is disobeyed, are to Bolton flawed and documented failures. Rather, his argument lends itself to the position that Saddam Hussein’s regime must be overthrown.⁷⁴

In Robert Kagan’s comparison of Saddam Hussein of the 1990s to Adolf Hitler of the 1930s, he draws the conclusion that “...nothing succeeds like success...”⁷⁵, and notes that this is not only true for dictators, as Hitler himself had noted, but also to superpowers. Kagan thus suggests that a firm foreign policy with respect to Iraq and a “...successful intervention...”, would not only serve to change the regime of Iraq, but also to “...revolutionize the strategic situation in the Middle East, in ways both tangible and intangible, and all to the benefit of American interests”⁷⁶.

⁷¹ John R. Bolton, ‘The U.N. Rewards Saddam’ *Weekly Standard*, December 15 1998

⁷² John R. Bolton, ‘Congress Versus Iraq’ *Weekly Standard*, January 19 1998, Pages 16-17

⁷³ John R. Bolton, ‘Saddam Wins’ *Weekly Standard*, August 24 1998, Pages 14

⁷⁴ *ibid.* pp. 13-15

John R. Bolton, ‘Surrendering to Saddam’ *Weekly Standard*, September 7 1998, Pages 17-18

⁷⁵ Robert Kagan, ‘Saddam’s Impending Victory’ *Weekly Standard*, February 2 1998, Page 22

⁷⁶ *ibid.* p.25

3.2.3 Defence

If it is not already clear from the discussion above of how *The Weekly Standard* has written of select countries during the period 1995-2001, they do not perceive the world to be a particularly safe place for American interests. In an article in 1997 reviewing the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review, Frederick W. Kagan argues that this report is simply not based on reality, but on wishful thinking. He argues, and this is indicative of the general position of *The Weekly Standard*, as is further compounded by the examples below, that the assumption that the world is a relatively peaceful place since the end of the Cold War, and that this provides a 'strategic pause' for American military involvement in foreign policy, is simply wrong. Such an understanding of the world, according to Kagan, leads to the dismantling of US military capability, which is in turn further exacerbated by the over reliance on technology to replace bodies on the ground. The 'strategic pause' is to Kagan if anything an opportunity to transform the US military organisation, a costly but to him necessary enterprise, rather than an opportunity to shift spending elsewhere.⁷⁷

In an editorial *The Weekly Standard* notes some disparities in American politics with regards to defence spending and American foreign policy in the camps of conservatives and liberals alike. Whilst conservatives during the Cold War had favoured an aggressive containment of the Soviet Union and had been willing to let this be evident in defence spending, they have since then backed away from active interventionism. Rather, the editors note that their contemporary conservatives are more likely to advance a military intended to be used exclusively in defence of 'vital national security interests' while remaining prepared to spend money on a defence they seem unprepared to put to use. The liberals on the other hand have a history of non-interventionist ideas that have been abandoned in favour of what the editors call 'neo-Wilsonian' foreign policy, that is interventions to stop humanitarian disasters such as the civil war in Bosnia, famine in Somalia and genocide in Rwanda and Burundi. Contrary to the conservatives, the liberals are advocating interventions without providing the military with the necessary defence budget to accommodate such a foreign policy programme.⁷⁸

This is reiterated by Robert Kagan who argues that defence spending is not guided by studies of US strategic requirements, but by a need for a balanced budget. Rather he argues that since the fall of the Soviet Union, policymakers seem to live under the imagination that Francis Fukuyama's idea of a world of liberal democracy for an unforeseeable future, whereas Kagan argues that such a world is very much a work in progress, and that "...preserving the current benevolent international environment may be less expensive than fighting the Cold War, but not that much less".⁷⁹

Frederick W. Kagan points out that in the discussion over defence spending, it is important to think four dimensionally, that is to consider time a factor. As such to neglect the armed forces, and an active foreign policy programme, in times of relative prosperity and peace is to also neglect those armed forces for an unforeseeable and unpredictable future.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Frederick W. Kagan, 'Wishful Thinking on War' *Weekly Standard*, December 15 1997, Pages 27-29

⁷⁸ Gary Schmitt, 'The Defense Deficit' *Weekly Standard*, March 18 1996, Pages 30-32

Editorial, 'Spend More on Defense' *Weekly Standard*, July 29 1996, Pages 9-10

⁷⁹ Robert Kagan, 'Don't Cut Defense' *Weekly Standard*, May 12 1997, Pages 14-16

⁸⁰ Frederick W. Kagan, 'The Armed Forces We Deserve' *Weekly Standard*, June 1 1998, Pages 27-29

In several articles it is argued that the need for strategic superiority is vital and that the cost to achieve such through a transformation of the military organisation cannot be avoided, but that any cost to achieve national security is a cost worth while. It is also within this context that the American missile defence system, going back to the Reagan Administration, is discussed, namely as a strategic necessity.⁸¹

Charles Krauthammer links the discussion of a missile defence system to the failure of arms control. At its simplest level the argument goes that non proliferation treaties are respected by the ‘good guys’ who do not pose a threat to begin with, but breached by the ‘bad guys’ who are likely to use their weapons of mass destruction.⁸²

The George W. Bush Administration covered by this portion of the paper did not avoid attack either on defence issues. William Kristol and Robert Kagan questions George W. Bush’s commitment to defence spending, citing a decision to not follow through on a promised research and development budget increase. They repeat the idea that to reform and adapt the military to new threats significant spending is required, and that it is the responsibility of the US president to secure such funds.⁸³

Gary Schmitt and Tom Donnelly present the recently elected president’s defence position in a positive light, arguing that in making national defence an issue in the presidential campaign and choosing Donald Rumsfeld and secretary of defence, the George W. Bush Administration is in a good position to honour its proposed policy programme.⁸⁴

However, in a particularly interesting editorial, Robert Kagan and William Kristol urge Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz to resign in protest against the deterioration of the defence budget. The criticism of the George W. Bush Administration is obvious, as Kagan and Kristol argues that at the current spending the military cannot be expected to adapt for the future, but in the best of cases merely be maintained whilst conditions around it changes, thus rendering it eventually incapable of performing its intended tasks. This is also an editorial where writers such as Kagan and Kristol cement their position as ‘Neocons’ in statements such as:

“To preserve our superpower status, to remain the guarantor of international peace and stability, and to defend our own vital interests, the United States must be able to fight and defeat different aggressors in different parts of the world—and at the same time.”⁸⁵

⁸¹ Frederick W. Kagan, ‘More Bang And More Bucks’ *Weekly Standard*, Jan 25 1999, Pages 31-33

Matthew Rees, ‘Going Ballistic’ *Weekly Standard*, February 8 1999, Pages 14-15

David Tell, for the Editors, ‘Spend it on Defense’ *Weekly Standard*, August 9 1999, Pages 11-12

Lawrence F. Kaplan, ‘Who Now Loathes the Military’ *Weekly Standard*, September 27 1999, Pages 13-16

Robert Kagan, for the Editors, ‘Bush’s Missile Defense Triumph’ *Weekly Standard*, June 26 2000, Pages 11-12

⁸² Charles Krauthammer, ‘Arms Control: The End of an Illusion’ *Weekly Standard*, November 1 1999, Pages 21-27

⁸³ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, ‘No Defense?’ *Weekly Standard*, February 19 2001, Pages 9-10

⁸⁴ Gary Schmitt and Tom Donnelly, ‘Spend More on Defense – Now’ *Weekly Standard*, January 22 2001, Pages 25-26

⁸⁵ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, ‘No Defense’ *Weekly Standard*, July 23 2001, Page 12

Tom Donnelly acknowledges that the George W. Bush Administration inherited a crippled military from the consecutive Clinton Administrations, yet emphasises in his commentary on the defence budget that this problem is compounded rather than remedied by the limited expansion of military spending.⁸⁶

James Webb criticises what he perceives as a harmful implementation of political correctness in the military. The issue under attack is the reason for admitting women into the armed forces, a reason that according to Webb is a foolhardy pursuit of equality. Webb raises the traditional issues, that introducing women in the military complicates the expedition of military justice, by introducing a double standard, as well as that it complicates relations between co-workers in isolated locations and pressed situations. However, where he focuses his critique is on the way the pursuit of equality is used as an attack on military culture.⁸⁷

This attack he says, goes back 30 years to the Vietnam War where the elite was exempt from service by a draft system that did not affect those enrolled in higher education. In Webb's argument, this led to an emasculation of the social and political elite, which in turn led to a lack of commitment to the military and an attitude that the opinions and perspectives of military commanders were not of significance in reforming the military. The result, according to Webb, was the aforementioned introduction of women into the military organisation in the pursuit of equality without regard for the practical problems. To Webb this was clearly a mistake, and he argues that policymakers need to start listening to military commanders. However, the underlying logic of Webb's argument is that the military should not be the scene of social engineering experiments, and that its role should first and foremost be that of achieving foreign policy ambitions and providing a national defence.⁸⁸

The problem for the military to maintain itself as a discrete cultural entity, fundamentally separated from the wider American culture is reiterated by A.J. Bacevich in an article on a female Air Force officer discharged as a consequence of, amongst other issues, illicit sexual behaviour. Bacevich's point is that the case illustrates a widening gap between civilian and military purposes. That sexual liberalism is on the rise in civilian society is taken for granted, but what is pointed out is that the military's sexual prudishness and advocacy of restraint is a recent phenomenon most likely a consequence of it regarding itself as inverse mirror image of civilian society. Sexual license, not restraint, has always been the hallmark of the warrior class in all cultures. The problem that Bacevich then emphasises is the need for military professionalism, or a 'military culture' that is acknowledged not only within the military organisation but by civilian elites as well.⁸⁹ *The Weekly Standard* features similar arguments on other cases of disputed gender discrimination.⁹⁰

The issue of women in the armed forces is however not the only way in which writers for *The Weekly Standard* perceives the emasculation of the military organisation in recent years. Quoting sensitivity training, the lack of respect for the traditions of combat units, and political correctness as to how drill instructors are allowed to handle recruits, Matt Labash

⁸⁶ Tom Donnelly, 'Cheap Hawks' *Weekly Standard*, June 11 2001, Pages 14-15

⁸⁷ James Webb, 'The War on the Military Culture' *Weekly Standard*, January 18 1997, Pages 17-22

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ A.J. Bacevich, 'The De-Moralization of the Military' *Weekly Standard*, June 9 1997, Pages 24-26

⁹⁰ Matt Labash, 'Pulling Wings Off the Warriors' *Weekly Standard*, May 18 1998, Pages 22-30

Kate O'Beirne, 'Babes in Arms' *Weekly Standard*, May 15 2000, Pages 36-38

paints a sorry picture of the US military in 2001. In short, the argument goes that the trends in civilian society of a celebration of individuality and self expression, inescapably leaks into the armed forces as its recruits and civilian policymakers are moulded by the society around them. Conversely, the units praised by Labash as having been able to maintain their identity of a strong and proud warrior class, such as the US Marine Corps, are also the ones that do not fail to fill their recruitment quotas. In Labash's argument the military has responded to the problems of filling recruitment targets by adapting the service to suit the wishes of its target market, youth ages 18-24, creating the identity crisis that Labash identifies as at the heart of the issue.⁹¹

The reasoning above, that the 'warrior culture' of the armed forces is being eroded, be it through the integration of women, or a wider emasculation as civilian society leaves an increasingly larger footprint, is frequently reiterated in *The Weekly Standard*.⁹²

In summary then the neoconservatives of *The Weekly Standard* view the role of the military as a guarantor of US supremacy and global hegemon. It is repeatedly emphasised that only American military power and a willingness to use it can provide national security for the United States, as well as encourage a benevolent world order. The idea is that liberal democracy, peace and stability and its proliferation is a work in progress, a process that is not spontaneous but created. One could of course view it as an enforced or coerced process towards peace and stability of a Roman model, but that would fail to encompass the emic perspective, that the writers for *The Weekly Standard* believe in the project of creating a peaceful world order. No doubt are they fully aware that the interests of the United States are not always congruent with those of other countries, not necessarily even with those of their allies, hence the need for strategic supremacy. They do however not view themselves as dominator, but rather as leader, as hegemon rather than Empire.

Whilst this position is intact in the post-September 11 period covered by this paper, it of course becomes more focused, and the enemy is given a name. Hence idea that the 1990s, following the end of the Cold War was only a temporary period of relative peace and prosperity frequently acknowledged by *The Weekly Standard*, and not a sustainable new world order, was confirmed by the events on September 11 2001. The threats discussed above became all the more imaginable and assumed a sense of reality, and whether or not the neoconservative analysis as it was presented in *The Weekly Standard* or in any of the other media outlets for neoconservative ideas were indeed correct is questionable, and there is certainly no such consensus, quite the contrary. However, their analysis has seemed to gain significant traction and their position on Iraq is often cited as the reason the George W. Bush Administration pursued a military strike against Iraq in 2003.

This paper does not seek to come to a verdict of the validity of contemporary foreign policy issues, and to discuss the events that have followed the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in 2001 is not appropriate in this section of this paper as it deals with issues not tainted by those events. Before we conclude the period 1995-2001 it is prudent to discuss a

⁹¹ Matt Labash, 'The New Army' *Weekly Standard*, April 30 2001, Pages 20-29

⁹² Tucker Carlson, 'Emasculating the Marines' *Weekly Standard*, February 17 1997, Pages 27-29

Matt Labash, 'How the Military Indoctrinates Diversity' *Weekly Standard*, August 18 1997, Pages 23-27

series of issues not related to foreign policy in order to illustrate the width of neoconservative thinking in *The Weekly Standard* during this period.

3.2.4 Multilateralism

In recent years the George W. Bush Administration has been criticised for taking American foreign policy in a unilateralist direction and for shunning multilateral endeavours. In this brief section the position of *The Weekly Standard* is outlined and in short it can be said that it is positive towards multilateralism when and only when it allows the United States to assume a leadership position, but highly critical in cases where the United States are expected to partly give up its sovereignty.

An issue that arose in the post-Cold War era was the possibility of an expansion of NATO to include some of the former Soviet states. The editors of *The Weekly Standard* consider this expansion a “...logical follow-on to our long and successful struggle against Soviet communism...”⁹³, and they argue that such an expansion is a natural step for America to take in securing peace in Europe. In short, they perceive the expansion of NATO’s sphere of influence as a way of extending American influence, not only in Europe where the expansion would occur, but also in the rest of the world:

“The enlargement of NATO, in short, is only one piece in an overall strategy of bolstering and extending America’s global leadership.”⁹⁴

Jeffrey Gedmin sees the role of the United States as NATO’s unquestioned leader. However, he questions whether American politicians are able to handle the responsibility and suggests that whereas the typical American doubts about the commitment of its European allies do not seem presently justified, this is not the current threat to NATO, but rather the United States unwillingness to commit ground forces in their joint enterprises. In this sense Gedmin argues that a leader that is not willing to risk their troops is not likely to be followed.⁹⁵

The same attitude can be seen in reverse, in their lack of appreciation for the International Criminal Court (ICC), and other international bodies attempting to negotiate multilaterally according to a set of rules not under the discretionary control of the United States.

In an article titled *The International Criminal Court Must Die*, David Frum explains the problem for the United States in accepting an international body with legislative power over American actions. The problem is simple, it challenges American sovereignty. However, in this case the term sovereignty requires some explanation as it does not only include legislative and executive power over their domestic territory as the term is typically approximated, but in the case of Frum American sovereignty also includes the right to defend American interests abroad. He neatly sums up his view on both American internationalism and incompatibility with the ICC:

“Real internationalism is, now and always, internationalism that defends and vindicates American interests and American constitutional values. It’s no paradox

⁹³ Editorial, ‘NATO: The More the Merrier’ *Weekly Standard*, July 21 1997, Page 9

⁹⁴ *ibid.* p.10

⁹⁵ Jeffrey Gedmin, ‘Toasting NATO’ *Weekly Standard*, April 19 1999, Pages 14-16

at all: Those who most want America to play a constructive role in the world must most vehemently insist that the International Criminal Court be junked.”⁹⁶

In the above cited article and others the problem of the phrasing of the ICC charter are expanded upon. The idea, according to the writers of *The Weekly Standard*, is to be able to prosecute officials ordering military attacks on civilian targets. However, many actions of peacekeeping forces, along with American forces pursuing American interests, take place in civilian settings where civilian casualties are an unfortunate reality. Hence, they suggest that albeit claims of the unlikely prosecuting of American servicemen in the ICC, there is a clear disparity between the word of the law and its spirit. They suggest that whereas it is easy to distinguish between ‘war criminals’ in a mundane setting, it is less clear in the legislative terminology of the ICC.⁹⁷

In the case of the ICC’s actions against former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, Jeremy Rabkin identifies the potential for the ICC charter as a tool for international conflict as opposed to diplomacy. With the loose charter of the ICC and the many grey zones where interpretation dictates who is a ‘war criminal’ and who is merely a statesman, many neoconservatives fear that the ICC provides militarily weak, yet hostile, countries an opportunity to attack American officials. From their perspective, the United States would have the incentive and the capability to retaliate in force against any country seeking to prosecute American statesmen or servicemen. In short, their take on international law is that it is best left to politicians to define as needed rather than leave it in the hands of lawyers and judges as this would restrain future government responses to unforeseeable scenarios, thus hindering American sovereignty.⁹⁸

The neoconservative attitude towards multilateralism in the second half of the 1990s as found in *The Weekly Standard* is quite simply summarised as reserved towards any multilateral project that does not recognise the United States as a leading figure. In the two cases discussed here, those of NATO and the International Criminal Court, that attitude is obvious. In the case of NATO where they identify the United States as its undisputed leader, the writers of *The Weekly Standard* are positive and conclude that it can still, in the post Cold War period, serve the interests of the United States through its leadership. In the case of the ICC however, which charter was written explicitly to avoid any country in an executive leadership position, that attitude leads to a different conclusion. As the United States is denied leadership, or even the veto right which to many neoconservatives is the only thing making American involvement in the United Nations tolerable, they conclude that the ICC is certainly not beneficial to American interests.

⁹⁶ David Frum, ‘The International Criminal Court Must Die’ *Weekly Standard*, August 10/August 17 1998, Page 29

⁹⁷ *ibid.* pp.27-29

Jeremy Rabkin, ‘This Court Would Be Criminal’ *Weekly Standard*, June 26 2000, Pages 19-20

⁹⁸ Elliot Abrams, ‘Free Pinochet?’ *Weekly Standard*, November 2 1998, Pages 15-16

Jeremy Rabkin, ‘First They Came For Pinochet...’ *Weekly Standard*, November 12 1998, Pages 23-29

3.3 The Culture War: The Moral Fabric of America 1995-2001

3.3.1 Education

The major educational issue advocated in *The Weekly Standard* is that of school choice. School choice does to a significant extent in the American case mean support for Catholic schools, and in the debate around educational reform, which reached all the way to the Supreme Court as it was seen to violate the First Amendment to the American constitution in that it prohibits the government to finance religious activities. Michael W. McConnell turns this argument on its head and argues that the First Amendment was not, at the time of its composing, intended to prohibit or at least impede religious groups per se, but rather to prohibit or impede special interest groups. At the time of the political battles that led to the amendment the concern was for the undue influence of immigrants and Roman Catholicism, but as McConnell argues the problem today is the reversed. The educational profession, in a position to unduly influence the youth is according to McConnell radically secular:

“They are convinced that teaching their own cherished beliefs in the public schools (racial and gender equality, tolerance of diverse lifestyles, and so forth) is an education in true “Americanism,” which is fair and neutral toward all groups in society, while nonpublic schools are “sectarian.” In Justice Brennan’s words, public schools impart “a heritage common to all American groups,” while nonpublic schools “indoctrinate” children in “divisive or separatist” ideologies.”⁹⁹

Thus McConnell argues that whereas other Western democracies have embraced educational choice as a guarantee of pluralism, the educational professionals is to him the ones naïvely believing that a secular perspective can by itself guarantee that pluralism.¹⁰⁰

Some of the suggestions made by writers in *The Weekly Standard* on educational reform echo strongly what the early neoconservatives for the conservative movement at the time, it provides it with arguments that are no dogmatic, but persuasive nonetheless. In two articles by Chester E. Finn from Manhattan Institute, the second of which is in collaboration with Nina Shokraii Rees from the Heritage Foundation, propositions are made for reform of the educational system. The particular issue that is being confronted is the same idea that the early neoconservatives opposed in social engineering, namely that a system of such magnitude is far too complex to be run from top to bottom. The suggestion is to maintain public support for the educational system but shed some of the red tape, focus on the individual child and a transparent National Assessment scheme.¹⁰¹

An example of such reform is that of Jeb Bush’s Florida where a voucher system has been applied to combat the poor quality of public schools. The system allows children attending some of the worst a grant if they change to an alternative school, including private and religious schools. What is problematic with this solution as a conservative strategy is that Tucker Carlson points out that if only passed popular scrutiny because Jeb Bush was able to

⁹⁹ Michael W. McConnell, ‘School Choice in America’ *Weekly Standard*, December 21 1998, Page 25

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* pp. 21-25

¹⁰¹ Chester E. Finn Jr., ‘Getting Serious About Schools’ *Weekly Standard*, January 25 1999, Pages 27-30

Chester E. Finn Jr. and Nina Shokraii Rees, ‘Flex Those Ed Muscles’ *Weekly Standard*, April 5/12 1999, Page 17

avoid addressing it as a ‘voucher’ system. Whilst Carlson acknowledges that it would likely not have passed in Florida had the general population thought of it as a voucher system, given the stigma attached to the concept, he still maintains that in the long term a political strategy is not sustainable if it cannot be advocated in plain text.¹⁰²

Chester E. Finn Jr., the most frequent education commentator at *The Weekly Standard*, realises in 1999 that the propositions he had advocated over the past years were not going to pass in Congress. Rather, he argues that the educational system is likely to remain intact in the foreseeable future, or until an education focused president is elected. Finn’s prediction from the same year is that George W. Bush would be such a candidate.¹⁰³

To the contributors to *The Weekly Standard* the public school system is failing because it has the wrong priorities. Rather than focusing on teaching skills such as at an elementary level reading and writing, sentence structure and grammar, the public educational system serves a different agenda. In short it promotes the values of the liberal middle class, the values of the liberal arts university educated teachers and policymakers.¹⁰⁴ Some of the contributors blame the universities for producing biased teachers, more interested in building multiculturally minded citizens than equipping the children with the tools they need to become productive citizens.¹⁰⁵

The failure of the public educational system is underscored by the popularity of scholarships that finance alternative, private and religious schools. In the several articles raising literacy as a major failure of the public educational system, alternatives are raised that whilst they do not seek to solve the problem by increased public funding, they don’t advocate a decrease in funding neither. Rather, they point to cases where parental involvement, such as in choosing what school to send their children to have had positive results. They also point to the better track record of Catholic schools in terms of literacy and other indicators, and as an alternative already in place as opposed to the private schools a voucher system would generate in the longer run.¹⁰⁶

In short the problems that *The Weekly Standard* has raised concerning education are fairly conventional. They are concerned with the knowledge basis of primary and secondary school graduates in the ‘hard’ subjects such as the natural sciences, mathematics and above all English grammar and spelling. What is less conventional is where they perceive said problem to have originated, namely from postmodernism which would have it that truth does not exist and that favours perspectives over facts. This argument of course closely resembles that raised by the early neoconservatives about the influence of the ‘New Class’ and their nihilism.

¹⁰² Tucker Carlson, ‘Bush Beats the Blob’ *Weekly Standard*, May 17 1999, Pages 21-24

¹⁰³ Chester E. Finn Jr., ‘A Real Education President’ *Weekly Standard*, September 20 1999, Pages 28-29

Chester E. Finn Jr., ‘The GOP Congress Fails Again’ *Weekly Standard*, November 29 1999, Pages 14-16

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Caldwell, ‘Gore Curriculum’ *Weekly Standard*, June 7 1999, Pages 15-17

Catherine Siepp, ‘Public School Confidential!’ *Weekly Standard*, October 16 2000 Pages 26-29

¹⁰⁵ Lynne V. Cheney, ‘Who Teaches the Teachers?’ *Weekly Standard*, August 9 1999, Pages 14-17

¹⁰⁶ John J. DiIulio Jr., ‘My School Choice: Literacy First’ *Weekly Standard*, October 19 1998, Pages 23-26

Edmund Lynch, ‘The Million Student March’ *Weekly Standard*, May 3 1999, Pages 17-18

Chester E. Finn Jr., Bruno V. Manno, & Gregg Vanourek, ‘What if all Schools were Schools of Choice’ *Weekly Standard*, June 19 2000, Pages 26-29

3.3.2 Abortion and Euthanasia

The debate over abortion is a frequently reoccurring issue in the magazine and has been so since the very beginning. Another issue that is closely akin to abortion is that of euthanasia. Whilst euthanasia is discussed less frequently it is also a topic that *The Weekly Standard* is not prepared to let go of, and it is intimately linked to abortion in the neoconservative analysis.

In the editorial of the second ever issue of the magazine, an editorial entitled ‘Taking Abortion Seriously’, David Tell urges the reader and the Republican Party to refocus the abortion debate to the issue that an abortion is the taking of life. This, he says, is an opportunity for the Republican Party to rejuvenate itself and allow its constituency to see its true colours by taking a firm pro-life position. He argues that the fashion at the time was for politicians to wave the issue around in a non-committing way so as to not offend either their pro-life constituents or pro-choice donors. Rather, he argues, the task of Republican politicians should be to work actively to change American values on the issue, by themselves being committed to the pro-life cause.¹⁰⁷

Two weeks later, Paul Greenberg compares abortion to slavery and picks up on their common breach of the foundation of the American legal system:

“Those unalienable rights to life and liberty Mr. Jefferson mentioned in the Declaration seem to have been eclipsed by a sad emphasis on the pursuit of happiness. And for all the happiness that the unbridled right to an abortion is supposed to make possible, no political question since slavery seems so heavy with guilt, and its denial.”¹⁰⁸

This ‘culture of death’ to use Greenberg’s title, refers back to the early neoconservatives’ concern with nihilism as the consequence of the corrupted liberalism of the ‘New Class’. However, Greenberg pushes the point further and talks of a ‘slippery slope’ that is not new in human history, and along which the pursuit of happiness has slid before. Nazi Germany he points out was a consequence of enlightenment eugenics of the 1920s from where he picks the concept “...*liebensunwerten Lebens*, or life not worth living...”¹⁰⁹.

It is within this context of a ‘slippery slope’ that *The Weekly Standard*’s confrontation with the issue of euthanasia is interesting. In a fierce critique of Judge Stephen Reinhardt’s, a rational suicide advocate, defence of a constitutional amendment dealing with the ‘right to die’, David Tell links the possibility to end the life of a patient suffering terminal illness to ending the life of not only an unborn child, but more importantly an infant born with physical or mental disabilities. This is clearly not what the law intends, but it is precisely how these arguments of moral degradation goes, that a well intended act today has devastating legal implications tomorrow.¹¹⁰

The debate over partial birth abortion led *The Weekly Standard* to bring back the discussion of eugenics into that of abortion, as they argued that the current abortion practice allowed for a

¹⁰⁷ David Tell, ‘Taking Abortion Seriously’ *Weekly Standard*, September 25 1995, Pages 5-7

¹⁰⁸ Paul Greenberg, ‘Culture of Death’ *Weekly Standard*, October 9 1995, Page 14

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* pp.14-16

¹¹⁰ David Tell, ‘Euthanasia Horror’ *Weekly Standard*, March 27 1996, Pages 9-11

selective process that leads to unproportional abortions of handicapped children. Prenatal testing offers the benefit of allowing parents to plan for a problematic birth ahead, but Tucker Carlson argues that in reality it is chiefly used to spot physically and mentally handicapped children which subsequently leads to the choice of late abortion.¹¹¹

However, the neoconservative position presented within *The Weekly Standard* is not only one of pro-life. David Frum presents a position that embraces a pro-choice position, albeit different from mainstream ideas of pro-choice. His concern is that the Republican Party has long been dominated by a minority of pro-life advocates whilst the figures for the opinions of Republican voters suggests that there is a pro-choice majority. This he understands as an indicator that the situation is not one of black or white. He suggests that most Republican voters think differently of abortion and in particular on legal abortion than the pro-choice advocates and supporters of the Democratic Party. Whereas they seek a constitutional amendment to guarantee the mother's right to choose, Frum suggests that the Republican voter's pro-choice idea is more complex. Essentially what Frum argues is that the Republican pro-choice majority recognises that an abortion in the very beginning of a pregnancy is different from a later abortion.¹¹²

On the same track, Noemie Emery suggests an approach for the Republican Party that allows it to regain a viable position within the debate that in turn allows it to counter the liberal pro-choice terminology that Emery sees as undermining the moral fabric, that is to conceal abortion behind a medical terminology that she sees as "...crafted to kill moral nerves"¹¹³.

Rather her approach for the Republican position, that embraces the majority that is in favour of legal abortion of some sort, is as follows:

- “1. The Republican party is the party that thinks abortion is wrong. We say it is wrong, and we plan to reduce it through aggressive, though voluntary and non-coercive, means.
2. We regard our disagreements as disputes about tactics, over means to one end.
3. We intend to address abortion not as one issue only, but as a symptom and cause of a social disorder, a sign of a frayed and decaying cultural context, in which the value of life is at risk.”¹¹⁴

As this is a position designed to combined idealism with the pragmatism of day-to-day politics, from the perspective of a commentator not in a high-powered political position, the actions on the political field are somewhat less idealistic.

¹¹¹ Tucker Carlson, 'Eugenics, American Style: The Abortion of Down Syndrome Babies' *Weekly Standard*, December 2 1996, Pages 20-25

¹¹² David Frum, 'Why Pro-Choice Failed' *Weekly Standard*, December 4 1995, Page 9

¹¹³ Noemie Emery, 'Abortion and the Republican Party: A New Approach' *Weekly Standard*, December 25 1995, Page 29

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* p.27

In a special issue on ‘the issue that won’t go away’, David Tell, Fred Barnes and William Kristol all have articles specifying how a pro-life position can be used to further the Republican Party. What Kristol argues from a point of statistics and Tell using examples is that the problem with a pro-life focus for the Republican Party is that whilst the American population are pro-life, or at least not completely pro-choice, they are largely ignorant as to how radical the current abortion legislation is. Fred Barnes shows how widening the discussion to include partial birth abortion would offer considerable partisan advantages.¹¹⁵ To Barnes this is a problem caused by contemporary media’s pro-choice alignment. He argues that if reporters were to spend as much time and effort dissecting the pro-choice position as they do with the pro-life camp the situation would most likely be different.¹¹⁶

Dealing further with abortion in a bipartisan setting is Matthew Rees, pointing towards Al Gore’s changing position on the issue. Rees outlines Gore’s political career as one starting with a pro-life position and changing towards a weak pro-choice position as the political circumstances changed around him.¹¹⁷

In short, the abortion issue as it is dealt with in *The Weekly Standard* can be seen to be divided between two only partially overlapping perspectives, those of ethics and politics. On the one hand, writers in the magazines have argued against abortion on the grounds that it leads down a slippery slope where grave horrors lurk at the bottom. On the other, which is arguably the dominant, the writers debate ways in which a political perspective on abortion can be incorporated into the Republican politicking position, where the aim is not to appeal to ideals but to forge a position that appeals to the widest possible constituency. Returning in 2000, Emery argues that thanks to the general public’s transition towards a pro-life position the two positions become combinable, that Republican pro-choice advocates should take a stand against the more radical pro-abortion position of the political left, thus unifying the Republican Party: “There should be a political price to be paid for being too careless with life. Republicans ought to make Democrats pay it.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ David Tell, ‘The Issue They Want to Go Away’, Fred Barnes, ‘Partial Birth Politics’, William Kristol, ‘Roe Must Go’, *Weekly Standard*, January 19 1998, Pages 7-12

¹¹⁶ Fred Barnes, ‘A Pro-Choice GOP?’ *Weekly Standard*, March 29 1999, Pages 14-15

¹¹⁷ Matthew Rees, ‘Al Gore’s Great Abortion Flip-Flop’ *Weekly Standard*, March 29 1999, Pages 27-29

¹¹⁸ Noemie Emery, ‘An Appeal to GOP Pro-Choicers’ *Weekly Standard*, July 3 2000, Page 29

3.3.3 Crime and capital punishment

Another ingredient in what can be labelled moral decay is the prevalence of crime. This section explores how *The Weekly Standard* discusses the various elements of crime prevention, deterrence and rehabilitation schemes.

In 1997 contributors to *The Weekly Standard* does acknowledge that the 1990s saw improvements in crime rates, but they maintain a position analogous to that of their contemporary Americans that crime is one of the major problems in society. This does not mean that they give credit to the authorities for bringing crime down, but there are competing arguments as to why crime has dropped and suggestions as to how to bring it down further.

Whilst the Republicans lost the presidential post in 1992, Michael Barone still attributes the decrease in crime rates to key Republican victories. By seizing control of Congress in 1994, thus enabling them to reform welfare and Rudi Giuliani's 'Zero Tolerance' policy as mayor of New York, Barone argues that Republican's managed to actually change the character of society in a way that reduced not only crime rates but also welfare dependency.¹¹⁹

John J. DiIulio Jr. is less enthusiastic about the drop in crime rates, and his argument is that they are merely a pyrrhic victory and nothing to celebrate. He suggests that crime has dropped as a consequence of a hard-line public policy combined with citizens choosing to protect themselves by gathering in privately guarded gated communities. His sentiment towards the quality of life under such conditions is clear in the following statement:

“An America in which crime is partially conquered by millions of citizens’ moving or locking themselves away from the rest of society while over 5 million criminals are in custody on any given day may be the best we can do for now, but it is hardly a state of affairs deserving of celebration.”¹²⁰

By 2000 Andrew Peyton Thomas notes that for the first time since the 1960s crime is not perceived as a national issue in the presidential election campaigning. What Peyton Thomas suggests is that crime could serve as a key issue in generating votes for the Republican Party if conservative politicians had the courage to discuss policy in their own terms without feeling obliged to incorporate liberal concerns into the argument. A hard-line policy on crime would distinguish conservative politicians from the Democrats and reinvigorate ‘crime’ as a key electoral issue.¹²¹

With regards to criminals serving prison sentences, *The Weekly Standard* is aggravated by a court ruling in 1998 that allow inmates to sue the correctional department on charges of discrimination due to handicaps. As the writers predicted, and confirmed, the possibility has put prisons in an impossible position, where the threat of law-suits make them vulnerable in conflicts with inmates. Whereas the original court decision was intended to correct a perhaps erroneous decision of the prison management, and perhaps an attempt to show how inmates

¹¹⁹ Michael Barone, ‘The Good News is the Good News is Right’ *Weekly Standard*, September 8 1997, Pages 23-25

¹²⁰ John J. DiIulio Jr., ‘A More Gated Union’ *Weekly Standard*, July 7 1997, Pages 13-15

¹²¹ Andrew Peyton Thomas, ‘Completing the War on Crime’ *Weekly Standard*, January 24 2000, Pages 19-21

ought to be treated more humanely, this is hardly what *The Weekly Standard* advocates. Even the notion that prison inmates should be able to demand to be treated in a particular manner is mocked and seen as merely a nuisance that legislation stripping them of the possibility to make law-suits against allegedly unfair decisions.¹²²

Andrew Peyton Thomas attributes the hard-line incarceration policy that is prevalent in the United States as a key factor in the war on crime. But he argues that this is not enough on its own. The solution to crime he argues: "...ultimately lies within our culture and our souls..."¹²³, and in helping those incarcerated from returning to a law-abiding life after their sentence is served, faith based programmes are advocated. That by turning the inmates into devout Christians, they would be less likely to commit crimes sounds more like a paleoconservative or a church based traditionalist initiative than a neoconservative project. However, one can understand it as such if one appreciates that the even the early neoconservatives acknowledged and appreciated that religion, and Christianity in particular, were longstanding components in American culture. What a faith based programme does in this sense is propagate an American identity, or community, that is seen to be facilitated by religion.

Capital punishment is also hailed as a key component in bringing crime rates down. William Tucker shows that the death penalty is an effective deterrent to violent crime, homicide in particular. Attacking a study presented in the *New York Times* that suggested that capital punishment did not act as a deterrent, Tucker finds that by focusing on states that execute criminals, thus not including states with the death penalty, the result is quite different, with figures that clearly show a relationship between the death penalty and decreasing homicides rates. Tucker also relies on statistical data analysed in the first instance by Isaac Ehrlich, University of Chicago, in 1976 and updated in 2001 by economists from Emory University, whose later analysis updated Ehrlich's figure of eight deterred murders per execution to 18, albeit with an estimated error of 10 that places the deterrence effect between 8 and 28 lives saved per execution.¹²⁴

On the ethical side, Andrew Peyton Thomas points out that a problem with the death penalty is that convicted prisoners spend far too long on death row, a tripling of the time spent 20 years ago.¹²⁵ However, this is more of a logistical problem than one of ethics, rather the attitude is more that as a policy it achieves its intended result, and those executed have forfeited their rights in committing the crime in the first place.

There is as such no real discussion of the ethics of capital punishment. Tucker acknowledges that there are valid debates on subsidiary issues, such as the execution of criminals with mental handicaps, the role of DNA testing and so on, but maintains that the general debate so far have presented the defendants of capital punishment as the "...defenders of some barbaric ritual..." whereas he argues that it "...is a social policy that achieves targeted results..."¹²⁶.

¹²² Andrew Peyton Thomas, 'Disabling the Prisons' *Weekly Standard*, April 27 1998, Pages 10-11

Roger Clegg, 'Disabling Our Prisons' *Weekly Standard*, March 27 2000, Pages 16-17

¹²³ Andrew Peyton Thomas, 'Completing the War on Crime' *Weekly Standard*, January 24 2000, Page 21

¹²⁴ William Tucker, 'Capital Punishment Works' *Weekly Standard*, August 13 2001, Pages 27-29

¹²⁵ Andrew Peyton Thomas, 'Completing the War on Crime' *Weekly Standard*, January 24 2000, Pages 19-21

¹²⁶ William Tucker, 'Capital Punishment Works' *Weekly Standard*, August 13 2001, Page 29

3.3.4 Anti-Americanism

Relatively little was said in *The Weekly Standard* during this period about anti-Americanism. Whilst this paper does favour more frequently recurring themes this is a particularly interesting topic as it surges in importance after September 11 2001, which makes the apparent lack of concern with anti-Americanism prior to those events all the more important.

The difference between the New World and the Old World is a theme we shall return to in a later section, but this is an appropriate moment to briefly discuss what Jeffrey Gedmin on behalf of *The Weekly Standard* perceives as European anti-Americanism.

With the expansion of the European Union and the move towards federalism, the common currency, monetary policy and the relinquishing of sovereignty, Jeffrey Gedmin concludes that what makes it all possible is not the rationale of any immediate benefits, but rather a shared anti-Americanism. Since the end of the Cold War the idea that the United States is not only the only superpower in the world, but a particularly inconvenient one for Europe has according to Gedmin become a commonplace notion. As such the European Union and the European Monetary Union are methods for otherwise powerless European countries and politicians to counter American hegemony.¹²⁷

Gedmin suggests that this is not the foundation upon which successful co-operation and alliances are built. To him there is a profound difference in attitude, and he argues that Americans view European military initiatives as a possibility to ‘share the burden’ of such endeavours as peacekeeping, whereas Europeans regard their military build-up as an opportunity to ‘share power’.¹²⁸ This of course contradicts other claims that the European countries are not interested in, or prepared to ‘police the world’ as the United States is often accused of.

But the Old World is not only where they view American hegemony negatively. The various provinces of Canada were essentially unified by the shared threat of American expansion to the north. In Preston Jones’s review of J.L. Granatstein *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*, it is emphasised how a sense of moral superiority has been nurtured in Canada, against the backdrop of their American neighbours in the South. Jones notes how Canadian anti-Americanism is more pronounced in the Anglophone parts of Canada, whereas in Quebec, with its large separatist movement, relations with the United States are much less strained. The reason then to Jones, for why free trade with Canada is opposed in the Anglophone parts, is that it threatens their Canadian identity.¹²⁹

Following an article in the *New York Times Magazine* where prestigious contributors from some 18 countries were put together under the title *How the World Sees Us*. Under headlines and themes such as ‘Bloated’, ‘Callous’ and ‘Vain’ these contributors explore the less appealing sides of what is presented as an American identity. Not surprisingly the reply from *The Weekly Standard* is an aggressive defence, not so much intended to highlight American

¹²⁷ Jeffrey Gedmin, ‘The New Europe – Menace’ *Weekly Standard*, March 29 1999, Pages 19-23

Jeffrey Gedmin, ‘Our European Problem’ *Weekly Standard*, June 19 2000, Pages 13-14

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹ Preston Jones, ‘Our Canadian Cousins’ *Weekly Standard*, October 19 1998, Pages 36-38

virtues, but to discredit the contributors themselves by attacking the stereotypes of their respective national identities.¹³⁰ It is a trivial line of argument as it rests on the same type of vague critique directed at weak stereotypes. Furthermore both sides in this ‘debate’ belong to their respective elites, and ironically exchange insults directed at their images of the other’s general population.

In summary then of how *The Weekly Standard* dealt with anti-Americanism during the years 1995-2001 one is tempted to say that they did not. The articles quoted above are marginal and there is no red thread to connect them. Anti-Americanism is quite simply not a major concern at this stage. When it does come to the surface and make it to the pages of the magazine they do not talk of the type of anti-Americanism we today face read about in newspapers on a daily basis, but rather about the views of their Canadian neighbours, European allies and foreign intellectuals.

The only interesting point that *The Weekly Standard* raises during this period with regards to anti-Americanism is that of a growing discontent within the conservative movement with the moral decay of contemporary America.

The concern amongst many conservatives is that democracy seems to be failing them, that the liberal democratic system is not bringing about a virtuous society, but rather one where moral decency is second place to moral libertarianism. In this sense, court decisions manifesting this notion in cases of abortion, gay rights and euthanasia pushes many conservatives to ask whether the ‘regime’ and the ‘people’ are no longer the same, as the legal framework no longer represents what they perceive as the will of the American people. Hence *The Weekly Standard* distinguishes between conservatives who retain their love for America and those who believe that the purity of their ideas must be maintained and thereby alienates themselves from the political process and any chance of influence. Brooks points out that whilst abortion and euthanasia are no positive indicators of moral trends, he maintains that the conservative advances on issues such as school choice and affirmative action shows that the liberal democratic system still offers possibilities for the conservative movement to influence legal principles.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Andrew Ferguson, ‘Those Crazy Americans’ *Weekly Standard*, June 23 1997, Pages 11-12

¹³¹ David Brooks, ‘The Right’s Anti-American Temptation’ *Weekly Standard*, November 11 1996, Pages 23-26

3.4 Deriving ‘Idealistic Hawkishness’ from *The Weekly Standard* 2001-2005

A year after the events of September 11 2001 Charles Krauthammer stated on the cover of *The Weekly Standard* that:

“We didn’t change after all. Things changed, yes. Flags waved. A president emerged. The economy slid. The enemy scattered. Politics cooled. The allies rallied. The allies chafed. Politics returned.

But *we* didn’t change. We thought we would. After the shock of the bolt from the blue, it was said that we would never be the same. That it was the end of irony. That the pose of knowing detachment with which we went to bed September 10 was gone for good.

Not so. Before the first year was out, it was back, all of it. Irony. Triviality. Vulgarity. Frivolousness. Whimsy. Farce.

All the things no healthy society can live without.”¹³²

However, whilst Krauthammer is referring to the return to normality in politics, the return to the usual bipartisan political process, *The Weekly Standard* has not returned to the issues with which it was previously preoccupied.

This section reviews some of the key issues dealt with in *The Weekly Standard* during the seventh year of its publication, 2001-2002. As this paper is not a defence of neoconservative thinking, merely an attempt to level the debate, this section could be viewed as an attempt at showing how the common view of the neoconservatives, the image of the Neocon, is indeed substantiated in such sources as *The Weekly Standard*. Together with the multitude of issues discussed in earlier sections of this paper the full picture of the neoconservatives up until the events of September 11 2001 is considerably more complex. The aftermath of said events have rendered *The Weekly Standard* far more focused on the issues with which it is typically associated these days, the war on terror, Iraq and the George W. Bush administration.

The year following the events of September 11 2001 was in *The Weekly Standard* not surprisingly centred around terrorism, foreign policy and the role of the president. Other issues were of course dealt with as well, but to a significantly lesser degree.

This section will briefly outline a number of key issues during this period. Whilst it is problematic to neatly categorise articles, three partly overlapping categories stand out, foreign policy, the war on terror and war presidency.

The categorisation of the neoconservatives as idealistic foreign policy hawks has been presented in numerous articles in both scholarly journals and in the mainstream press.¹³³

¹³² Charles Krauthammer, ‘Year One’ *The Weekly Standard*, September 9 2002, Page 24

¹³³ It is not within the scope of this paper to exhaustively cite all articles dealing with the post September 11 foreign policy hawkishness of the neoconservatives the following have informed this paper:

Timothy J. Lynch, ‘Kristol Balls: Neoconservative Visions of Political Islam, 2005 (Leicester: University of Leicester), First Draft

Whilst no other paper uncovered by this investigation focuses as heavily on *The Weekly Standard* as this paper, the topic has all but been exhausted and as such this section will only draw on a selection of seminal articles in *The Weekly Standard*.

Within the context of both the war on terror and foreign policy Iraq gets rejuvenated attention and the conflict between Israel and Palestine surfaces as a recurrent interest. Saudi Arabia is also discussed in great detail both as a foreign policy concern and with regards to Osama bin Laden and the Al-Queda network.

The neoconservatives have become known as some of George W Bush's staunchest supporters and whereas this was not overly evident in the presidential campaign or during the early months of his presidency, *The Weekly Standard* celebrates him as war president. The role of the president as spokesperson for international interventionism is of significant importance in understanding applied 'idealistic hawkishness'.

This structure of this section is intended to outline the major issues discussed in *The Weekly Standard* during the post September 11 period. As such it is essentially a checklist of the magazine's position on the issues under heaviest criticism from initially left wing commentators and more recently, the mainstream media. To construct this case of 'idealistic hawkishness' as have numerous editorials, political commentators and other pundits, from the material published in *The Weekly Standard* is not difficult. There is an abundance of material to choose from, and this section cannot cover the entirety of the texts.

On almost any contentious issue in what is known as the 'Bush Doctrine' the neoconservatives of *The Weekly Standard* have taken supportive positions. They argue in favour of pre-emption and the justification of detention of enemies as illegal combatants. They saw the claimed presence of weapons of mass destruction as justification for going to war in Iraq and argued that the link between Osama bin Laden's Al-Queda and Saddam Hussein's Iraq thus widening the war on terror to encompass Iraq. Driven by the idea of spreading the ethos of liberal democracy, these positions constitute what is sometimes called 'idealistic hawkishness' or 'hard Wilsonianism'. This is an account of 'idealistic hawkishness' in *The Weekly Standard*.

Naomi Klein, 'Baghdad Year Zero – Pillaging Iraq in Pursuit of a Neocon Utopia' *Harper's Magazine*, September 2004

Michael Lind, 'A Tragedy of Errors' *The Nation*, February 23 2004, <http://www.thenation.com> (accessed on November 6 2006)

Tom Barry, 'Iraq War Product of Neocon Philosophy of Intelligence' *The Right Web*, February 12 2004, <http://www.irc-online.org> (accessed on November 7 2006)

Marc Beeson, 'The Rise of the "Neocons" and the Evolution of American Foreign Policy' Year Unknown (Australia: University of Queensland)

3.4.1 War on Terror

The war on terror has obviously dominated the media landscape over the past few years and *The Weekly Standard* is no exception. The case for 'idealistic hawkishness' is most conveniently situated within the context of the 'war on terror' and as such a general expose of some of the related issues will serve as an introduction to the discussion of foreign policy and George W. Bush as war president. To some extent this section has a haphazard organisation where emphasis is on particular issues, without a guiding narrative. The purpose of this structure is to highlight the ideas on particular issues without streamlining them into an imposed structure where the arguments are reduced to confirming a preconceived logic. The general narrative, the generalisation of neoconservative thought during this recent time period will be returned to in the concluding section.

The appropriate starting point for understanding the neoconservative position on the 'war on terror' is with Kagan's and Kristol's comments on President Bush's speech where he outlined his administration's policy intentions. The key issue that they highlight is the width of its implications. They emphasise that the war on terror cannot be understood as a campaign against Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda or the Taliban regime of Afghanistan, but that these are only initial steps. To Kagan and Kristol these are appropriate and necessary targets but they represent only a fraction of the agenda President Bush commits his administration to.¹³⁴

In the same issue *The Weekly Standard* reprints an open letter from the Project for a New American Century from September 20 2001, where five issues in the campaign against terrorism are highlighted. Predictably they argue that a "...key goal, but by no means the only goal [...] should be to capture or kill Osama bin Laden, and to destroy his network of associates."¹³⁵ However, they also argue that action need also be taken against Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and that "...even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq."¹³⁶ Hezbollah are included as an essential target, and Iran and Syria are mentioned as sponsors of terrorism and possible dissenters over action against Hezbollah. Israel is mentioned as a key ally and it is argued that U.S. policy must include support for Israel in its conflict with the Palestinian Authority. Finally, the letter argues that "A serious and victorious war on terrorism will require a large increase in defense spending."¹³⁷

Signatories include a number of frequent contributors to *The Weekly Standard*, as well as some of the people who have become known in mainstream press as Neocons, such as Richard Perle and Francis Fukuyama.¹³⁸ The later writing of the two will be returned to in the final section of this paper as they represent diverging factions of neoconservatism.

¹³⁴ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'The Right War' *The Weekly Standard*, October 1 2001, Pages 9-10

¹³⁵ William Kristol *et al*, 'An Open Letter to the President' *The Weekly Standard*, October 1 2001, Page 10, also available from PNAC website, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/> (accessed on October 27 2006)

¹³⁶ *ibid*.

¹³⁷ *ibid*.

¹³⁸ *ibid*.

Another reprint in the editorial section of *The Weekly Standard* consisted of an excerpt of President George W. Bush's *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* from 2002.

“The document expresses so well so much of what *The Weekly Standard* has argued for over the last seven years ...”¹³⁹

In short what George W. Bush argues in the excerpted sections consists of the following, and it reads to some extent as a sort of abstract to what *The Weekly Standard* would come to argue in the years to follow.

George W. Bush argues that unlike the Cold War where Bush argues that the United States contained the Soviet Union by deterrence, today's ‘rogue states’ are less likely to be dissuade by such measures. Rather Bush argues that the appropriate policy is instead pre-emption. To Bush ‘rogue states’ such as Iraq, are have or are seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and it is within this framework Bush is arguing in favour of pre-emptive attacks. Another aspect of the war on terror is the defence spending required to win such as war. The idealistic aspects of this project and the self assumed role of the United States are also expressed in the excerpt:

“Freedom is the non-negotiable demand of human dignity; the birthright of every person—in every civilization. Throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror; it has been challenged by the clashing wills of powerful states and the evil designs of tyrants; and it has been tested by widespread poverty and disease. Today, humanity holds in its hands the opportunity to further freedom's triumph over all these foes. The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead in this great mission.”¹⁴⁰

Given the extent of this project, it comes as no surprise that the neoconservatives continued arguing in favour of increased military spending in the United States. As this paper showed in section 3.2.3 increasing defence spending is a long-standing intention of the neoconservatives. However, in the decade between the Cold War and September 11 2001, they constituted a minority. With the altered priorities of government and the general public, defence spending became a vote-winning issue for members of Congress.

As such, funding is an issue that the neoconservatives returned to as the George W. Bush administration made clear that the war on terror would be an extensive and indefinite endeavour. Tom Donnelly is very much in favour of the Bush Doctrine as outlined in the *National Security Strategy*, but argues that the U.S. military is ill prepared to meet its ambitious agenda. Donnelly concludes that “National security doctrines that aren't backed by adequate force are meaningless.”¹⁴¹ This is an argument we will return to in section 3.5.1.3 on the subject of appeasement.

¹³⁹ The Editors, ‘A Winning Strategy’ *The Weekly Standard*, September 30 2002, Page 9

¹⁴⁰ George W. Bush, ‘A Winning Strategy’ *The Weekly Standard*, September 30 2002, Page 10

¹⁴¹ Tom Donnelly, ‘Still Hollow After All These Years’ *The Weekly Standard*, December 9 2002, Page 15

Despite the subject of defence spending having been whitewashed through its perceived necessity in the post September 11 period, William G. Mayer argues that the subject remains taboo with respect to bipartisan debate. He cites the critique of Karl Rove's recommendation for the Republican Party to capitalise on its authority with the public with respect to its tradition of supporting the armed forces.¹⁴² Whereas he suggests that some subjects are too important to be outside of the bipartisan debate, *The Weekly Standard* would more often than not lament other commentators for suggesting an issue to be multifaceted.

John J. DiIulio Jr. reminds the readers of *The Weekly Standard* that the current war is not a war that can be fought with the armed forces alone. In a 2002 review of the Office of Homeland Security DiIulio argues that whilst the US military successfully have invaded Afghanistan, homeland security depend not only on the might of American soldiers but on a number of federal and civilian agencies throughout all the American states. In short, he seeks to include fire-fighters, relief personnel and other support groups under the wider umbrella of homeland security.

As this paper will not devote any further space to defence issues, the preceding paragraphs are intended as reminders of the width of the concept of defence and national security which the neoconservatives have adopted. This constitutes a general trend which would be difficult to quantify.

The remainder of this section is devoted to discussing *The Weekly Standard's* covering of the issues outlined in President Bush's National Security Strategy along with related issues such as unlawful combatants and appeasement.

¹⁴² William G. Mayer, 'A Real National Security Debate' *The Weekly Standard*, June 24 2002, Pages 17-18

3.4.1.1 The New Rules: Illegal Combatants

The war on terror would not be a real war without an enemy. In this case it was not entirely clear as to whom that enemy was, and even more so, the general public knew very little about why people like Osama bin Laden and the Al-Queda network would host such strong feelings of enmity towards the United States.¹⁴³

During its war on terror the George W. Bush administration declared that a number of its captives were not to be given the status of ‘combatants’. Consequently these people exist in a legal limbo and were referred to as ‘illegal’ or ‘unlawful’ combatants, and the issue of illegal combatants is perhaps the most controversial issue of the Bush Doctrine. *The Weekly Standard* has strongly favoured this legal exception on the basis that it is vitally necessary to national security.

The distinction is made, as outlined above, that the war on terror is an actual war against an enemy, even where that enemy is guilty only of acts that courts of law would deem crimes, not acts of war. The war on terror is as such seen as a new type of war, for which old imaginations of war cannot apply. This is true for the extralegal status of Camp X-Ray’s prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, who are not deemed neither combatants nor non-combatants, as such classifications would give them certain rights according to internationally sanctioned and agreed upon charters. By labelling the interned ‘unlawful’ or ‘illegal’ combatants the U.S. in effect gave themselves free rein to keep them indefinitely and apply non-sanctioned methods of interrogation. There is to *The Weekly Standard* a problem in treating enemies like mere criminals, whereas war is external, crime is internal and the two must be kept separate. The problem of a war consisting only of terror attacks is that the enemy is often internal and the type of problem the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere around the world, imposes is a matter of making it possible to distinguish between criminals and enemies. Essentially a distinction between civil and martial.¹⁴⁴

David Tell defends the infringement on liberty that is the implication of the administrations take on the legal status of its captives. David Tell asks to what extent American civil liberties are affected by the notion of ‘illegal combatants’, and finds that they are not affected significantly for ordinary American citizen. His argument is straightforward but simplistic and short sighted. He argues that whilst “...Unsympathetic characters should be treated fairly, too”¹⁴⁵, he also finds that in particular cases these unsympathetic characters are planning to commit acts of terrorism. In the case of Nabil al Marabh who was held on suspicion of involvement with Al-Queda without access to a legal representation for eight months. Reviewing al Marabh’s life story Tell finds that “Nabil al Marabh [...], is an extremely dangerous fellow—a terrorist, in fact. He is also, praise Allah, a prisoner of the

¹⁴³ It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the historical relationship between the United States and militants in the Middle East, but Chalmers Johnson’s presentation of the concept of blowback is a useful guide to this conflict. Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: the Costs and Consequences of American Empire* 2000 (New York: Henry Holt and Co.); *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* 2004 (New York: Metropolitan Books)

¹⁴⁴ David Tell, ‘Treating Enemies Like Criminals’ *The Weekly Standard*, August 12 2002, Pages 7-8
 Thomas Powers, ‘Liberty and Justice for Almost All’ *The Weekly Standard*, June 16 2003, Pages 12-14
 Thomas F. Powers, ‘Due Process for Terrorists?’ *The Weekly Standard*, January 21 2004, Pages 22-25

¹⁴⁵ David Tell, ‘Due Process for Terrorists?’ *The Weekly Standard*, July 1 2002, Page 9-10

United States government, and it seems to us that American civil liberties are more, rather than less, secure as a consequence.”¹⁴⁶

Reuel Marc Gerecht argues that on a practical level the treatment of prisoners in Iraq is not likely to worsen the situation or create any uproar, referring to a scandal in which photographs of Iraqi prisoners are being humiliated by their American guards. Rather he argues, such civil liberties concerns are given little importance in the Middle East, where according to Gerecht, practicality is more important than philosophy. He argues that to the average Iraqi there are more pressing concerns than the well being of prisoners.¹⁴⁷

In short, *The Weekly Standard's* attitude to these and other practical issues related to the war on terror are when they are in conflict with conventions such as human rights and even American civil rights, trivialised.¹⁴⁸ This attitude is interesting, in that the same writers will go to great lengths to lament their political opponents over trivial disagreements over American policy. This incongruity can be understood as a lack of argument but is likewise indicative of their priorities.

Adam Wolfson criticises Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's likening of the war on terror with the Cold War, in that the enemy is not a hostile yet rational nation as the Soviet Union was, but a loose organisation of religious fanatics. Whilst he suggests that the enemy is more like the Nazis of Nazi Germany he notes that either comparison is likely to be flawed. Rather he widens the issue of the mentality of the enemy with that of the states in which these individuals originated and does as such imply a serious problem across the entire Middle East.

“The souls of men, Plato taught, are reflections of the regimes that raise them. In the Islamic world, where liberal democracies are scarce, so too are liberal democrats. In contrast, anti-American sentiment is rife, and while mass murderers like bin Laden and Atta remain a minority, they are cheered by the thousands in the street, lauded by the government press, incited by imams, and winked at (when not openly encouraged) by their rulers. If the terrorists are to be defeated in their war against the United States, the regimes that nurture them will have to be held strictly accountable, not merely “contained.””¹⁴⁹

The war on terror is a war in which the rules are made up as it goes along. Few are the political scientists who would claim that there are actual rules of war, but with the extensive agenda of the war on terror, this willingness to recategorise people holds deep imperial implications. Antonio Agamben's 'homo sacer' has been evoked by many of the critics of the concept of illegal combatants. Slavoj Žižek suggests that when applied to the American war

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.* p.10

¹⁴⁷ Reuel Marc Gerecht, 'Who's Afraid of Abu Ghraib?' *The Weekly Standard*, May 24 2004. Pages 30-33

¹⁴⁸ Matt Labash, 'Guantanamo's Unhappy Campers' *The Weekly Standard*, February 11 2002, Pages 28-32

Thomas F. Powers, 'The End of Gitmo Limbo' *The Weekly Standard*, September 27 2004, Pages 21-24

Henrik Bering, 'The Good Terrorist' *The Weekly Standard*, October 18 2004, Pages 22-23

Heather Mac Donald, 'Torturing the Evidence' *The Weekly Standard*, January 24 2005, Pages 13-14

Reuel Marc Gerecht, 'What's the Matter with Gitmo?' *The Weekly Standard*, July 4/11 2005, Pages 19-25

Ellen Bork, 'Men Without a Country' *The Weekly Standard*, August 15/22 2005, Pages 13-14

¹⁴⁹ Adam Wolfson, 'More Like Nazis Than Commies' *The Weekly Standard*, November 12 2001, Page 17

on terror it creates the distinction between ‘human’ and ‘inhuman’ with respect to those designated outside of the law by those who draw their power from the American project.¹⁵⁰

This section serves as an indicator to how the writers of *The Weekly Standard* regard the enemy or even suspected enemies. There is in *The Weekly Standard* a strong sense of nationalism, in the sense that if you are not American you do not count. This resonates how the war on terror is presented, as a war which if not won spells the end of America. This is an issue which will be returned later.

Adding here a section on the coverage of the Patriot Act would have further highlighted how the neoconservatives consider all conventions and other rights up for sacrifice in the war on terror.

¹⁵⁰ Slavoj Žižek, ‘Welcome to the Desert of the Real’ 2002 (London: Verso Books)

3.4.1.2 Weapons of Mass Destruction

On the topic of weapons of mass destruction, *The Weekly Standard* has taken a perhaps surprisingly strong position. Surprising in the sense that as political commentators they do not possess privileged information nor are they investigative reporters generating information hitherto not public.

In an editorial entitled *Why We Went to War* Kagan and Kristol argues that the documented stockpiles of chemical weaponry after the first Gulf War and the Saddam Hussein regime's inability or unwillingness to account for these to U.N. weapon inspectors, in itself was a valid cause for going to war. To Kagan and Kristol, Saddam Hussein never explained, or attempted to, the whereabouts of Iraq's chemical arsenal or the manner in which it had been disposed of. To them this is a general consensus, and they argue that even if others are less direct in this conclusion, even Hans Blix, chairman of the U.N. inspectors, was dissatisfied.¹⁵¹

Within that context Kagan and Kristol argue that the four year intermission during which Iraq banned the inspectors, the Saddam Hussein regime had ample opportunity to restructure Iraq's weapons programmes. They argue that whilst the Clinton administration realised Iraq's infractions it did little to hold Iraq accountable. This failure, as we have discussed above, was to the neoconservatives at *The Weekly Standard* directly emboldened Saddam Hussein. When this stalemate came to an end in 2002 when the U.N. Security Council issued Resolution 1441 which required Iraq to comply with U.N. weapon inspectors within 30 days, Iraq's non-compliance was to *The Weekly Standard* a catalyst but never the reason for war. The reason according to Kagan and Kristol is best summarised by themselves:

“The reason for war, in the first instance, was always the strategic threat posed by Saddam because of his proven record of aggression and barbarity, his admitted possession of weapons of mass destruction, and the certain knowledge of his programs to build more. It was the threat he posed to his region, to our allies, and to core U.S. interests that justified going to war this spring, just as it would have justified a Clinton administration decision to go to war in 1998.”¹⁵²

This is largely the same argument presented by Secretary of State Colin Powell in an excerpted section of a speech to the U.N. Security Council reprinted in *The Weekly Standard*.

¹⁵¹ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'Why We Went to War' *The Weekly Standard*, October 20 2003, Pages 7-11

¹⁵² *ibid.* p.10

The claim of weapons of mass destruction was the public reason for regime change in Iraq to British Prime Minister Tony Blair as well, but Irwin M. Stelzer emphasises that Blair saw positive aspects in ousting Saddam Hussein in its own right in addition to neutralising the claimed threat of weapons of mass destruction. Stelzer cites Blair loosely and summarises his position as:

“The world has a responsibility to intervene when inaction means the slaughter of innocents: A war that is about “values” rather than “territory” is a just war.”¹⁵³

However, even in 2004, a year after President Bush proclaimed an end to major combat operations and the United States victorious, by whence mainstream views on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction had swung to a consider such claims a ruse, or even a Straussian ‘noble lie’, William Kristol defends *The Weekly Standard’s* and the George W. Bush administration’s position that Saddam Hussein’s regime had possession of such weapons. To Kristol, there are simply too many unanswered questions. Kristol urges the administration to form a strong and public position, something he suggests it has lost as public opinion swung on the matter and he writes that:

“...having professed such certainty about Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction before the war, the administration now seems intimidated by the new conventional wisdom that Saddam had done away with his WMD.”¹⁵⁴

In a number of editorials and articles these points are reiterated, and there is little doubt that the writers of *The Weekly Standard* support the conclusion that the alleged weapons of mass destruction were a valid reason for going to war.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Irwin M. Stelzer, ‘No Regrets for Blair’ *The Weekly Standard*, October 13 2003, Page 17

¹⁵⁴ William Kristol, ‘About Those Iraqi Weapons...’ *The Weekly Standard*, May 31 2004, Page 8

¹⁵⁵ Stephen F. Hayes, ‘Questions of Mass Destruction’ *The Weekly Standard*, June 23 2003, Pages 13-15

William Kristol, ‘Reality Check’ *The Weekly Standard*, October 13 2003, Page 9

Stephen F. Hayes, ‘Case Closed’ *The Weekly Standard*, November 24 2003, Pages 20-25

William Kristol, ‘About Those Iraqi Weapons...’ *The Weekly Standard*, May 31 2004, Pages 7-8

3.4.1.3 Pre-emption and Appeasement

Another set of issues that have become closely associated with the neoconservatives within the discussion of the war on terror, are pre-emption, regime change and appeasement.

Whilst definitions of pre-emption and regime change would surely need to be convoluted, the practical meaning of the two within the Bush Doctrine is more straightforward. Pre-emption refers to the use of force against states or groups to prevent future attacks from them on U.S. targets. Regime change refers to the toppling of the government of a state with the purpose of transforming it into a democracy. Both issues are highly controversial.

In January 2002, Kagan and Kristol take the position that "...For the war on terrorism to succeed, Saddam Hussein must be removed."¹⁵⁶ It is a call for invasion, with the purpose of toppling the regime. There is the mention of weapons of mass destruction, but they do not try to present a case where Iraq constitutes an immediate danger. Rather, they calmly argue that Saddam Hussein has been a problem in the past and is likely to pose similar problems in the future. This is in short a case for a pre-emptive attack on Iraq.

The neoconservative case for pre-emptive attack is best summarised by Michael J. Glennon in January of 2002. Pre-emption as a concept has become closely associated with what is now known as the Bush Doctrine, and is the idea that a government can wage war preemptively to achieve a long term goal, runs contrary to the U.N. Charter. Glennon defends the Bush Doctrine on the basis that foreign policy has long since found the rigidity of the U.N. Charter inconvenient and has never really abided by its confines. To Glennon, pre-emptive attacks are quite straightforward. The conundrum in his article is not in its implementation, but in the realisation that times of war is not the time for legal debates. What he is advocating is simply an approach to foreign policy which is akin to martial law, that is extralegal measures to deal with the current situation, and to worry about legalities afterwards:

"There will be plenty of time to resume that discussion when the war on terrorism is won. [...] Completing that victory is the task at hand. And winning may require the use of preemptive force against terrorist forces as well as against the states that harbour them."¹⁵⁷

The twin of pre-emptive strikes is nation building. Nation building is a strange feature in the neoconservative discussion of Iraq both before and after the war began. The way the term is used is not mere reconstruction in terms of infrastructure, housing and food supply, but rather the nation building referred to is ideological. The dictator or regime toppled is not to be replaced by another that is worse or even similar, but by a liberal democracy.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'What To Do About Iraq' *The Weekly Standard*, January 21 2002, Page 23

¹⁵⁷ Michael J. Glennon, 'Preempting Terrorism' *The Weekly Standard*, January 28 2002, Page 27

¹⁵⁸ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'What To Do About Iraq' *The Weekly Standard*, January 21 2002, Pages 23-25

Matt Labash, 'Down and Out in Umm Qasr', *The Weekly Standard*, April 21 2003, Pages 21-23

Irwin M. Stelzer, 'Forgive Them His Debts' *The Weekly Standard*, April 21 2003, Pages 24-26

Stephen F. Hayes, 'The Future of Iraq, In Outline' *The Weekly Standard*, July 28 2003, Pages 11-12

Vance Serchuk and Tom Donnelly, 'Nation Building, After All' *The Weekly Standard*, April 11 2005, Pages 20-29

Stephen F. Hayes, 'The Future of Iraq, In Outline' *The Weekly Standard*, July 28 2003, Pages 11-12

The reason this is a strange feature is that nation building in this sense closely resembles social engineering. Social engineering as the sections on the early neoconservatives discussed was one of the tenets of the liberalism that the liberal anti-communists that were to become neoconservatives did not agree with, and vehemently refuted throughout the 20th century. The second generation of neoconservatives' adoption of social engineering in Iraq and Afghanistan is perplexing and in widening the context in the final section, this will be elaborated on.

The much contested concept of an 'axis of evil' was supposedly coined by the White House speechwriter David Frum. Frum is also a frequent contributor to *The Weekly Standard* since the very first issue in 1995. To have a neoconservative writer coin the perhaps most controversial term in the current foreign policy paradigm has obviously aroused significant attention. The discussion below of the neoconservative foreign policy discussion since 2001 is centred around the 'axis of evil', in order to give an idea of their suggestion for U.S. foreign policy with regards to Iraq, Iran and North Korea in the post September 11 debate.

We will not devote any further space here to the three countries constituting the 'axis of evil'. As is no surprise they each receive significant attention, most of all Iraq, in *The Weekly Standard*. As we have already dealt with country specific case studies in the 1995-2001 period, additional sections here appear redundant.

The discussion on appeasement is readily linked to the 'axis of evil' grouping of Iraq, Iran and North Korea in Bush's 2002 State of the Union speech. Whilst widely criticised for being simplistic, James D. Miller defends the expression not in terms of content but in terms of message. He argues that the signal sent to the governments of the three countries must be clear and unwavering. The choice of the three rested on the foundation that these are countries the Bush administration both morally disapprove of and that it intends to take action against. Miller points out that a number of countries could have been added to the list if a moral standpoint was the only qualifier, notably China, but adding a country the U.S. is not prepared to attack would have weakened the threat to Iraq, Iran and North Korea.¹⁵⁹

The concept of appeasement reeks of implications of shame, weakness and cowardice. This is how *The Weekly Standard* situates practically any opposition to US policy with regards to the war on terror.¹⁶⁰

There is in the same understanding of appeasement as weakness, a notion in *The Weekly Standard* that fundamentally this is an American-European divide.¹⁶¹ Churchill was in this sense much more of an American figure despite being British, to Chamberlain's European attitude.

Robert Kagan develops this subject further in his book *Paradise & Power* where he finds that European appeasement is a direct consequence of European weakness. America on the

¹⁵⁹ James D. Miller, 'Credible Threats' *The Weekly Standard*, March 11 2002, Page 17

¹⁶⁰ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, 'Going Wobbly?' *The Weekly Standard*, June 3 2002, Page 11

William Kristol, 'Axis of Appeasement' *The Weekly Standard*, August 26 2002, Pages 7-8

¹⁶¹ James W. Ceaser, 'America's Ascendancy, Europe's Despondency' *The Weekly Standard*, May 20 2002, Pages 23-26
David Gelernter, 'The Roots of European Appeasement' *The Weekly Standard*, September 23 2002, Pages 19-25

other hand does not have to play the compromise card thanks to its defence spending and does as such not lean towards appeasement.¹⁶²

Max Boot is quite aware of being politically incorrect when he argues that:

“In centuries past, the wild and unruly passions of the Islamic world were kept within tight confines by firm, often ruthless imperial authority... [...] As America slowly took over Britain’s oversight role after 1945, Washington tried self-consciously to carve out a different style of leadership [...] Unfortunately America showed something else – that we were weak, and could be attacked, economically and physically and rhetorically, with impunity.”¹⁶³

He goes on to expand on a long list of countries and situations in which a lenient and post colonial style of governance or interference has inflamed hatred against the United States and left the impression of American weakness. It is unclear what Boot’s argument is and he is not explicitly arguing in favour of a return to heavy handed imperial strategies but he leaves it hanging in the air as he points to the problematic situations which have developed in its absence.¹⁶⁴

The neoconservative aversion towards appeasement is longstanding and would be easily recognised in the early anti-communist liberals that constituted the foundation of neoconservatism in the 1950s and 1960s. Stephen Peter Rosen, a distinguished Harvard scholar, discusses the complexities of dealing with the enemy, or more precisely tyrants, in the January 21 2002 issue of *The Weekly Standard*. He makes the distinction that certain tyrants can be successfully deterred whilst others have to be disposed of, and he uses the cases of Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler as examples. The ability of deterrence to produce results is a matter of “communicating a threat that pain will be inflicted on someone else in the future, if certain actions are carried out. The business of deterrence, therefore, involves making people think in certain ways about the future.”¹⁶⁵

This success of deterrence therefore depends on two factors according to Rosen. Successful deterrence does as such not only depend on the deterring state’s ability to retaliate promptly if demands are not met, but also on the world view of the threatened tyrant. This is to say that a dictator who does not believe that threats will be acted on, or who believe retaliation will be insignificant or that any losses are acceptable, will not be inclined to succumb to threats.¹⁶⁶

The same argument was also found in an article just two months after September 11 2001, in which Adam Wolfson draws on the arguments of George F. Kennan from 1947 that the methods which defeated Nazi Germany would not be successful against the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Robert Kagan, ‘Paradise & Power, America and Europe in the new world order’ 2004 (London: Atlantic Books)

¹⁶³ Max Boot, ‘The End of Appeasement’ *The Weekly Standard*, February 10 2003, Page 21

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.* pp.21-28

¹⁶⁵ Stephen Peter Rosen, ‘How to Deal With Tyrants’ *The Weekly Standard*, January 21 2002, Page 28

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Adam Wolfson, ‘More like Nazis than Commies’ *The Weekly Standard*, November 12 2001, Pages 14-17

Further, in a crucially important article, Tod Lindberg argues that a war against Saddam Hussein specifically is crucial to the future of deterrence. Lindberg refutes the notion that deterrence and pre-emption are discrete and can usefully be understood as separate. Deterrence, to Lindberg depends on the possibility of pre-emption. Action against Iraq is as such action with the purpose of signalling to prospective enemies that disobedience can be punished. He is specifically referring to North Korea, but this can be extended to a long list of countries, friends and foes alike.¹⁶⁸

It is through this argument that we can understand the vehemence of *The Weekly Standard* and other neoconservative outlets in their insistence on connecting Iraq and further the 'axis of evil' to the war on terror. The foreign policy implications of the neoconservative project if understood primarily as hawkish interventionism is deeply imperialist and the next section is a brief outline of the imperial self awareness of American neoconservatives.

¹⁶⁸ Tod Lindberg, 'Deterrence and Prevention' *The Weekly Standard*, February 3 2003, Pages 24-28

3.4.3 Towards Imperial Self Awareness

Whilst foreign policy has already been discussed above, U.S. foreign policy has changed dramatically since late 2001. The war on terror has provided the current paradigm and the neoconservatives are sometimes considered a major contributor to the ideological foundations for an idealistic foreign policy.

Charles Krauthammer provides an article in which he discusses the new world order which is a possible consequence of the attack on the United States in September 2001 and the defiant position of one man, Osama bin Laden, against the world's sole superpower.¹⁶⁹

Krauthammer's argument is based on the notion that whilst hegemonies are rarely uncontested and have historically generated opposing coalitions, for a decade following the end of the Cold War there was no such dissent to U.S. hegemony. He argues that two possibilities existed, a coalition between Russia and China, and a Russian led coalition consisting of remnants of the Soviet Union. Neither materialised, and instead September 11 2001 represents the disclosure of the challenger to America's hegemony, radical Islamists. As such, to Krauthammer the implication of Al-Queda's attack on the United States is the challenge posed to American hegemony.

To Krauthammer the issue lies not in hunting for particular individuals such as Osama bin Laden, but to manifest American supremacy. To take on regimes that 'harbour' terrorists is a method of sending the message to prospective coalitions against the United States that such actions will not be tolerated. He argues that "Weaker states invariably seek to join coalitions of the strong. For obvious reasons of safety, they will go with those who appear to be the winners."¹⁷⁰, and in the case of America's war on terror the key to U.S. success lies in its show of force and resolve.

Krauthammer as such argues in favour of establishing a New World Order, as President George H.W. Bush attempted, by establishing a coalition of major powers. Key to such a coalition is to Krauthammer American leadership and to him the future of liberal democracy depends on it.

"If the guarantor of world peace for the last half century cannot succeed in a war of self-defense against Afghanistan(!), then the whole post-World War II structure—open borders, open trade, open seas, open societies—will begin to unravel."¹⁷¹

The new world order advocated by neoconservatives such as Krauthammer is not necessarily new in any way. Rather it is a matter of confirming certain ideas as either true or false. In this sense some of America's allies, with whom the U.S. shares fundamental values, would have their relations with the United States strengthened and strategic allies, with whom the U.S. has dealt with for economical and geopolitical reasons but who are not seen to share an ideological value base with the United States, must be distanced.

¹⁶⁹ Charles Krauthammer, 'The Real New World Order' *The Weekly Standard*, November 12 2001, Pages 25-29

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* p.28

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* p.29

Paul Wolfowitz supposedly wrote a report in the early 1990s when he was serving under Donald Rumsfeld outlining the case for an imperial strategy of world domination. Following the fall of the Soviet Union the United States remained the world's only superpower and this was according to Wolfowitz an opportunity for world domination that the United States could not afford to forego. Wolfowitz was supposedly ordered to scrap the report as it was considered to radical a strategy at the time. This investigation has not been able to confirm the existence of such a report.

There a phrases in articles in *The Weekly Standard* that so aptly captures this progression towards imperial self awareness. Noemie Emery, in an article comparing George W. Bush to Harry Truman as presidents who did not want the wars they each came to fight, yet to her mind performed brilliantly, suggests that in a time when the United States was repeatedly attacked informally, through terrorism and taunt, "...Bush connected these dots in a very few minutes, in the fierce light projected by fuel on fire. Such acts of cognition save people and nations."¹⁷² We are in her words "...Present at the Re-Creation..."¹⁷³

Another worthwhile mention is from Kagan and Kristol's call for an invasion of Iraq already cited, which concludes that:

"No step would contribute more toward shaping a world order in which our people and our liberal civilization can survive and flourish."¹⁷⁴

Writers of *The Weekly Standard* occasionally touch on terms such as 'hegemon', 'world police' and 'empire'. The preferred term in those moments of self aware imperialism is 'Pax Americana'.¹⁷⁵

Max Boot is one of the most outspoken neoconservatives at *The Weekly Standard* and in his article *The Case for American Imperialism* in October 2001 he argues that the United States must accept its role as imperial power as a part of the war on terror.¹⁷⁶

This positive attitude to imperialism is not repeated.

¹⁷² Noemie Emery, 'Present at the Re-Creation' *The Weekly Standard*, September 30 2002, Page 33

¹⁷³ *ibid.* p.30

¹⁷⁴ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'What To Do About Iraq' *The Weekly Standard*, January 21 2002, Page 25

¹⁷⁵ Elliot A. Cohen and A.J. Bacevich, 'A Defense Agenda for William Cohen' *The Weekly Standard*, March 3 1997, Pages 26-29

David Brooks, 'The Age of Conflict' *The Weekly Standard*, November 5 2001, Pages 19-23

Tom Donnelly and Vance Serchuk, 'A Bigger, Badder, Better Army' *The Weekly Standard*, November 29 2004, Pages 16-19

¹⁷⁶ Max Boot, 'The Case for American Imperialism' *The Weekly Standard*, October 15 2001, Pages 27-30

4 Widening the Context and Concluding Remarks

This paper has investigated the ideas of neoconservatism between two pivotal points in its history. Following the end of the Cold War, neoconservatism was declared dead by its major contributors, yet nonetheless, more than a decade later, U.S. foreign policy cannot be discussed without reference to the neoconservatives.

In the autumn of 2006 neoconservatism was once again proclaimed dead, this time most frequently by external commentators, but also increasingly by its fellow travellers. However, other than on the arena of foreign policy, such commentators and pundits have dealt very little with the ideas of the neoconservatives. The early neoconservatives have been documented by historians and political scientists, and this paper has reviewed a number of such treatises, written by neoconservatives themselves, more neutral scholars, as well as critics. The contemporary generation of neoconservatives are however poorly covered, despite the significant influence of the ideology on contemporary conservatism it seems to wield, and on 'compassionate conservatism' in particular.

This review of *The Weekly Standard* has as such attempted to rectify this information asymmetry, and it has found certain incongruities along with a broader understanding of the neoconservatives of today which goes beyond their foreign policy concerns. These findings are summarised below and an attempt is made at situating these in the wider discussion of the American imperial project.

The mainstream view of the neoconservatives, or the 'neocons', as they are commonly referred to suggests that a 'cabal of neocons' have influenced the George W. Bush administration to invade Iraq and they are said to be responsible for linking Iraq to the wider war on terror. This paper has not presented a conspiracy theory of the like that any web search including a combination of the keywords 'neocon' and 'Iraq' would surely generate. Rather it has presented a case for understanding the second generation of neoconservatives as a product of a combination of factors.

One of the things this paper has sought to illustrate is how the material in *The Weekly Standard* can be used to create very different perceptions of the neoconservatives. On the one hand there is the forcefulness of their take on foreign policy which really comes into focus in the years 2001-2005, and which constitutes what this paper refers to as 'idealistic hawkishness'. On the other hand, there is in *The Weekly Standard* ample evidence of the continuity of the more intellectual side of neoconservatism, that is the 'neoconservative persuasion' as Irving Kristol, who refused to consider neoconservatism a political movement, called it.

As this paper has argued these two faces of the neoconservative ideology are not fully compatible, and there is considerable tension between the two and in the present situation it is fair to say that 'idealistic hawkishness' has the upper hand.

Gal Beckerman has suggested that the arena where the neoconservative movement will be either vindicated or forever buried is Iraq.¹⁷⁷ As closely associated with the war in Iraq, whether fairly or not, it is clear that failure in Iraq would be a major setback for the neoconservatives, and would likely diminish their credibility on other issues. Presently, failure in Iraq scenario is in the conventional wisdom and mainstream press essentially a truth.

Michael Lind in his critique puts it more bluntly, and to him the neoconservatives ought to already have been thoroughly discredited:

“Unfortunately for [the neoconservatives], a political ideology can fail in the real world only so many times before being completely discredited. For at least two decades, in foreign policy the neocons have been wrong about everything.”¹⁷⁸

Consequently, the mainstream press has recently expressed the nearly unanimous verdict that neoconservatism is now dead. The November 2006 mid-term election results, which prompted the resignation of Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, and his replacement with a political ‘realist’, was seen as the definite end to neoconservative influence over foreign policy. That this would be a return to ‘realist’ foreign policy was immediately refuted by Fred Barnes who in *The Weekly Standard* explains that the nomination of Robert Gates is not a retreat on hitherto policy.¹⁷⁹

This is in stark contrast to the Presidential election of 2004 which saw George W. Bush re-elected. Tod Lindberg suggested just prior to the election that given U.S. foreign policy in the post September 11 situation was characterised as neoconservative, the election was a referendum on neoconservatism. He suggested however, that whether or not Bush is re-elected by the public, neoconservatism had in essence already won:

“But win or lose, the vindication of neoconservatism has already taken place,, in that the Democratic candidate in 2004 has found it impossible to run for the Oval Office on a platform of its repudiation, but rather has embraced its central strategic insights.”¹⁸⁰

The neoconservative movement has also seen considerable internal dissent. Francis Fukuyama in his book *After the Neocons* (2006), published in North America as *America at the Crossroads* (2006), departs from mainstream neoconservatism.¹⁸¹ He argues that some of the responses by the Bush administration, specifically those that were identical to the policies advocated by neoconservatives inside and outside the administration, have failed and left the United States worse off than had they not been implemented. He is referring to the doctrine of preventative war and the invasion of Iraq.

¹⁷⁷ Gal Beckerman, ‘The Neoconservative Persuasion’ *Forward*, January 6 2006, <http://www.forward.com> (accessed on March 3 2006)

¹⁷⁸ Michael Lind, ‘A Tragedy of Errors’ *The Nation*, February 23 2004, <http://www.thenation.com> (accessed on November 6 2006)

¹⁷⁹ Fred Barnes, ‘Son Knows Best’ *The Weekly Standard*, November 27 2006, Pages 12-13

¹⁸⁰ Tod Lindberg, ‘The Referendum on Neoconservatism’ *The Weekly Standard*, November 1/8 2004, Page 18

¹⁸¹ Francis Fukuyama, ‘After the Neocons – America at the Crossroads’ 2006 (London: Profile Books); ‘America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy’ 2006 (New Haven: Yale University Books)

Whilst he argues that neoconservative foreign policy is more complex than it is given credit, his account of its main components boils down to the same case this paper has made in previous sections. His critique of neoconservatism is limited to its application in the post September 11 context, that is on the issues of preventative war, regime change and nation building in Iraq.

Rather he refers back to the early neoconservatives, whose experiences were shaped by the Cold War, and to some extent the Second World War, and argues that the lessons from that earlier period for the neoconservatives could be abstractly summarised as four key ideas:

“...a concern with democracy, human rights, and more generally the internal politics of states; a belief that U.S. power can be used for moral purposes; a scepticism about the ability of international law and institutions to solve serious security problems; and finally, a view that ambitious social engineering often leads to unexpected consequences and often undermines its own ends.”¹⁸²

Charles Krauthammer in a response to one of Fukuyama’s articles related to his subsequent book, argues that Fukuyama and others are mistaken to believe that the neoconservative foreign policy doctrine, which he argues is the foundation of the Bush Doctrine, is in anyway in decline. Rather he argues that if anything, the neoconservative vision, once a position of dissent, has now been adopted by a wide audience around the world. In a practical sense, neoconservative foreign policy has been disseminated throughout the ranks of those implementing foreign policy operations in diplomacy and the armed forces.¹⁸³

“The remarkable fact that the Bush Doctrine is, essentially, a synonym for neoconservative foreign policy marks neoconservatism’s own transition from a position of dissidence, which it occupied during the first Bush administration and the Clinton years, to governance. Neoconservative foreign policy, one might say, has reached maturity.”¹⁸⁴

Richard Perle has echoed this sentiment in interviews, that neoconservative foreign policy is now the dominant paradigm in conservative thought, and argues that the neoconservative influence is not likely to disappear even if future administrations does not include particular individuals:

“I find one of the sillier ideas is the notion, and you hear it all the time, American policy has been hijacked by a handful of people, and as soon as they are out of there we are going to go back to the way it was. They are wrong about that because we are not the same people we were before.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Francis Fukuyama, ‘After the Neocons – America at the Crossroads’ (London: Profile Books) Pages 4-5

¹⁸³ Charles Krauthammer ‘The Neoconservative Convergence’ *Commentary*, July 5 2005, reprinted in *FrontPage Magazine*, <http://www.frontpagemag.com> (accessed on November 1 2006)

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Richard Perle interviewed in documentary, Director/Writer: Eugene Jarecki, ‘Why We Fight’ (US: Sony Pictures Classics, UK: BBC Storyville) 2005

The perhaps most common usage of the term ‘Neocon’ is in the context of conspiracy theories placing the neoconservatives as these puppeteers of the George W. Bush administration. There are a number of these theories and this paper has consciously avoided the temptation to include a discussion of their ideas so as to not distract from the task at hand, that is understanding the trends in contemporary neoconservatism and the changes it has gone through in recent years.

This paper does not strongly support the argument that the neoconservatives ran a lengthy and driven campaign to persuade policymakers to go to war in Iraq. William Kristol’s editorial ‘Saddam Must Go’ is often quoted as the starting point for such a campaign¹⁸⁶, and this paper does find that for approximately one year following the editorial’s publication in 1998 *The Weekly Standard* devoted considerable attention to Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

This is to say that whilst regime change in Iraq was a foreign policy target to the neoconservatives, *The Weekly Standard* favoured regime change by proxy, by supporting local opposition groups such as that led by Chalabi and Kurdish militia groups. Whilst their campaign included suggestions of a ground attack, it was not the only method advocated, albeit the most provocative.

In the wake of the events of September 11 2001 this programme was resumed and *The Weekly Standard* took a number of heavily criticised positions. They emphasised the existence of a link between Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq and Osama bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda network. A claim now widely believed to be wrong.

They were clearly strong advocates of a military invasion of Iraq during the build-up in 2002 and 2003, and staunch defenders of the Bush Doctrine and of George W. Bush himself since the apparent failure to bring about a liberal democracy in Iraq.

The Project for the New American Century is frequently mentioned with respect to the invasion of Iraq. This paper has not focused on the Project for the New American Century other than where their letters have on occasions been reprinted in *The Weekly Standard*. However, in many ways there is of course significant overlap and it seems fair to say that the two are in symbiosis with each other. As such, when William Kristol states that: “...I wouldn’t exaggerate the influence of the Project for the New American Century. It is a very small think tank but in some respects we argued for [...] elements of the Bush Doctrine before the Bush Doctrine existed...”¹⁸⁷, he is in a sense also talking of the influence of neoconservatism itself.

The Project for the New American Century, initially ran out of *The Weekly Standard*’s offices and by largely the same people. Explicitly intended to generate support for American global leadership, it has published a number of foreign policy recommendations in its letters and papers. As a sort of newsletter, these letters are far more to the point, and almost exclusively devoted to foreign policy. As such any study centred solely on PNAC publications would fail

¹⁸⁶ Craig Aaron, ‘Standard Issues’ *In These Times*, October 6 2005 <http://inthesetimes.com> (accessed on November 1 2006)

¹⁸⁷ William Kristol interviewed in documentary, Director/Writer: Eugene Jarecki, ‘Why We Fight’ (US: Sony Pictures Classics, UK: BBC Storyville) 2005

to incorporate the issues this paper has been able to cover given its wider reading of *The Weekly Standard*.

As this paper has demonstrated, *The Weekly Standard* advocated practically all the measures and policies that we associate with the Bush administration's war on terror, and did as William Kristol explained with reference to the Project for the New American Century, advocated many of these policies prior to the war on terror. The step from advocacy to influence is however, significant. Rather, this paper is more supportive of regarding the policy overlap as derived from a shared experience of reality.

In widening the context of this paper, the role of the neoconservatives can only be understood in their entanglement in the second Gulf War and their relationship to the George W. Bush administration. Whilst this paper has attempted to study the neoconservatives through *The Weekly Standard*, as a source of ethnographic material of sorts, other studies have focused more so on the individual neoconservatives themselves.

'Imperial' is the way that many left wing commentators have long used with scorn in describing U.S. foreign policy. The discussion on the United States as an imperial power has recently widened across the political field and there are now serious academics and less serious pundits both in favour of, and of course, vehemently opposed to imperialism.

Chalmers Johnson dates imperial tendencies in U.S foreign policy essentially to the Second World War, in particular to the end when the United States bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki as deterrence, not to the Japanese, but to the Soviet Union, and represents as such an act to establish a dominant position in the post-war world. Johnson does not theorise 'Empire' but finds that the enormous military power of the United States which was built during the Cold War, and its activities, have been largely concealed to the American public. The empire which Johnson is referring to is the network of military bases that the U.S. maintain throughout the world, the professionalisation of its military and the power this is intended to exude on potentially competitive countries.¹⁸⁸

Niall Ferguson is remarkably honest about the imperial project, and argues that rather than criticise the infrastructure and the policies as such, what is worth criticising is the tendency to deny the imperial ambitions of the United States. In his accounts, empires eventually fail chiefly because they fail to embrace their 'nature'.¹⁸⁹ The neoconservatives could be understood in this sense, from a positive perspective, as the transformative intellectuals needed to reform, not the application of policy, but how it is represented. This has by all accounts failed, nor has it been the conscious intention of the neoconservatives, and it is not within the scope of this paper to speculate whether the neoconservatives have been instrumental in bringing the discussion on Empire to the surface.

¹⁸⁸ Chalmers Johnson, 'Blowback – The Costs and Consequences of American Empire' 2000 (New York: Henry Holt & Co.); 'The Sorrows of Empire – Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic' 2004 (New York: Metropolitan Books)

¹⁸⁹ Niall Ferguson, 'Empire: The Rise and Fall of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power' 2003 (London: Allen Lane); 'Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire' 2004 (London: Allen Lane)

The neoconservatives are for obvious reasons of little interest to the progression of events in the context of world systems theory or global systemic anthropology, where the emphasis is on capital formation and capital decentralisation, in long term historical change.

Wallerstein has criticised the imperial project of the United States and argued that it has been in decline for several decades and that the contemporary war on terror is only a catalyst to structural transformation. He traces the U.S. imperial project to the world recession in 1873 and was at the end of the world wars of the 20th century firmly on its way to being an imperial power.¹⁹⁰

The trend in the United States which Wallerstein identifies is generalised and theorised in Jonathan Friedman's account. Here the focus is on capital accumulation and capitalist distribution which is to say that a hegemon can only retain its dominance for so long, before structural transformations within its centre make it more profitable to invest elsewhere.¹⁹¹ Capital dispersal away from the centre, takes the shape of globalisation or colonisation and the former is the mechanism through which the hegemon loses its dominance, and the latter through which a self-aware hegemon, an empire, extends its dominance as Niall Ferguson suggested.

However, both the early neoconservatives and the second generation of neoconservatives can be usefully situated within this context. The early neoconservatives developed within the context of liberal anti-communism, the context in which the material and infrastructural imperial foundation itself developed, and they were active advocates of not only the defence industry, but the ideology of American greatness in all aspects of life. In contrast, the second generation of neoconservatives have come to the surface during a period of hegemonic decline and systemic transformation. The bewilderment of the lost cause of the struggle with an obvious enemy, the Soviet Union, makes the second generation of neoconservatives a puzzle in that they now do not seek a single obvious enemy against which to position themselves. Rather, the neoconservative project within the context of systematic transformation is that of opposition to said system. Imperial over-reach and grand strategies is in this sense the symptoms of a hegemon gasping for breath, but does not go willingly.

Gary Dorrien, a critic of the neoconservatives, and one of the writers drawn upon in our historical overview of the neoconservatives, is one of the voices situating the neoconservatives as integral to the imperial project of the United States. Having covered the early neoconservatives from a historical perspective he notes that the neoconservatives never really found non-foreign policy related issues comfortable, despite their insistence on fighting a 'culture war' during the 1990s.¹⁹²

He does however argue that the influence of the neoconservatives on the George W. Bush administration was not significant until the events of September 11 2001 made key players more susceptible to ideas of unipolarist policies. As such, Dorrien finds that the neoconservatives experienced eight years as critics of Clintonite foreign policy, and a further

¹⁹⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The Decline of American Power: the U.S. in a Chaotic World' 2003 (New York: New Press)

¹⁹¹ Jonathan Friedman and Christopher Chase-Dunn 'Hegemonic Declines: Past and Present' 2004 (Boulder: Paradigm Press)

¹⁹² Gary Dorrien, 'Imperial Designs – Neoconservatism and the New Pax Americana' 2004 (New York: Routledge)

seven months where they, in their high ranking appointments, had to continue along the same path.¹⁹³

Dorrien argues that the neoconservative project, the notion of perpetual war and nation-building, are the key stones of an imperial project. As such he finds that the invasion of Iraq to the neoconservatives was only a first step. The neoconservative project to Dorrien goes beyond the present and is part of a world order constructed and maintained by the unipolar force of the United States.¹⁹⁴

Another way of situating the neoconservatives in the war on terror is as the apologists of the military industrial complex. This is how the documentary *Why We Fight*, by film maker Eugene Jarecki, situate the neoconservatives. Drawing on former President Dwight D. Eisenhower's farewell address in 1961, in which he warned of the deteriorating effects on democracy that the military industrial complex asserts, Gwynne Dyer states that:

“As Eisenhower said, the military industrial complex is really three components. There's the military professionals; there is defence industry, and there is congress. There is now a forth component and that is the think tanks.”¹⁹⁵

The documentary places a heavy emphasis on the role of think tanks, such as William Kristol's Project for the New American Century, in creating reasons for the United States to intervene with its military around the globe. This argument is in many ways supported by a study of *The Weekly Standard*, which prides itself with being hand delivered to every member of congress where the defence budget is negotiated. *The Weekly Standard* has throughout its publication been in favour of increasing defence expenditure as this paper has shown in sections 3.2.3 and 3.4.1.

This however, places the neoconservatives as subservient to the defence industry and this is not how they are typically thought of. Given their more general American politics and their concern with anti-Americanism, national security and the American way of life, it is not completely realistic to understand them too narrowly as the protagonists of particular industrial interests. This is not to say that there is no symbiosis. The segments of the corporate sector which benefit from American militarism and defence expenditure, clearly also benefit from the intellectual elite advocating such spending.

Michael Lind traces the development of neoconservatism not only as originating on the left wing of American politics, but argues that it has closely imitated the institutions and analytical framework of the far left as well. As such he argues that today's neoconservatives are intellectual heirs not only of the early neoconservatives, but also of the Trotskyites.

This is contrary to the conclusion of this paper, which has demonstrated the how, what is in this paper referred to as the second generation of neoconservatives, are in many ways disconnected from the ideas held by the early neoconservatives. The idea of 'nation building'

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Gwynne Dyer interviewed in documentary, Director/Writer: Eugene Jarecki, 'Why We Fight' (US: Sony Pictures Classics, UK: BBC Storyville) 2005

in particular clearly illustrates this disruption. This paper has outlined the rationale of ‘nation building’ for the second generation of neoconservatives, and it is in stark contrast to the disillusionment the early neoconservatives held with ‘social engineering’ as a concept and as practised.

That is, the early neoconservatives were the staunchest critics of ‘social engineering’, a project comparable to the regime change and subsequent ‘nation building’ which *The Weekly Standard* advocated in the case of Iraq. This inconsistency is remarkable and suggests a change within the neoconservative ideology, which corresponds to the change in participants.

This suggests that neoconservatism cannot be studied as an institution which propagates its intrinsic values completely. If we take Irving Kristol’s word for it, neoconservatism is not an ideology but a persuasion, a perspective from which the world is analysed and understood, then the changing neoconservative agenda would merely be a response to a changing context.

This study has found nothing to suggest that neoconservatism is not an ideology, other than perhaps its limited number of subscribers. As the number of self-confessed neoconservatives is slight, this would go a long way in understanding the dramatic change in perspective, as it makes the impact of influential voices within the movement all the more noticeable. *The Weekly Standard* is one such voice and as the heirs to *The Public Interest*, it is now shaping and reflecting contemporary neoconservatism.

As such this paper has suggested that the change in participants is significant. The second generation of neoconservatives did not defect from other, often left leaning, political movements, but defected, if from anywhere, from the mainstream conservative movement. Rather they grew up with neoconservatism, or conservatism in the fashion of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, where some of the key contributors are even sons of the early neoconservatives, the William and Irving Kristol, and John and Norman Podhoretz.

This is a key distinction for this paper. An ideology such as neoconservatism cannot be studied as greater than its constituent parts. All ideologies are clearly subject to change, as the participants change. However, given the relative youth of neoconservatism, the lack of a central text and the limited number of subscribers it is simply that much more susceptible to change. This is likely how neoconservatism survived its first death, and quite possible how it will survive the setback caused by the current military failure in Iraq.

Another way in which the neoconservatives have been situated, and which this paper has only touched upon briefly, is as Straussians. From the writing and teaching of philosopher Leo Strauss, the argument has been raised that he advocated a particular role to the intellectual elites of society, and the neoconservatives are often cited as now filling that position. The role of Strauss’ intellectuals is to propagate a vision of the ideal society to the general citizen and by cunning and deception strive to realise that ideal even if this involves acting in a manner counterintuitive to those ideals.

In the case of the neoconservatives this argument applies in the ‘noble lie’ of arguing for a war with Iraq on the basis of it possessing weapons of mass destruction and as such posing

an ‘imminent threat’ to the U.S. and its allies. This deception is in the Straussian sense benign because its purpose is to propagate liberal democracy in the Middle East.

One would of course think that such a Machiavellian argument would be applicable to all hawkish politicians, but it is typically backed up by some overlap of famous neoconservatives with Leo Strauss and his students. Paul Wolfowitz for example was a student of Allan Bloom, Strauss’ closest student, often referred to as his disciple. Irving Kristol also expressed a great degree of reverence for Leo Strauss as a political philosopher.

In reviewing *The Weekly Standard*, this investigation came across some references to Strauss and Bloom, and even if it would be counterintuitive for the neoconservatives to publicly announce their support for the philosopher if their methodology included deception of ‘noble lies’, a brief summary of these articles seems pertinent.

Peter Berkowitz in 2003 seeks to set the record straight, presumably to cast the neoconservatives in a more benevolent light than the mainstream and alternative press had by then began to cast. He argues that the teachings of Strauss are widely misunderstood. He does however concede that the Straussian influence on neoconservatism is profound, albeit not in the way it is often thought of. He suggests that rather than a cynical and illiberal philosopher, Strauss was a strong defender of liberal democracy, not because it was a perfect system, but because it was “...the form of government best suited to the protection and enjoyment of human liberty”¹⁹⁶.

This is also how Berkowitz understands Strauss’ advocacy of religion as a positive influence on society, despite his own atheism. In summary, Berkowitz identifies a selection of lessons from Strauss that the subsequent neoconservatives took to heart:

“The urgency of defending liberal democracy by encouraging its virtues, combating its vices, and never losing sight of its enemies is the great political lesson that those of his students who became neoconservatives embraced.”¹⁹⁷

Berkowitz has also reviewed Kenneth Hart Green’s anthology on Leo Strauss, in which it is argued that Strauss took his Jewish legacy seriously and derived many of his ideas from Judaism. Berkowitz argues that whilst it is impossible to categorise Strauss as a religious believer, he did have a great deal of respect for the religious beliefs of others when they did not undermine their intellect.¹⁹⁸

Religion is not a dominant topic of *The Weekly Standard*, but there are a number of references, and it would constitute an interesting field of inquiry for other reviewers more knowledgeable on the topic.

It is perhaps in Allan Bloom’s writing that we can find more immediate overlap. Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) was an attack on the educational system and parenthood,

¹⁹⁶ Peter Berkowitz, ‘What Hath Strauss Wrought?’ *The Weekly Standard*, June 2 2003, Page 14

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.* p.15

¹⁹⁸ Peter Berkowitz, ‘The Reason of Revelation’ *The Weekly Standard*, May 25 1998, Pages 31-34

which he considered responsible for the spread of nihilism and relativism.¹⁹⁹ This is of course consistent with the attack on adversary culture which the early neoconservatives were associated with. Bloom was a student of Leo Strauss, and *The Weekly Standard* has devoted occasional attention to him.²⁰⁰

This investigation of the neoconservatives was originally conceived as a continuation of an undergraduate paper in which it was argued that the current paradigm of misrepresentation of ‘the other’ as a political tool on a hitherto unimaginable scale, potentially constituted the end of anthropology. Whilst this paper was originally intended as a staunch critique of neoconservatism, it did not materialise as particularly outright criticism. Rather what I believe that this paper presents is a more nuanced picture of the neoconservatives and *The Weekly Standard* than what is perhaps the norm. The typical presentation of neoconservatives is either one of strong support, but more commonly one of vehement discontent.

In both cases attention is given to detail, that is to particular statements on particular topics. As such many reviews, such as some referenced above, focus on the 1998 PNAC letter to at-the-time President Clinton, urging him to take action against Iraq and the editorial in *The Weekly Standard* ‘Saddam Must Go’ from the year before. These are important articles, but they constitute only a fraction of the arguments and topics covered by the neoconservatives.

Whilst a study of the PNAC would have generated a far more foreign policy oriented review, this review of *The Weekly Standard* has revealed the width and breadth of neoconservative thinking during at least a portion of recent history.

What is in many ways the major conclusion of this paper, is that the neoconservatives as they have presented themselves and their key arguments, are more of an aberration in history than it is norm. This is to say that the ‘Neocon’ as warmonger and idealistic foreign policy hawk, is neither a new phenomena nor an exclusively neoconservative position, but what is new about this scenario is that this has become the central tenet of the ideology, that with which it is unequivocally associated with in popular and academic thought.

A review of the issues covered by the early neoconservatives, supports this claim. As does statements and texts by recently defected neoconservative Francis Fukuyama. In the days before the 2006 U.S. mid-term elections, prominent neoconservatives Kenneth Adelman, Richard Perle and David Frum have all publicly denounced the implementation of the Bush Doctrine, which they themselves were instrumental in formulating.²⁰¹ This is perhaps better understood as a tactic to distance themselves from an increasingly unpopular White House administration than as a change in ideas.

Whilst the material provided by journalists such as David Rose, the journalist interviewing Adelman, Perle and Frum, is fascinating, it merely confirms the mainstream view of the neoconservatives as nothing other than foreign policy hawks. Part of the problem is that it is very easy to pick out selections from the material provided in print by *The Weekly Standard*,

¹⁹⁹ Allan Bloom, ‘The Closing of the American Mind’ 1987 (New York: Simon and Schuster)

²⁰⁰ Werner J. Dannhauser, ‘My Friend, Allan Bloom’ *The Weekly Standard*, Pages 43-47

Pia Catton, ‘Still Bloom-ing’ *The Weekly Standard*, June 2 1997, Pages 12-13

²⁰¹ David Rose, ‘Neo Culpa’ *Vanity Fair*, November 3 2006, <http://www.vanityfair.com> (accessed on November 6 2006)

Commentary, formerly *The Public Interest*, and Project for the New American Century and American Enterprise Institute.

The articles by David Rose also reconfirm the methodological problem of the anthropologist in dealing with subjects of considerable status and a political agenda which overlaps that of academia. David Rose gets access to these prominent neoconservatives at a time when they choose to distance themselves from the movement. This discretionary access would not be satisfactory to the anthropologist, nor would the clandestine methods of the investigative reporter who could dig up connections but would lack overarching context.

As such, the literary methodology of this paper does not uncover secret relationships between frequent contributors and key members of the Bush administration, the defence industry or congress. As an edited magazine, the texts in *The Weekly Standard* conform to the broad agenda of the neoconservative project. Therefore, this study of the neoconservatives through a single media outlet provides an opportunity to isolate the significant changes that have occurred over the past decade.

There are a number of key topics with which the neoconservatives are associated, the War on Terror and Iraq being at the forefront. This paper has largely looked in the other direction, and much of the focus has been on the less frequently cited topics. When the editors of major newspapers proclaim neoconservatism dead today, we need to keep in mind that the major neoconservatives did the same more than a decade ago. In the years between the Cold War and the War on Terror, the second generation of neoconservatives, that of *The Weekly Standard*, remained relevant to U.S. politics because they were able to speak with authority on a range of topics, not primarily as foreign policy experts, but as bipartisan analysts and eloquent critics of the Democratic Party as well as factions of the conservative movement.

In short, this is to say that the general understanding of the neoconservatives of today, as 'Neocons', is as much misleading as it is true. The neoconservatives have pursued the foreign policy their more reasonable critics accuse them of, a foreign policy programme that this paper has referred to as 'idealistic hawkishness', primarily but not exclusively since the events of September 11 2001. But their authority rests on a wider foundation, and as such this paper does not consider it self-evident that the failure to bring about liberal democracy in Iraq, automates the death of the ideology.

There is a huge gap in the documentation of the neoconservatives. Following the first 'death' of neoconservatism in the early 1990s, it seems no one cared to investigate what the retired 'Cold Warriors' turned their attention to, and instead a number of historical and biographical accounts of neoconservatism were produced. Following September 11 2001 the gaze of media and academia was once again turned to the neoconservatives, and as the Bush administration seemingly replicated what William Kristol and his fellow travellers at *The Weekly Standard* and Project for the New American Century had argued in editorials and open letters, there was widespread belief that they essentially directed the administration.

The gap in coverage however was never bridged. There exist today only two versions of the neoconservatives, the 'Cold Warriors' and the 'Neocons'. These categories are not enough. This paper has sought to nuance the picture painted of the second generation of neoconservatives, the 'Neocons', not with the purpose of vindication or apology, but rather to facilitate a critique based on a fuller picture.

5 Bibliography

5.1 Primary Literature

- Kristol, William (Editor) and Fred Barnes (Executive Editor)
The Weekly Standard (New York: News America Publishing Incorporated)
Vol.1 No.1-49, September 18 1995-September 2 1996 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Publishing Incorporated)
Vol.2 No.1-50, September 16 1996-September 8 1997 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Publishing Incorporated)
Vol.3 No.1-49, September 15 1997-September 7 1998 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.4 No.1-48, September 14 1998-September 13 1999 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.5 No.1-48, September 20 1999-September 11 2000 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.6 No.1-48, September 18 2000-September 10 2001 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.7 No.1-48, September 17 2001-September 9 2002 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.8 No.1-48, September 16 2002-September 1 2003 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.9 No.1-48, September 15 2003-September 6 2004 (ISSN 1083-3013)
- The Weekly Standard* (New York: News America Incorporated)
Vol.10 No.1-47, September 13 2004-September 5 2005 (ISSN 1083-3013)

5.2 Secondary Material

Aaron, Craig

2005 Standard Issues *In These Times*, October 6 2005, <http://inthesetimes.com> (accessed November 1 2006)

Barry, Tom

2004 Iraq War Product of Neocon Philosophy of Intelligence *The Right Web*, February 12 2004, <http://www.irc-online.org> (accessed November 7 2006)

Bell, Daniel

1976 *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books)

Berman, Paul

2003 *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company)

Beeson, Marc

The Rise of the 'Neocons' and the Evolution of American Foreign Policy (Australia: University of Queensland)

Bloom, Allan

1987 *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc.)

Boot, Max

2002 What the Heck is a 'Neocon'? *The Wall Street Journal*, December 30 2002, reprinted in *OpinionJournal*, <http://www.opinionjournal.com> (accessed March 12 2006)

Cassidy, John

2006 Murdoch's Game *The New Yorker*, October 16 2006 <http://thenewyorker.com> (accessed November 1 2006)

Dorrien, Gary

1993 *The Neoconservative Mind – Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press)

2004 *Imperial Designs – Neoconservatism and the New Pax Americana* (New York: Routledge)

Ferguson, Niall

2003 *Empire: The Rise and Fall of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books)

2004 *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London & New York: Penguin Press)

Friedman, Jonathan and Christopher Chase-Dunn (eds.)

2004 'Hegemonic Declines: Past and Present' (Boulder: Paradigm Press)

Friedman, Murray

2003 The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish intellectuals and the shaping of public policy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Frum, David

2005 The Right Man – An inside account of the Bush White House (Toronto: Random House)

Frum, David and Richard Perle

2003 An End to Evil, How to Win the War on Terror (New York: Ballantine Books)

Fukuyama, Francis

2006 After the Neocons – America at the Crossroads (London: Profile Books)

2006 America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy (New Haven: Yale University Press)

Gerson, Mark

1996 The Neoconservative Vision: from the Cold War to the culture wars (Lanham, MD: Madison Books)

Jarecki, Eugene

2005 Why We Fight (US: Sony Pictures Classics, UK: BBC Storyville)

Johnson, Chalmers

2000 Blowback – The Costs and Consequences of American Empire (New York: Henry Holt & Co.)

2004 The Sorrows of Empire – Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic (New York: Metropolitan Books)

Kagan, Robert

2003 Paradise & Power – America and Europe in the New World Order (London: Atlantic Books)

Kristol, Irving

1995 Neoconservatism, The Autobiography of an Idea (New York: Free Press)

1995 The Neoconservative Imagination: Essays in honour of Irving Kristol (Washington DC: AEI Press)

Klein, Naomi

2004 Baghdad Year Zero – Pillaging Iraq in Pursuit of a Neocon Utopia *Harper's Magazine*, September 2004

Lind, Michael

2004 A Tragedy of Errors *The Nation*, February 23 2004 <http://www.thenation.com> (accessed November 8 2006)

Lynch, Timothy J.

2005 'Kristol Balls: Neoconservative Visions of Political Islam (Leicester: University of Leicester) First Draft

Mead, Walter Russell

2005 Power, Terror, Peace, and War – America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk (New York: Vintage Books)

Micklethwait, John & Adrian Wooldridge

2004 The Right Nation – Conservative Power in America (London: Penguin Books)

Novak, Michael

1982 The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism (New York: Simon and Schuster)

Robertson, Neil G.

1999 The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss *The Journal of Politics Vol.61 No.1*

Rose, David

2006 Neo Culpa *Vanity Fair*, November 3 2006, <http://www.vanityfair.com> (accessed November 6 2006)

Stelzer, Irwin

2004 The Neocon Reader (New York: Grove Press)

Žižek, Slavoj

2002 Welcome to the Desert of the Real (London: Verso)