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Jacob Walker Murphy   April 16, 2013

Meditating Chaos

The Response of American Intellectuals to Threats and Acts of Terrorism:
1991–2011

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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In 1991, the Cold War came to an end. The United States was, for the first time in its history, unrivaled. Over the next two decades, America would contend with new threats entirely different from the nation–state antagonists of the last century. Terrorism had a profound effect on the country throughout this period. During this time, the American intellectual debate was in continuous flux, as traditional ideological boundaries melted away, and many prominent figures wandered among various intellectual camps. During three distinct periods –– 1991–2001, 2001–2003, 2003–2011 –– the absence or presence of terrorist attacks, the identity of the perpetrators, and the scale and aim of the assaults and government response all had a tremendous bearing on the priorities of American intellectuals. Indeed, the discussions that terrorism helped generate or refine often went on to transcend the subject confines of pure terrorism or counterterrorism. Over two decades, the Cold War intellectual structure had been substantively altered, with former partners now foes, and new alliances constructed.

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Introduction

With the official dissolution of the Soviet Union the previous day, on the 27th of December, 1991, for the first time in its history, the United States was militarily unrivaled by any nation-state. The respite, however, was brief. Over the next twenty years, the country would fight less definable enemies: forces not attached to sovereign nations, groups not bound by the standards of conventional war or the negotiations of traditional diplomacy. In February of 1993, the bombing of the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City began a series of terrorist attacks, diverse in origin, methods, and purpose, that would continue into the next millennium. The response to these strikes was equally varied, and, following the September 11th, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., became a matter of vigorous contention and extensive debate.

This thesis is an examination of how American intellectuals -- whether in government, the media, or the university -- responded to the challenges posed by terrorism, and threats of terrorism, during the twenty-year period between the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in December 1991, and the killing of the man who for many was the face of terrorism, Osama bin Laden, in May 2011. Responses have ranged from a muted reaction to early domestic terrorism, to later advocacy of aggressive military retaliation, to a questioning of the physical, financial, and moral debts being incurred to purchase a sense of security. The "majority opinion" among America's intellectuals has evolved according to the success, absence, and distance of terrorist attacks, the extent of the government response, and both domestic and international social developments.

This twenty year period may be divided into three distinct phases, bookended by particularly significant events, and distinguished by pronounced and prevailing theories of

response, or by the absence of them. The first stage runs from the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union through September 10th, 2001, encompassing a decade of American hegemony punctuated by a few instances of domestic terrorism, the ascendancy of al-Qaeda, and several attacks on American institutions abroad. The second period begins with the 9/11 attacks, and concludes with the end of the invasion stage of the Iraq War and President George W. Bush's declaration of an end to "major combat operations" on May 1, 2003. The third and final phase begins with the transition to an occupation mission in Iraq in spring 2003, and terminates with the death of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011.

While relatively constrained both geographically and temporally, this thesis must contend with the extraordinary variety of opinions that circulated among America's intellectuals during the era discussed. An encyclopedic discussion of each individual intellectual, their thoughts, and how these ideas changed over two decades would be exceedingly long, and would lack the context that this thesis hopes to provide. While being conscious of the independence of the intellectuals involved, this work will analyze their ideas as they reflect or oppose some of the principal "factions" within American society and politics. The work will focus on those theories and pronouncements that are either particularly evocative of a moment or a group, or that represent a significant strain of dissent.

Pursuant to these aims, each of the three main sections will include an analysis of the reactions to terrorism of three major ideological groups – the neoconservatives, the paleoconservatives, and, broadest of all, the American left. For the purposes of this paper, neoconservatives shall be defined as those whose philosophy has been distinguished by a powerful amalgamation recalling the Cold War right's aggressive anti-communism (redirected,

of course), and an embrace of the grand-scale idealism of President Woodrow Wilson, with its attendant desire to apply American principles of government and social ideals across the globe. Paleoconservatives will be defined as those whose foreign policy is more closely aligned with the "Old Right," tending to favor an isolationist policy while still sharing many social and domestic concerns with other conservative factions.

Of the three, the left is most difficult to define, encompassing as it does a tremendous range of different, at times conflicting, positions. Remaining conscious of the duality of the realist-idealist trend in leftist foreign policy history, most of the left-leaning thinkers discussed in this thesis will be proponents of American freedoms and democratic values, but will diverge significantly on whether the United States possesses either the right or responsibility to spread these values abroad. Central to the discussion of the "broad left" in this paper will be the division between the "traditional" left -- anti-war, often anti-institutional, sometimes anti-American -- (hereafter "left" or "leftists"), and the liberal left -- more interventionist, reforming but *not* anti-institutional, and generally more patriotic (hereafter "liberal" or "liberals".)

In addition to these three groups, this work will touch upon other particularly significant groups or sub-groups – the libertarians, socialists, Christian Right and Left, liberal hawks – that rose to prominence in the national intellectual debate, in some cases staying briefly, in others finding and embedding themselves within an unclaimed issue. Within the three ideological factions, a successful analysis must also discuss those who bear against the current, raising noteworthy objections to either policy or the parameters within which the national discussion is occurring. Finally, and critically, it will become apparent in the paper that the membership of these groups is by no means fixed -- that intellectuals have, at times, repeatedly switched

amongst them or occupied positions somewhere in between. Similarly, as the brief discussion above hinted, two specific groups' views may overlap, and an individual who identifies as a "liberal" may hold neoconservative or paleoconservative views, or vice versa.

<center>***</center>

This paper will not seek to examine American intellectuals -- their thoughts, works, and judgments -- without taking into account the complicating milieu of politics, popular social movements, and economic trends. This is not intended to be a work of "Great Men" or even "Great Thinkers." Rather, it aspires to be an analysis of men and women who are both extraordinary "intellectuals" -- policy-makers, activists, professors, etc. -- and "ordinary" residents of the turn of the century era that this essay examines. It will explore the junctures of multiple currents, looking at where American intellectuals have marched in lockstep with their countrymen, and where they have diverged from them, their international counterparts, and each other.

The Historiography of Terrorism Studies

The study of terrorism has proved uniquely problematic for historians. Often, this leads to it either being ignored, or passed off to a different discipline. When it has been engaged, it has created fissures within the academic community stemming not only from the nebulous nature of the subject, but from the fact that terrorism is among the international community's most pressing concerns, in addition to being a locus of domestic debate.

No other question plagues the study of terrorism more than its inability to define its subject, to provide the answer to the question: "What is terrorism?" Many articles or books on the issue begin with a disguised confession that arrival at any consistent definition is impossible, while others provide a definition that is either too *exclusive* -- thus robbing historians of the opportunity to compare different terrorist groups across time and place -- or, more often, too *inclusive* -- leaving the term so semantically satiated that it retains no value. Like most words, terrorism has meant different things to different people, in different places, in different times.

"Terror," -- *la terreur* -- and its etymological offshoots, are products of the French Revolution. Two centuries ago, terror was the province of government and established power, as tens of thousands of Frenchmen were executed during the so-called "Reign of Terror." A century ago, in the United States, "terrorist" was the pejorative accorded to anarchists and labor agitators. In the 1960s and 1970s, guerrillas and other insurgent groups operating both in the United States and throughout the world -- Northern Ireland, Palestine, Italy, Algeria, Germany -- began to be labelled terrorist organizations. Thus, while its provenance lies in the French Committee of Public Safety, for most of the twentieth century, extending in some cases back to the 1890s,

terrorism has been seen as the method of those *not* in power -- the stateless, the repressed, and the proletariat.

Setting aside the debate over historic terrorism, the study of modern terrorist activity further divides the scholars who pursue it, as well as the intellectual community of which they are a part. Does terrorism studies belong within the history department? Or is it an issue for political science? Does its global nature root it within international relations? Research on terrorism engages not only these disciplines, but other fields across the university system as well -- sociology, anthropology, economics, religion, philosophy, psychology -- an array befitting an extremely complex issue that usually incorporates matters of faith, cultural autonomy, political expression, and international finance.

At its birth in the 1970s, terrorism studies was an academic-policy hybrid. In journals like *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (1977) or books like J. Bowyer Bell's *A Time of Terror* (1978), scholars conducted research on this resuscitated form of what Bell called "revolutionary violence," but with the goal of providing policy orientations. This characteristic has stuck with the field as it developed in later decades, particularly after September 11th. The historiography of terrorism is one dominated by policy concerns, works written for application to the present. This itself creates, among some academics, an aversion to study the topic -- the historians who seek understanding of the terrorist, or venture criticism of the response to terrorism, risk being accused of insensitivity, of "egg-headedness," or even sedition. On the other hand, the historians whose simple use of the word "terrorist," as understood under the "state-centric" model, might be accused by their colleagues of being "mere handmaidens to power."[1]

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[1] Cited in Beverly Gage, "Terrorism and the American Experience," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (June 2011) http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/teaching/2011_06/article.html [accessed September 20, 2012].

Around this dichotomy competing schools have struggled. Noam Chomsky has long denounced the policy orientation of terrorism studies, arguing that it exculpates the powerful while condemning the weak: "You have to find a definition that excludes the terror *we* carry out against *them*, and includes the terror that *they* carry out against *us*. And that's rather difficult."[2] The advent of the "critical terrorism studies" (CTS) approach, formally declared in 2006 but traceable to dissenting scholars, like Chomsky, in previous decades, turns the epistemological framework within which "orthodox" terrorism studies operates -- the state-centric model -- into the structure against which this new method pushes. In its effort to counter the traditional school, critical terrorism studies does away with the air of rectitude that, in their mind, has contaminated previous work in the discipline. For the adherent of this new sub-discipline, the old school panders to a Western, state-centric, establishment, where the state-government apparatus is inherently good (and the victim), and the repressed (the terrorists) are the evil perpetrators. CTS tends to seek cultural context and historic motivation, to understand *why* a terrorist does what he or she does.

A related debate, one that precedes CTS, is whether a nation-state may be considered a terrorist, and whether methods of modern warfare may be classified as terrorism. Some argue that the use of a bomb against civilian populations represents a single standard that must be applied to all -- country, organization, individual -- alike. Others contend that, when committed in conventional warfare, bombing is simply a tragic reality of war. Still others maintain a position in the middle: that nations bombing noncombatants are indeed committing a horrific crime, perhaps one on par with terrorism, but meriting a different name.

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[2] Ibid. (Chomsky, cited in)

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Much of history's credibility as a discipline lies in its ability to look back, to use hindsight as the lens that dispels past uncertainty, and to wield the passage of time as the weapon that penetrates through the myths and illusions propagated and harbored by those of the period being studied. History is, by definition, a study of the past, but often of a more distant past -- one measured in decades or centuries. Some historians choose their subjects because they seek a better understanding of events or movements long completed. Others seem to hold to Faulkner's apothegm: "The past is never dead; it is not even past," and engage the "before" in order to better comprehend the "after." The latter are still careful not to write with the present in mind, as if all history has been a conscious push towards modernity.

Any history of terrorism, then, is problematic for the historian. As a phenomenon, terrorism continues to exist throughout the world. It has no beginning event or ending date to point to, in the way that European historians or Renaissance experts might highlight 1453, and the fall of Constantinople. As a form of violence, the practice of terrorism, being accessible by not only nation-states but smaller organizations and even individuals, defies bookending. Historians may disagree about the legacy of World War Two, but most will agree that the conflict formally ended on September 2, 1945, with the surrender of Japan. Even guerrilla combat, a far less formal exercise than world war, can usually be traced to a fairly specific event, or to a particular unpopular policy.

Terrorism, on the other hand, lacks the centralization necessary to determine continuity, and to identify start and finish. For example, many Islamic terrorists -- towards whom most of the intellectuals of this paper will be reacting -- say their aim is the destruction of the United

States and/or the elimination of Israel -- aims that are indeed clearly stated but, by virtue of their

audacity, essentially abstract. This raises the question of whether Muslim terrorism is a "war" or

military "campaign" in which events like September 11th are "battles"; or whether this variety of

terrorism might be better thought of as a movement, a violent cultural and political backlash that

represents the latest stage in a progression of war that increasingly targets civilians rather than

combatants.

If the historian adheres to a limited interpretation of his mission, then academia must wait

until terrorism either succeeds -- whether that success takes the form of something as epoch-

ending as the collapse of Western civilization -- or is eliminated, before being able to study the

causes, methods, and reaction to this phenomenon in full. The scholar is warned against the

temptation to look down upon history from his own Olympian perch, or to transgress the bounds

of the discipline by engaging in Whiggish history or presentism. Terrorism being a current issue

that provokes powerful emotions and strong feelings of triumph or victimhood, the tendency to

lapse into un-professional or un-academic standards is stronger than it is with, say, eighteenth

century English bread riots, debates over which are still lively and ongoing, but which temporal

distance has rendered significantly less tempestuous and dramatic.

Terrorism, however, is an issue that must be engaged, and not only by policy makers,

partisan think tanks, and "security specialists." It must be engaged by historians *because* it is

already debated by the aforementioned groups. It is a word thrown about with equal abandon by

politicians eager to establish their national security credibility, and media members who apply it

to everything from a random "lone-wolf" shooting in an American suburb to the concerted

attacks on the World Trade Center and European transit systems.

While scholars of a dozen fields chart and write the history of terrorism in our time and in decades and centuries prior, we must also examine the *reaction* to terrorism. For it is the response to events like Oklahoma City, September 11th, and the London transit bombings that is most revealing, and most consequential, as the United States and other democratic nations either forge through the threat that terrorism poses, or become embroiled in a morass of international conflict and domestic unrest. In the last decade, dozens of books have been written on the political counteraction to terrorism -- specifically, the American decision to go to war in Afghanistan and, later, Iraq. Sociological studies have started to examine the effect of terrorist acts on American electoral politics.

The intellectual response to terrorism offers another, relatively unexplored, area for terrorism studies to investigate. American intellectuals have had to grapple on an ideological plane with the complexities of terrorism -- the need to achieve perspective without becoming too disconnected; the need to understand the motivations of terrorists without appearing sympathetic to them; the need to reconcile their intellectual integrity with their aversion to the methods of groups like al-Qaeda. Such a struggle, often both internal, in the conscience of the thinker, and external, in debates between various American intellectuals, yields a rich and winding narrative full of contradictions, exceptions, and rationalizations. Still, the question remains: "Why intellectuals?" While they are not particularly representative of the nation they inhabit, and while their importance has been much disputed, intellectuals have been subject to the same experiential leveling that affects everyone in an area touched by terrorism. Terrorism is a form of violence, but it is also theater, staged for as broad an audience as possible; September 11th was illustrative of this.   With a bomb and dedication to an idea being all that is required for a

terrorist to work, the American intellectual has been confronted with the most democratic and, in many ways, intellectual form of violence.

Part One: "The End of History"

As Americans marked the conclusion of 1991 and the start of 1992, they also celebrated

the first year in almost half a century without the specter of the Cold War. In the previous weeks,

the Soviet Union's prolonged deterioration culminated in the Supreme Soviet's declaration of

official dissolution. Communism, which had succeeded fascism as America's ideological enemy

immediately after the Second World War, had lost its flagship. American power seemed

boundless; 1991 saw the first recorded use of the term "hyperpower."[3]

From the fall of the U.S.S.R. to 9/11, American intellectuals saw their nation's power as

unchallengeable and total. Terrorism was a minor concern, if a concern at all. Acts of terrorism

did occur -- most prominently the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the Oklahoma City

bombing in 1995, the embassy attacks in 1998, and the USS *Cole* attack in 2000 -- and they did

receive media coverage and spur intellectual discussion for a time. However, they were usually

rationalized or generally dismissed as the actions of attention-seeking malcontents. The focus at

every level of American society -- government, academia, media -- remained on conventional

wars. The era of major conflicts – defined in state versus state terms -- was believed to be over,

as significant wars had become infrequent, and certainly no nation would challenge the world's

sole remaining superpower. Domestic blows struck in defiance of the federal government -- like

the Oklahoma City bombing -- never gathered broad support, while attacks orchestrated by

foreign groups were aimed largely at U.S. personnel and facilities abroad and, thus, remained

provincial both literally and among the priorities of American intellectuals.

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[3] Cited in James M. Quirk, "Globalization at Risk: The Changing Preferences of States and Societies," *Managing Global Transitions* 6, no. 4 [Winter 2008]: 344, http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISSN/1581-6311/6_341-371.pdf [accessed March 17, 2013].

I. The United States and the Post-Cold War World: 1991-1993

As the Cold War came to a surprisingly swift end, American intellectuals had good reason to be optimistic. The nation was unrivaled in every measure of global influence: its military was second to none, its economy was twice the size of its closest competitor, Japan, and America was at the helm of the most powerful alliance in history – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Even before the fall of the U.S.S.R., America's stewardship of the Gulf War in early 1991 had resulted in a swift defeat of Iraq, the liberation of Kuwait, and a demonstration of the impotence of Saddam Hussein's rogue state policies.

One year later, Francis Fukuyama, a prominent neoconservative and former policy director in the Reagan Administration, turned his 1989 article, "The End of History," into a full-length book that proclaimed the inevitability of liberal democracy and capitalism. According to Fukuyama, Western liberalism, having disposed first of fascism and now of communism, was destined to spread across the earth. Like a neoconservative Marx, Fukuyama prophesied that the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" had been reached, that Western representative and parliamentary democracy had been proven to be "the final form of human government." The "*ideal* of liberal democracy*,*" Fukuyama wrote, "could not be improved upon."[4]

For the first time since its accession to "great power" status, the United States was seen to lack a significant threat, at least in the conventional state terms. While the period was punctuated by foreign crises and controversies -- the Balkans, Somalia and Rwanda, Sino-American relations and concern over China's human rights record, and Hussein's perennially unruly Iraq -- intellectuals' criticism of the Clinton Administration's handling of each of these

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[4] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* [1992; repr., New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006], i.

events was marked more by a frustration with the lack or mis-application of American power to shape them, and less by a concern that the crises threatened the United States itself.

Some American intellectuals did, however, perceive challenges from non-state actors. At the same time that Fukuyama published his influential text, a liberal academic named Benjamin Barber published a significant work of his own in *The Atlantic*. In his March 1992 article "Jihad vs. McWorld," Barber warned of the tension between the "two axial principles of our age – tribalism and globalism" and saw in the future the use of war "not as an instrument of policy but as an emblem of identity … an end in itself." Writing during the opening stages of the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia, Barber worried about a similar fate for the ex-Soviet republics, a fear of "hyperdisintegration." Although he used the term jihad in a broad sense of tribal warfare, Barber did explicitly address the danger that he believed religion posed to the stability of the McWorld. Religious fundamentalism, he wrote, constituted a new "hypernationalism … fractious and pulverizing, never integrating" – leading eventually to a "Lebanonization of the World."[5]

At the same time that Fukuyama and Barber were putting forth their visions of the post-Cold War world, a political scientist named Samuel Huntington addressed the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute. He delivered a speech that in 1993 became the article "The Clash of Civilizations?" Written in response to Fukuyama's upbeat expectations of the future, and drawing upon a 1990 *Atlantic* article by the British-American historian of Islam Bernard Lewis, Huntington disregarded the boundaries of traditional states and redrew the world map in terms of

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[5] Benjamin Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld," *The Atlantic*, Mar. 1992, 53-63.; Beginning in 1975, Lebanon had descended into a civil war that pit the nation's Christian and Muslim populations against each other. Lasting fifteen years, the conflict displaced around twenty percent of the population, killed 150,000, and was marked by frequent foreign involvement, including Syrian and Israeli invasions, andAmerican and European interventions.

ancient cultures, or civilizations. Foremost among those elements distinguishing different

cultures was religion. Huntington cited a passage from Lewis as a conclusion to his section on

Western-Islamic clashes:

> We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies
> and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the
> perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival [Islam] against our
> Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.[6]

History and hindsight would endow Huntington and Barber with the status of prophets, while

appearing to disprove Fukuyama's optimism.

II. The Domestic Turn
Oklahoma City in Context: 1992-1995

For pre-9/11 America, the word "terrorism" was probably most associated with the April

19, 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh and Terry

Nichols, an attack that killed 168 people.[7] The bombing stunned the nation, and was the

deadliest terrorist attack in the United States until September 11, 2001. Nineteen children were

killed, including sixteen under the age of six who died when the explosion tore through the

second floor daycare. For all of its seeming senselessness, the Oklahoma City bombing was a

methodically planned assault, carefully rationalized by its perpetrators, particularly McVeigh.

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[6] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* (online edition), Summer 1993, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations [accessed November 2, 2012]. In a response to Huntington, former Cold Warrior and ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick agreed that civilizations were important in this macro-analysis, and noted further that: "Immigration ... challenges the cosmopolitanism of Western societies. Religious tolerance is one thing; veiled girls in French schoolrooms are quite another. Such challenges are not welcome anywhere." Her prescient warning of the limits of multiculturalism, particularly with regards to religion and Europe, predated the European leadership's consensus by almost two decades. Jeane Kirkpatrick, "The Modernizing Imperative: Tradition and Change," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 72, no. 4 [September 1993]: 22-24, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045712?seq=1 [accessed November 2, 2012].

[7] William L. O'Neill, *A Bubble in Time* [Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009], 197.

Both he and Nichols were motivated by the federal government's controversial handling of the

1992 Ruby Ridge standoff with separatist Randy Weaver, and the bloody resolution to the 1993

Waco, Texas siege that ended with the deaths of four agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

Firearms and Explosives (ATF) as well as 82 members of the Branch Davidian sect.[8]

Randy Weaver, an Idaho man in his early forties, was a sometime associate of the white

supremacist group Aryan Nations. He was indicted on illegal firearms possession charges when

he refused to agree to a deal offered by the ATF which would have dropped the gun charge in

exchange for his cooperation and infiltration of the Aryan Nations. A clerical error gave him the

wrong date for his trial, and a bench warrant was issued for his apprehension when he missed his

court date. He eluded arrest for eighteen months, between February 1991 and August 1992. In

that August, six federal marshals positioned themselves at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, to conduct

surveillance of Weaver. Discovered by one of his dogs, the marshals became engaged in a

gunfight with Weaver, his son Sammy, and a family friend Kevin Harris, during which one of the

marshals and Sammy Weaver were killed.

From the 21st to the 31st of August, the federal government laid siege at Ruby Ridge. On

the 22nd, a government sniper fatally shot Vicki Weaver, Randy's wife, through the head as she

held the couple's ten month old baby. Weaver himself was wounded the same day, as was

Weaver's friend Kevin Harris. Nine days later, Randy Weaver and the surviving members of his

family surrendered to law enforcement.[9]

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[8] "McVeigh Offers Little Remorse in Letters," *The Topeka Capital-Journal*, June 10, 2001.

[9] *Report of the Ruby Ridge Task Force to the Office of Professional Responsibility of Investigation of Allegations of Improper Governmental Conduct in the Investigation, Apprehension and Prosecution of Randall C. Weaver and Kevin L. Harris*, June 10, 1994 http://www.justice.gov/opr/readingroom/rubyreportcover_39.pdf [accessed April 3, 2013].

Six months after the Ruby Ridge incident ended, another siege began near Waco, Texas, on February 28, 1993. This clash also started with the ATF, when agents attempted to perform a search of a property belonging to the Branch Davidians, a schismatic offshoot of the Seventh Day Adventists. As at Ruby Ridge, a firefight erupted, in which four ATF agents and six Branch Davidians were killed. Temporarily withdrawing, the government came back with Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) operatives, who surrounded the Mount Carmel compound where the Branch Davidians were holed up with their leader David Koresh.

Fifty days later, on April 19, 1993, the government used tanks, grenade launchers, and other military-grade weaponry (the Branch Davidians were also heavily armed, though not to the same extent) to break into the compound. Fires, the origin of which would be a point of contestation, broke out, preventing the escape of most of the besieged, and resulting in the death of a further 76 Davidians.[10] The handling of both the Ruby Ridge and Waco incidents by federal law enforcement agencies provoked widespread outcry, contributing to the growth of the anti-government militia movement, and spurring the formulation of the Oklahoma City attack.

In addition to this "political" terrorism directed at a government perceived as increasingly threatening and Leviathan-like, there was also terrorism that targeted the federal government's role in social controversies. For example, the bombing murder perpetrated by Eric Rudolph in Centennial Olympic Park during the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games was justified by Rudolph himself (nine years after the fact) as an assault against legalized abortion. During his years on the run, Rudolph also bombed several office buildings, nightclubs, and abortion and family planning clinics.

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[10] Alan A. Stone, *Report and Recommendations Concerning the Handling of Incidents Such as the Branch Davidian Standoff in Waco, Texas: To Deputy Attorney General Philip Heyman*, November 10, 1993, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/waco/stonerpt.html [accessed April 3, 2013].

Even during the year of Oklahoma City, however, domestic terrorism was not the neoconservatives' list of top priorities. There were no articles in either *Commentary* or *The Public Interest* dedicated to the Oklahoma City attack in the weeks and months following the bombing. In a November 1995 symposium published in *Commentary*, one of the refrains of the seventy-two intellectuals invited to comment on America's "National Prospect" was the dangers of the far-*left*. George Gilder, a conservative social commentator and intelligent design activist, wrote that:

> The national prospect … thrives in defiance of the bohemian agenda of secular hedonism, relativism, multiculturalism, gender revolution, environmental panic, nihilist arts and letters, and expropriation of the productive world … the establishment intellectuals … will reach out to Luddites and terrorists in the anti-capitalist backwaters of the third world.[11]

Only one of the respondents, Hoover Institute fellow and long time anti-communist Cold Warrior Arnold Beichman, even mentioned Oklahoma City, and he did so dismissively in his last paragraph of his contribution.concluding.[12] One of the most prominent neoconservatives, William Kristol, son of neoconservative paterfamilias Irving Kristol, and a neoconservative in his own right whose connections to anti-"Big Government" rhetoric ran through his position as Chief of Staff to former Vice President Dan Quayle, offered the rather terse opinion that attacks on the government like the Oklahoma City bombing were "not healthy."[13]

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[11] George Gilder, "The National Prospect: A Symposium," *Commentary* (online archive), November 1995, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-national-prospect/ [accessed February 10, 2013].

[12] Arnold Beichman, "The National Prospect: A Symposium," *Commentary* (online archive), November 1995, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-national-prospect/ [accessed February 10, 2013].

[13] Cited in "Combustible Rhetoric," Editorial, *New York Times*, April 27, 1995.

Paleoconservatives drew a radically different conclusion than the neoconservatives from Oklahoma City, and assigned it more importance. Joseph Bast, president of the libertarian Heartland Institute, wrote of the attack that:

> It is vital that the lesson drawn from Oklahoma City be this: *We must reduce the size and power of the federal government.* Only a return to the spirit and the letter of the Tenth Amendment – a devolution of power and responsibility to state and local governments and to "the people" – will restore peace between the American people and their government.[14]

Those on the right shared with many liberal and leftist intellectuals a hesitation regarding the measures taken in the aftermath of the bombing. One of the consequences of the attack (and of the first World Trade Center bombing two years earlier) was the passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which streamlined death penalty cases, restricted appeals, and limited the number of habeas corpus writs a detainee could file to one. The Clinton Administration also backed new, broader, surveillance proposals that would allow investigators to wiretap suspect conversations. Bast wrote of the U.S. government's response that, "Instead of producing peace, it would institutionalize a state of permanent war between the American people and their government."[15]

Bast and others went as far as to assert, with increasingly explicitness as time made their views seem less insensitive, that the blame for Oklahoma City lay at the feet of the federal government, with its tax collectors, curtailment of the right to bear arms, and environmental laws: "In a nation filled with victims of government injustices, it is not surprising that some angry young men seek to become heros [*sic*] by striking back." Bast acknowledged the Waco

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[14] Joseph Bast, "Libertarians, Conservatives, and the Oklahoma City Bombing," *Heartland Institute* [May 26, 1995] http://news.heartland.org/editorial/1995/05/26/libertarians-conservatives-and-oklahoma-city-bombing [accessed January 20, 2013].

[15] Ibid.

siege as the government act that McVeigh sought retribution for, but urged the reader not to

"focus too much attention on the events in Waco," – not because Waco did not justify Oklahoma

City, but because there were, "Thousands of lesser affronts to justice [that] occur every year that

could, perhaps as easily, act as the excuse for an Oklahoma City-style bombing." It was the

burden of the federal government, Bast wrote, "to regain people's trust."[16]

Those on the left found that Oklahoma City exposed a number of disturbing issues within

American society, and some of their concerns were reminiscent of those expressed by libertarians

like Bast. Of the initial assumptions that the bomber(s) must be Middle Eastern, Alexander

Cockburn wrote in *The Nation* that, "In a week when Robert McNamara was saying he's awfully

sorry he helped organize the killing of 3 million Vietnamese, this reflexive belief in American

incapacity to bomb … is odd." Cockburn went on to suggest that the attack was perhaps not

entirely unjustified, and should certainly have been expected:

> From perfervid denunciation of aliens, the press has moved to furious attacks on the
> 'extreme right,' the 'patriot' movement and their fanatic belief in freedom and hatred of
> government, notably the I.R.S. and the Federal Reserve … No reporter asks whether she
> [Attorney General Janet Reno] would care to reconsider their strategy at Waco in light of
> what happened in Oklahoma City. There are no flags at half-mast for those people gassed
> and incinerated courtesy of Janet and Bill two years earlier.[17]

Rejecting the idea that television, films, and talk radio "breed violence," he did argue that,

"Violence breeds violence. The U.S. Army does its job, and you don't need an Arab to tell which

way the fuse goes."[18]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Alexander Cockburn, "Beat The Devil: Journeys Amid Paranoia," *The Nation*, May 15, 1995, 659.

[18] Ibid., 660.

Two years after Oklahoma City, *The Nation* had abandoned its attempt at balance in its

handling of the attack. In an editorial coinciding with McVeigh's conviction, it listed the

following as inspirations for the bombing:

> …the tide of antigovernment rhetoric from the Republican mainstream and the hateful
> language of conservative talk radio; the National Rifle Association's portrayal of agents
> from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms as Nazi stormtroopers; the rapid rise
> of populist militias in thrall to theories about black helicopters and a Zionist Occupation
> Government; and a real government attack that had, however unintentionally, left
> seventy-two [*sic*] dead in Waco, Texas … and was still very much alive on the gun-show
> circuit … such were the currents and eddies that swept him toward his 'propaganda of the
> deed,' just as … killers of abortion providers could find context for their acts in the
> demonizing rhetoric streaming from parts of the anti-choice movement.[19]

While the left bristled with revulsion at the far right and McVeigh, a substantial part of

their anxiety relating to Oklahoma City came from the response to it. Only months after the

attack, legislation granting the government increased surveillance authority was on its way

through Congress. Seeking to capitalize on the pro-security spirit of the mid-90s, Clinton made

international terrorism a concern of his foreign policy plan during his 1996 re-election

campaign, and declared his intention to push back against those "states that refuse to play by the

rules we have all accepted for civilized behavior."[20] Richard Barnett (who cofounded the

progressive Institute for Policy Studies in 1963 after becoming disillusioned with his government

job), wrote in *The Nation* that the Administration's anti-terrorism rhetoric was just a covering for

a visionless America that "has yet to articulate clear goals ... other than staying top dog in the

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[19] Editors, "Getting McVeigh," *The Nation*, June 23, 1997, 3.

[20] Cited in Alison Mithcell, "Clinton, at U.N., Signs Treaty Banning All Nuclear Testing," *New York Times*, September 25, 1996.

next century ..." "International terrorism," Barnett went on, "serves as the successor myth to

International Communism."[21]

III. Al-Qaeda Comes to America: 1993-1998

One month after Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton was sworn in as President of the United

States, an Islamic terrorist cell led by Ramzi Yousef detonated a massive car bomb in the

subterranean garage of New York's World Trade Center. The explosion failed in its objective to

collapse the North Tower into the South Tower, but it did cause six deaths and over 1000 injuries.

Initially, suspicion fell on Serbian terrorist groups, but a small fragment of the detonated van

allowed investigators to trace the identification number to that of a vehicle rented by Mohammed

Salameh, one of Yousef's associates. Confirming this lead, Yousef sent a letter to *The New York

Times*, explaining his motive: "This action was done in response for the American political,

economical, and military support for Israel, the state of terrorism, and to the rest of the dictator

countries in the region."[22] Further, Yousef apparently hoped to inflict a sort of karmic retribution

on the nation in retaliation for the atomic bombings in 1945 of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that

concluded the Second World War. Yousef's attack was followed four months later by an FBI raid

on a warehouse where Muslim terrorists were in the process of making bombs. Their plans to

destroy several New York landmarks – the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, the George Washington

Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building, and, with the help of the

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[21] Richard J. Barnett, "The Terrorism Trap," *The Nation* (online archive), December 2, 1996, http://www.thenation.com/article/terrorism-trap [accessed January 20, 2013].

[22] Cited in Senate Judiciary Committee - Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, "Foreign Terrorists in America: Five Years After the World Trade Center," http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/1998_hr/s980224c.htm [accessed March 16, 2013].

Sudanese mission, the United Nations – were thwarted. The Clinton Administration chose to proceed with a regular trial in the civilian court system.

Yousef had cooperated with Omar Abdel-Rahman, known by his colorful epithet, the "Blind Sheik." Rahman had travelled widely before settling in the United States, and continuing to preach a virulent anti-Western and anti-American message: "Americans are descendants of apes and pigs who have been feeding from the dining tables of the Zionists, Communism, and colonialism."[23] Rahman operated outside of the "mainstream"; that is, his beliefs and operations were not common knowledge outside of those he mentored and preached to. Despite living in the middle of New York City, he managed to escape scrutiny for a time due to the fact that he proselytized in Arabic. Rahman had received support from an acquaintance of several years whom he met while fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan during the 1980s: Osama bin Laden.[24]

Bin Laden was an exorbitantly wealthy member of the bin Laden family of Saudi Arabia. The family had made at least five billion dollars in construction contracts with the Saudi state and neighboring Arab nations. Osama bin Laden himself had come into an inheritance worth at least a quarter of a billion dollars, and he used his wealth to purchase enough construction equipment – dump trucks, bulldozers, etc. – to build the trenches and tunnels and caves used by the guerrillas fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.[25] The *mujahedeen* among whom bin Laden fought, and with whom he would found the terrorist organization al-Qaeda ("the Base") around 1989, received funding from the Central Intelligence Agency during the Carter, Reagan, and

[23] Cited in Michelle Malkin, "The Blind Sheik and Our Muted President," *National Review Online*, January 9, 2013, http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/337217/blind-sheik-and-our-mute-president-michelle-malkin [accessed March 16, 2013].

[24] Robert Friedman, "The CIA and the Sheik," *The Village Voice*, March 30, 1993.

[25] Obituary, "Osama bin Laden," *The Economist*, May 5, 2011.

Bush I Administrations. A long-standing debate, one that continues to develop, revolves around the question of whether American aid was distributed directly to bin Laden and the more religiously radicalized members of the Afghan resistance.[26]

What is not disputed is that bin Laden's attitude toward the United States turned to loathing in 1990-1991. Beginning in August 1990, the United States dispatched troops to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield, to defend that kingdom against Iraq, and to prepare for the next year's Operation Desert Storm. The ruling House of Saud, which bin Laden viewed as heretical, could not be persuaded that it should reject the placement of American troops along its Iraqi border. Bin Laden was furious, and his protestations led to his expulsion from the kingdom in 1991 and the freezing of his financial assets. As a result, his fortune dwindled to around $30 million, and his familial allowance of seven million dollars per annum was severed, although he did continue to receive funds from several of his many family members.[27]

In 1996, bin Laden called for a holy war "against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places [Islam's holy sites of Mecca and Medina]."[28] This declaration took the form of a fatwa, a term for a Muslim legal opinion that has come to mean either a proclamation of war or a death sentence. The continued presence of American soldiers in Saudi Arabia would prompt his second fatwa, in 1998. This order listed three principal crimes committed by the United States:

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[26] Many news agencies state that bin Laden received CIA funding. Whether this is a result of actual research or views of bin Laden's Arab resistance and the *mujahedeen* as equivalent is difficult to know. Peter Bergen, a CNN counterterrorism analyst and one of the few Westerners to interview bin Laden (he conducted the first television interview with him) consistently argues that there is no evidence to support the claim that the CIA funded bin Laden. Further, the nature of CIA funding of the guerrillas during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan complicates the issue: the funds were funneled through Pakistani agencies.

[27] Obituary, "Osama bin Laden," *The Economist*, May 5, 2011.

[28] Cited in PBS Newshour "Bin Laden's Fatwa," PBS, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military/july-dec96/fatwa_1996.html [accessed March 12, 2013].

First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people … turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples …
Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance … the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres …
Third, if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq … and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into paper statelets and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the Peninsula.[29]

Bin Laden continued: "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – *civilian and military* – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it…[emphasis added]." He concluded by calling "on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans…"[30]

Accordingly, bin Laden's organization and other Islamic terrorist groups conducted several attacks on Western targets in the the 1990s. Several plots -- the intended hijacking of passenger planes over the Atlantic, the so-called Millennium plot to bomb Los Angeles International Airport -- came to naught, but some were executed. In 1996, the U.S. military Khobar housing complex in Saudi Arabia was bombed by Saudi Hezbollah. In 1997, an Egyptian Islamist group killed 58 tourists and 4 Egyptians at the nation's prized Temple of Hatsheput archaeological site in the "Luxor Massacre." One year later, the U.S. diplomatic corps suffered the highest profile attacks with the coordinated bombings of the American embassies in

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[29] Cited in PBS Newshour "Al Qaeda's Second Fatwa," PBS, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military/jan-june98/fatwa_1998.html [accessed March 12, 2013].

[30] Ibid.

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, on August 7, 1998. These attacks would push bin

Laden onto the nation's "Most Wanted" list.

IV. America Responds: Intellectuals and the Reaction to the Rise of Osama bin Laden: 1998-2001

Around this time, neoconservative suspicions regarding terrorism, and a lingering

concern over Iraq, began to coalesce into a theory most clearly (and, later, controversially)

articulated by Laurie Mylroie in her 2000 book, *Study of Revenge: Saddam Hussein's Unfinished

War Against America*. Mylroie, who taught at both Harvard University and the Naval War

College, contended that Hussein was the hand behind the 1993 World Trade Center attack, and

suggested that he had facilitated several of the other acts of Muslim terrorism in preceding years,

as well as the Oklahoma City bombing. Published by the neoconservative American Enterprise

Institute (AEI), the book was warmly received by the neoconservative intellectual community. It

acquired endorsements from former Reagan and Bush I appointee and then dean of Johns

Hopkins's School of Advanced International Studies Paul Wolfowitz, AEI Fellow and former

Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, former CIA Director James Woolsey, Senior AEI

Vice-President and former Assistant Secretary of State John Bolton, and I. Lewis Libby (most of

whom would become high-ranking members of the George W. Bush Administration). Mylroie's

book, however, was thin on evidence, and relied heavily on the fact that World Trade Center

bombing suspect Ramzi Yousef travelled with an Iraqi passport despite not being a citizen of

Iraq.

Mylroie's views were consistent with those of the neoconservatives who had been sounding the alarm about Iraq and urging the Clinton Administration to take action against Hussein during the second part of his presidency. Her views found a particularly high-ranking supporter in Perle, a former protégé of neoconservative Senator Henry Jackson and an integral member, with Woolsey, Wolfowitz, Bolton, and former National Security Advisor Elliot Abrams, of the "Project for the New American Century" (PNAC) think tank. PNAC was perhaps the most vocal group calling for regime change in Iraq during the late-1990s. By the end of the decade, the prolonged Iraqi disarmament crisis had reached its Clinton-era peak. U.N. resolutions dating to the end of the Gulf War had required the liquidation of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, to be verified by U.N. weapons inspectors. In the late nineties, Hussein would throw out the inspectors, broker a deal with the U.N. and let them back in, only to throw them out again.

An "Open Letter to the President," released on February 19, 1998 by PNAC, exhorted Clinton to step up action against Iraq and to make regime change the clear policy of the United States. Warning of Hussein's pursuit of WMDs, the letter asserted that Iraq posed a "danger to our friends, our allies, and to our nation." To facilitate Hussein's dethronement, the U.S. must recognize the Iraqi National Congress (INC) -- the U.S.-supported Iraqi opposition government in exile -- expand and/or establish safe zones in northern and southern Iraq, and "position U.S. ground force equipment in the region" to "protect and assist the anti-Saddam forces." In a reference to the ongoing Monica Lewinsky scandal, and a dismissal of their more traditionally conservative party comrades, the authors of the letter included, "In the present climate in Washington, some may misunderstand and misinterpret strong American action against Iraq as

having ulterior political motives ... Saddam must not become the beneficiary of an American domestic political controversy."[31] Bearing the signatures of Perle, former National Security Advisor Richard V. Allen, Bolton, Robert Kagan, *The Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol, *The New Republic* editor (and "liberal hawk") Martin Peretz, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfield, Wolfowitz, and over thirty others, this letter is one of the most significant and inclusive of neoconservative manifestos, and its importance as a foreign policy statement would transcend the late 90s and bear considerably on the crisis period of 2001-2003.[32] Notably absent in these letters and other documents is much mention of bin Laden or, indeed, Islamic terrorism itself. For most neoconservatives, strikes against Islamic terrorism were a means to a much greater end: a military policy against Iraq.

Other neoconservative intellectuals disagreed, and sought to redirect the discussion away from Iraq and back towards militant Islam. Steven Pomerantz, a former assistant director of the FBI and chief counter-terrorism officer, called on the Clinton White House to adopt a "significantly more aggressive diplomatic posture," to realize that the "fundamental problem … is that international terrorism is not only a crime. It is also … an act of war, and the United States needs to treat it as such." Pomerantz *did* call for action against those nations that supported or sheltered terrorists, but made no mention of Iraq, naming instead Iran, Libya, Sudan, and North Korea, and those countries – like Saudi Arabia and Greece – that were uncooperative in American investigations of terrorist acts.[33]

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[31] Elliot Abrams, et. al., "Open Letter to the President," Project for the New American Century, http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqclintonletter.htm [accessed January 14, 2013].

[32] Positions reflect the authors' status in 1998.

[33] Steven L. Pomerantz, "The Best Defense," *The New Republic*, August 31, 1998, 14.

The attitude towards bin Laden and Islamic terrorism in general was far more measured on the left -- even in the aftermath of the embassy bombings. Unlike the neoconservatives, leftist intellectuals were more likely to examine bin Laden on his own terms, as an individual, not as an agent of Afghan or Sudanese politics, and certainly not as an employee of Saddam Hussein. Robert Fisk, a British journalist among the few Western correspondents to speak with bin Laden, ridiculed Clinton's designation of bin Laden as America's top fugitive after the embassy bombings as "infantile." Fisk spoke with admiration of bin Laden, and his profiles of bin Laden portray a philanthropist ("When I first met bin Laden … he was building roads for isolated villages …"), a humble warrior ("'My fellow Muslims did much more than I. Many of them died but I am still alive.'"), and an avid reader ("I had the latest Beirut daily newspapers in my bag. He seized upon them and pored over their pages for almost half an hour …"). Fisk rejected the U.S. government's explanation of the embassy bombings ("hatred of America"), noting that they occurred on the eighth anniversary of the arrival of U.S. troops to defend Saudi Arabia. The implication was that American soldiers in that kingdom were viewed, not without justification, as a hostile symbol of imperialism. In essence, Fisk contended that a "hatred of America" was fundamentally different from a hatred of an American presence contaminating Muslim soil.[34]

The Clinton Administration's retaliation against bin Laden after the embassy bombings drew criticism not only from the neoconservatives but from the left as well. Two weeks after the embassy attacks, Clinton ordered Operation Infinite Reach against Sudan and Afghanistan. Several missiles launched from warships destroyed the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum, Sudan, which the Clinton Administration had alleged was involved in the

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[34] Robert Fisk, "Talks With Osama bin Laden," *The Nation*, September 21, 1998.

development of chemical weapons for terrorist organizations. Dozens of missiles were also fired into Afghanistan, where bin Laden had been operating behind the shelter of the country's Taliban rulers. Clinton made a point of emphasizing that the attacks "were not aimed at Islam."[35]

Somewhat surprisingly, *National Review* applauded the attacks, dismissing even the "cynical" motives ascribed to the bombings (like *The Daily Show*'s nickname: "Operation Desert Shield Me From Impeachment"). The magazine, run by conservative William F. Buckley since its 1955 founding, described the strikes as "a response to a real threat," targeting the "terrorist mastermind" Osama bin Laden. The magazine went on to call for the total defeat of bin Laden and his enablers: "Bin Laden ... is a new phenomenon, but we should not exaggerate either his novelty or the difficulty of defeating him ... he is a freelancer ... dependent on the support of renegade governments ... against which we have leverage." *NR* mentioned Afghanistan and Sudan but not Iraq. The article concluded by prophesying that "[bin Laden's] revolutionary ideology is increasingly discredited in the Muslim world ..."[36] In an earlier article, Buckley *did* describe Iraq as a remediable problem spot in a "war against terrorism," but for Hussein's periodic attempts to "shut down the UN inspections that the world relies on to deny him weapons of mass destruction."[37]

As for Clinton's claim that bombing of Muslim countries was not intended as an attack upon Islam itself, Buckley asked: "Why not?" When the U.S. bombed Iraq the next year in retaliation for violation of weapons inspection agreements, Clinton pointedly refused to allow bombing during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan. Buckley denounced this, and the decision to

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[35] Cited in Gustav Niebuhr, "After the Attacks: The Muslims; Islam Is Not the Enemy, U.S. Declares," *New York Times*, August 22, 1998.

[36] Editors, "Counterstrike," *National Review,* September 14, 1998.

[37] Editors, "Undeterred," *National Review*, September 1, 1998.

avoid targets located near noncombatants, as "liberal squeamishness." He found amusement in another small controversy. One soldier wrote "Here's a Ramadan present" on an American bomb dropped on Iraq, prompting a swift, damage-control statement from the Pentagon that "religious intolerance is an anathema to Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen ... The United States deeply respects Islam." "Another Clinton first," Buckley wrote, "politically correct bombs."[38]

Liberal and leftist intellectuals decried the August 1998 cruise missile attacks, particularly that on Khartoum, Sudan. MIT linguist and long-time anti-war activist Noam Chomsky condemned the Sudan attacks for causing the deaths of tens of thousands due to the ensuing lack of medicine.[39] Liberal journalist and essayist Christopher Hitchens, not one to oppose firm responses on principle, articulated the skepticism of many when he questioned the timing of the attacks. U.S. intelligence sources had said that the only window to attack Sudan happened to be on the night of a new round of grand jury testimony by Lewinsky. Like Chomsky, Hitchens took particular umbrage with the destruction of a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant that turned out to have to no connection to bin Laden or chemical weapons.[40]

Some American intellectuals, however, both liberal and conservative, did believe that bin Laden -- and militant Islam in general -- posed a serious threat to the United States. Steven Emerson, described on several occasions by different people as the "Paul Revere" of counter-terrorism, was among them. The creator of *Jihad in America*, a 1994 documentary film exploring Islamic fundamentalism in the U.S., and a well-respected, if sometimes controversial, expert on terrorism, Emerson made a career out of sounding the alarm about Muslim extremism,

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[38] Editor, "Not So Smart Bombs," *National Review*, January 25, 1999.

[39] Noam Chomsky, "A Quick Reaction," *CounterPunch*, September 12, 2001 http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20010912.htm [accessed January 30, 2013].

[40] Christopher Hitchens, "Close But No Cigar," *The Nation,* October 5, 1998, 9.

both in the media or Congressional testimony. Although accused by Arab-American groups and some on the left of inciting hatred and fear mongering, Emerson did exhibit impressive foresight during the 1990s and beyond. Three years before the embassy bombings, Emerson warned the House International Relations Subcommittee on Africa on the spread and radicalization of militant Islam on that continent.   In early 1998, before the attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, he advised the Senate Judiciary Committee not to allow the "absence of bombs going off … [to] lull us into a false sense of security." In 2000, he testified twice before the House Judiciary Committee on Islamic terrorist organizations operating within the United States.[41]

In the same issue that Steven Pomerantz published his article, "The Best Defense," *The New Republic* editorial board, under the guiding spirit of neoconservative/liberal publisher Martin Peretz, published "Blasted," ten paragraphs that criticized the U.S. government's policy towards terrorism over the last fifteen years, accusing Clinton in particular of a fearful unwillingness to wield America's military power. Assuming a positively neoconservative policy view, the editors wrote that, since the 1983 Beirut embassy bombing, "one American president after another has threatened retribution against outrages aimed at our embassies and barracks and airlines, but the threats have never been made good." Like Pomerantz, the editorial pointed the finger of culpability for terrorist attacks at nations that facilitated the acts themselves – such as Iran – and at those who hindered the response – such as Saudi Arabia. It is telling that the one retaliation singled out by the editors as appropriate was a military one, the 1986 bombing raid ordered by President Reagan against Libya. Rejecting the strains of moral relativism that

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[41] Emerson testimony before: House International Relations Committee: Subcommittee on Africa, *Africa and the Middle East: The Expanding Threat of Terrorism*, 104th Cong., 1st sess.; Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Government Information, *Foreign Terrorists in America: Five Years After the World Trade Center Bombing*, 105th Cong., 2nd sess.

characterized discussion of militant Islam in some quarters of the left, *The New Republic* declared that the "bombings in East Africa are yet another reminder that, even in the modern world, there is still such a thing as radical evil."[42]

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Despite these attacks, these warnings, terrorism remained back-burnered by both the government and the majority of American intellectuals. The world of September 10th yielded to that of September 11th, not over the course of one morning as the surprise generated by the attack would indicate, but over the entire preceding decade. Alternatively, perhaps it was the nature of the attacks during the pre-9/11 period that led people to believe that a catastrophe like 9/11 was impossible.

Domestic terrorism, perpetrated by Americans like Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, could be understood as an extension of the myriad cults, Patriot movements, and sects that had sprung up across the country and had been in the news in the early 90s with the Ruby Ridge and Waco incidents. It was thus dismissible as the province of the maladjusted, the bitter, or simply the "crazy," much as early twentieth century terrorism had been considered the domain of anarchists and militant labor agitators. While in 1995 thirty-nine percent of Americans may have agreed that the, "federal government ha[d] become so large and powerful that it pose[d] an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens," few were going to follow McVeigh's lead and take violent action.[43] Thus, it seemed that Benjamin Netanyahu, then on the cusp of his first term as Prime Minister of Israel, might be correct when he asserted in the

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[42] Editors, "Blasted," *The New Republic*, August 31, 1998.

[43] Gallup Poll: http://www.gallup.com/poll/149678/americans-express-historic-negativity-toward-government.aspx [accessed December 2, 2012].

aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, that "terrorism based exclusively in America is unsustainable and can be reduced to insignificance in short order."[44]

Terrorism executed against the United States by "others" was, with the notable exception of the first World Trade Center attack, undertaken overseas, although it took American lives as well. Attacks that occurred in places like East Africa or Yemen seemed far removed from the American political consciousness. By 2000, the percentage of Americans concerned about being the victim of a terrorist attack had fallen from 42% in 1995, to 24%. Terrorism, for the most part, remained a problem for "other people" and "other countries."[45] In retrospect, of course, it was terrorism based abroad that would be the real threat to the United States in the coming years.

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[44] Benjamin Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists* [London: Macmillan, 1997], 11.

[45] Gallup Poll: http://www.gallup.com/poll/149315/americans-fear-terrorism-near-low-point.aspx [accessed December 2, 2012].

Part Two: The "Clash of Civilizations"

The challenge in the old world, the nineties world of Bill Clinton, was to remember that, behind the prosperity and complacency, death was waiting and entire countries hated us. The problem of the new world, the zeroes world of George Bush, will be to reassert the ordinary, the trivial, and even the ridiculous in the face of instability and dread.

Jonathan Franzen in *The New Yorker*, Sept. 24, 2001

On the morning of September 11th, 2001, nineteen members of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization hijacked four passenger jets, with the intention of using them as manned missiles. Two of the planes targeted the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center, one destroyed a portion of the west front of the Pentagon, while the fourth, intended to crash into the U.S. Capitol Building, went down in rural Pennsylvania when the hostages rebelled.[46] Millions of Americans saw the attacks unfold on live television, witnessing the impact of the second plane into the South Tower. They watched as New York City rescue workers ran into the burning buildings, while over one hundred office workers, trapped by the smoke and heat, leapt to their deaths. Eventually, viewers saw the buckling and collapse of both skyscrapers. Almost 3000 people were killed in the attacks.[47]

The twenty-one months between September 2001 and May 2003 were dominated by memories of the 9/11 assaults, and by the subsequent declaration of a "War on Terror." Tens of thousands of American soldiers were dispatched to Afghanistan and Iraq.[48] During those two

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[46] Khalid Sheik Mohammed, cited in: Yosri Fouda and Nick Fielding, *Masterminds of Terror: The Truth Behind the Most Devastating Terrorist Attack the World has Ever Seen* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), 127-28.

[47] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, Thomas H. Kean, and Lee Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (Washington, DC: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004), 311.

[48] Amy Belasco, *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues* (Darby, Penn.: Diane Publishing, 2009), 6-9.

years, the nation's strategic priorities, international preoccupations, and complex system of

partnerships and alliances would undergo various permutations.

Among the many consequences of 9/11 was a transformation of American intellectuals'

attitudes toward terrorism. American intellectuals played critical roles, both passive – by not

contesting their assumed assent to the post-9/11 program -- and active – quickly trying to

influence policy, alternately urging patriotic unification or galvanizing dissent against the Iraq

War.

I. The 9/11 Reaction and the Invasion of Afghanistan: Fall 2001 through Spring 2002

The immediate post-attack period was characterized by a coalescence that spanned

intellectual allegiances and political factions, at least superficially. Anyone with a sensitive pen

or tongue made sure to express his or her horror at the attacks and call for a strong response. The

liberal *New Republic* dedicated its first issue after 9/11 to the attacks, and identified Islam as the

culprit, and Israel, of which editor Martin Peretz was a vigorous supporter, as a co-victim:

> The common view is that [bin Laden] is seeking to punish America for its association
> with Israel, but ... he [also] wishes to punish Israel (and Jews generally) for being so
> remorselessly American, that is, so secular, so liberal, so enthralled by enlightenment ...
> Israel is flourishing right there in the orbit of Islam ... For this reason, the terrorist war
> against the United States and the terrorist war against Israel is the same war ... If not for
> anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, those two towers would still be standing.[49]

The conservative *National Review* denied that the attacks were even terrorism, calling the

"September Massacres" an attempt to "thwart the will" of the United States: "[L]et no one

imagine that any American policy ... could have insulated us from such a strike. The United

States is hated because we are ... powerful, rich, and good ... Rome sacked by the barbarians."

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[49] Editors, "It Happened Here," *The New Republic*, September 24, 2001, 10-12.

As for the response, the magazine said, "the attackers' commanders ... their allies and patrons, should be paved over."[50]

Dissident intellectuals, however, began voicing their opinions before the last fires in the wreckage of the Twin Towers were extinguished. Most of these intellectuals were longtime leftists who stressed that the recent history of American foreign policy made 9/11 unsurprising. These leftists were joined by a number of Old Right and paleoconservative intellectuals, who argued similar points about American interventionism. A smaller number of thinkers and writers took offense to the American *reaction* to 9/11, which they saw as jingoistic and fraught with misplaced outrage. A still smaller number suggested that the attacks were, perhaps, justified.

In the first category were the intellectuals for whom 9/11 was not unexpected, for whom, as one book put it, "the unforgivable is not necessarily incomprehensible or inexplicable."[51] The term "blowback," used by the Central Intelligence Agency to refer to "unintended consequences" of U.S. policies, gained a currency among those intellectuals who saw 9/11 as the fallout of America's international policies. In some cases, the source of the blowback was more immediately relevant: many pointed out that bin Laden had enjoyed U.S. support during his guerrilla war against the U.S.S.R. following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Others cited broader policies -- the American push for globalization and the widening gulf between rich and poor, or the notion of "imperial America," meddling in countries around the world. Longstanding U.S. support for Israel drew particular scrutiny. Immediately after the attacks, *The Nation* featured an article by British journalist Robert Fisk in which he wrote:

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[50] Editors, "At War," *The National Review*, October 1, 2001, 6.

[51] Strobe Talbott and Nayan Chanda, *The Age of Terror*, cited in Peter L. Bergen, "Picking up the Pieces," *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2002 [Accessed February 12, 2013, from http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57823/peter-l-bergen/picking-up-the-pieces].

... this is not really the war of democracy versus terror that the world will be asked to believe in the coming days. It is also about U.S. missiles smashing into Palestinian homes and ... about a Lebanese militia -- paid and uniformed by America's Israeli ally -- hacking and raping and murdering their way through refugee camps.[52]

Alexander Cockburn used a substantial portion of his weekly "Beat the Devil" column, also in *The Nation*, to quote approvingly a *USA Today* article that attributed some of the 9/11 hijackers' "extremism" to Israeli actions: the "humiliation and anger of a population living under decades of occupation: Israeli bulldozers knocking over families' ancient stone homes and uprooting their olive groves ... U.S. M-16s used to shoot at stone-throwing boys."[53]

Conversely, however, even among those who found America not entirely unculpable in the attacks, the theory that American support for Israel was the driving force behind bin Laden's actions lacked universal acceptance. Susan Sontag, one of the icons of American criticism in the second half of the twentieth century, wrote that even if Israel "announced a unilateral withdrawal of its forces from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ... followed by the proclamation of a Palestinian state," it would make no difference: "I think Israel is a pretext for these people."[54]

For some intellectuals, however, the blowback was karmic, a moral retribution for the sins of the nation's foreign policy past. Chalmers Johnson, a scholar of Asian history, former CIA analyst, and author of works including *Blowback, Second Edition* and *The Sorrows of Empire*, wrote in *The Nation* that 9/11 was not an attack upon America, but an attack upon the country's foreign policies. The crimes of the American state were many: disproportionate

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[52] Robert Fisk, "Terror in America," *The Nation* September 13, 2001 (October 1, 2001 in print) [Accessed March 1, 2013, from http://www.thenation.com/article/terror-america].

[53] Alexander Cockburn, "And Now for a Note of Good Cheer," *The Nation*, October 15, 2001, 9; Sandy Tolan, "Despair Feeds Hatred, Extremism," *USA Today* (online archive), September 20, 2001, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/comment/2001-09-20-ncguest2.htm [accessed March 1, 2013].

[54] Cited in David Talbot, "The 'Traitor' Fires Back," *Salon.com*, October 16, 2001, http://www.salon.com/2001/10/16/susans/ [accessed March 16, 2013].

consumption of global resources, U.S. support of Latin American dictators, a military-industrial complex that, by his measure, included Hollywood films like *Pearl Harbor*, as well as the abandonment of bin Laden after Soviet defeat in Afghanistan (only then, Johnson wrote, did bin Laden turn on the U.S.). Johnson argued that bin Laden was "no more ... 'evil' than his fellow creations of the CIA," and compared him with Panamanian strongman and former U.S. ally Manuel Noriega.[55]

Foremost among the leftist critics was Noam Chomsky, a linguist by training, whose critiques of the Vietnam War served as a harbinger for his decades of political and economic commentaries and social activism. On September 12, 2001, Chomsky published "A Quick Reaction," a small article in which he, like Johnson and many others on the left, put the 9/11 attacks in numerical and historical perspective: "The September 11 attacks were major atrocities," he wrote, before qualifying this statement in the next sentence: "In terms of number of victims they do not reach the level of many others, for example, Clinton's bombing of the Sudan with no credible pretext ..."[56] Citing Fisk, he went on to note: "The primary victims, as usual, were working people: janitors, secretaries, firemen, etc. It is likely to prove to be a crushing blow to Palestinians and other poor and oppressed people."[57]

Others on the left encouraged the abandonment of American empire. Howard Zinn, historian, social activist, and author of *A People's History of the United States*, urged the country

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[55] Manuel Noriega had worked with the CIA for almost three decades, coming to power in Panama in the 1980s. He fell out of favor, however, and during the Bush I Administration was arrested and flown to the United States, charged with drug trafficking and other offenses; Chalmers Johnson, "Blowback," *The Nation*, October 15, 2001, 13-15.

[56] Referring to the Clinton Administration's bombing of a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant in retaliation for the embassy bombings.

[57] Noam Chomsky, "A Quick Reaction," *CounterPunch* (online), September 12, 2001, http://www.counterpunch.org/2001/09/12/a-quick-reaction/ [accessed January 20, 2013].

to become a "more modest nation. The modest nations of the world don't face the threat of terrorism. Let us become ... a humanitarian superpower."[58] While these theories of understandable retribution, or payback, found the majority of their votaries among the left, paleoconservatives expressed similar thoughts on what provoked 9/11, reactions that will be discussed below.

Some on the left took umbrage at the nature of the American popular response, defined predominantly by a national unity, but also by a surge in the approval rating of the conservative presidency of George W. Bush, a presidency that many continued to feel was illegally gained in the wake of voting irregularities and the Supreme Court's decision to halt the Florida recount. A spike in xenophobia and anti-Muslim concern caused further anxiety. Over a billion dollars in private donations flowed into funds established for 9/11 victims. Firefighters and paramedics from across the country set up camp around Ground Zero. Schools asked students to wear red, white, and blue, while sales of American flags exhausted domestic manufacturers so thoroughly that foreign suppliers saw a 70-fold increase in purchases.[59]

Such overt displays of patriotism drew criticism from some leftists, particularly those who were members of historically oppressed groups. Some African-American leaders questioned just *who* or *what* had been attacked. Jesse Jackson, one of the nation's most visible civil rights activists and a two-time presidential candidate, warned an audience that the "extreme right wing has seized the government ... so look out ... without a definition of who is a terrorist, anyone can be ... Martin Luther King could have been ... The right-wing media, the FBI, they are

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[58] Howard Zinn, "A Just Cause, Not a Just War," *The Progressive* (online archive), December 2001, http://www.progressive.org/0901/zinn1101.html [accessed January 20, 2013].

[59] Mary Helen Miller, "Flag Sales Rising, But Not on Flag Day," *Christian Science Monitor* (online archive), June 14, 2011, http://www.csmonitor.com/Business/2011/0614/Flag-sales-rising-but-not-on-Flag-Day [accessed March 16, 2013].

targeting our leadership." Al Sharpton, another long-time civil rights activist, addressed his

audience at Atlanta's 2001 "State of the Black World" conference with the proclamation that "We

don't owe America anything – America owes us," and, "While the rest of the country waves the

flag of Americana, we understand we are not part of that."[60]

Prominent American feminists also rebuked the American popular reaction to 9/11,

though with differences in degree. In a *New Yorker* article dated September 24, which resulted in

criticism from various quarters, Sontag was representative of those asking for introspection and

historical education:

> Politics, the politics of a democracy – which entails disagreement, which promotes
> candor – has been replaced by psychotherapy. Let's by all means grieve together. But
> let's not be stupid together. A few shreds of historical awareness might help us
> understand what has just happened...[61]

Katha Pollitt, a feminist essayist and longtime contributor to *The Nation*, wrote of her daughter's

request that the family fly the American flag from a window: "Definitely not, I say: The flag

stands for jingoism and vengeance and war."[62] Barbara Kingsolver, an often politically-oriented

novelist and essayist who had registered her disapproval of the Persian Gulf War by temporarily

relocating to Tenerife, declared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that:

> the American flag stands for intimidation, censorship, violence, bigotry, sexism,
> homophobia, and shoving the Constitution through a paper shredder … Outsiders can

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[60] Steve Miller, "Leaders Rally on Racial Rhetoric at Conference," *The Washington Times* (online), November 30, 2001, http://washingtontimes.com/news/2001/nov/30/2011130-031531-7204r/ [accessed March 16, 2013].

[61] Susan Sontag in "The Talk of the Town," *The New Yorker* (online archive), September 24, 2001, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/09/24/010924ta_talk_wtc [accessed February 12, 2013].

[62] Katha Pollitt, "Put Out No Flags," *The Nation* (online archive), September 20, 2001, http://www.thenation.com/article/put-out-no-flags# [accessed February 12, 2013].

destroy airplanes and buildings, but it is only we, the people, who have the power to demolish our own ideals.[63]

Expressing a sort of backhanded ambivalence about the attacks, prolific critic, essayist, and social activist Barbara Ehrenreich bemoaned not the methods but the burdensome, attendant ideologies of bin Laden and his associates: "What is so heartbreaking to me as a feminist is that the strongest response to corporate globalization and U.S. military domination is based on such a violent and misogynist ideology."[64] Sontag once again differed from some of her otherwise ideologically similar compatriots. In addressing the response generated by her comments in *The New Yorker*, which were perceived by some as insensitive and by others as seditious, she went out of her way to distance herself from Chomsky explicitly, and from Ehrenreich and others implicitly. Sontag explained that her position was "decidedly *not* the Chomsky position ... First of all, I'll take the American empire any day over the empire of what my pal Chris Hitchens calls 'Islamic fascism.' I'm not against fighting this enemy -- it *is* an enemy and I'm not a pacifist."[65]

A few offered the view that 9/11 was perhaps "justified," or that the attacks were the product of an American or Israeli conspiracy. Gore Vidal, known for his novels and essays, as well as his occasional controversial forays into national debates, argued that the "Bush junta" had preexisting plans to invade Afghanistan and to "crack down on civil liberties at home." He theorized that, hoping to achieve control over the energy deposits of Central Asia, the Bush Administration deliberately delayed the activation of its emergency protocols (scrambling fighter

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[63] Cited in Nile Gardiner, "Orange Prize for Barbara Kingsolver Will Outrage Americans," *The Telegraph* (UK) (online), June 10, 2010, http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100042884/orange-award-to-barbara-kingsolver-will-outrage-americans/ [accessed February 12, 2013].

[64] Cited in Rachel Neumann, "The Empire Strikes Back," *The Village Voice* (online archive), October 2, 2001 http://www.villagevoice.com/2001-10-02/news/the-empire-strikes-back/2/ [accessed February 12, 2013].

[65] Cited in David Talbot, "The 'Traitor' Fires Back," *Salon.com*, October 16, 2001, http://www.salon.com/2001/10/16/susans/ [accessed March 16, 2013].

jets, shooting down hijacked aircraft, etc.) so that the attacks would achieve the maximum effect. Bin Laden would be the "frightening logo," apparently "chosen on aesthetic grounds ... [because] the administration is convinced that Americans are so simple-minded that they can deal with no scenario more complex than the venerable, lone, crazed killer ... who does evil just for fun."[66]

Vidal's views did not gain a mainstream following, although similar scenarios and their theorists, the so-called "9/11 Truthers," speculate on. He was not alone, however, in voicing such unconventional conjectures. Among the more radical leftists to push against the prevailing narrative after 9/11 was tendentious, Pulitzer Prize-winning American novelist, journalist, socialist, and anti-Vietnam War activist Norman Mailer. Author of such works as *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), *Armies of the Night* (1968), and *The Executioner's Song* (1979), Mailer was no stranger to provocative statements. In the aftermath of 9/11, he condemned not only the surge in nationalist sentiments, in the *Daily Telegraph* -- "America has an almost obscene infatuation with itself. Has there ever been a big, powerful country that is as patriotic ... in the tinniest way, with so much flag-waving?" -- but ascribed a beneficent class warfare agenda to bin Laden.[67] "The WTC was not just an architectural monstrosity, but also terrible for people who didn't work there," Mailer said at a Dutch literature festival. The Twin Towers symbolized an elitism, a "'If you can't work up here, boy, you're out of it'" attitude. Further, "Everything wrong with America led to the point where the country built that tower of Babel, which consequently had to be destroyed."[68]

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[66] Cited in Sunder Katwala, "Gore Vidal Claims 'Bush Junta' Complicit in 9/11," *The Guardian* (UK) (online archive), October 26, 2002 http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/oct/27/books.featuresreview [accessed March 12, 2013].

[67] Cited in E.R. Shipp, "Must We Wave the Flag in Whole World's Face?" *Miami Herald*, February 19, 2002.

[68] Cited in Paul Hollander, *The Only Superpower: Reflections on Strength, Weakness, and Anti-Americanism* [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008], 207-08.

Nor was this vein of thinking restricted to the left. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, televangelists and leaders on the Christian Right, argued that at least some of the blame for the attack lay with the United States. Their offending parties, however, were radically different from those identified by Sontag and other leftists. Two days after the attack, Falwell declared on Robertson's "700 Club" television program that God had allowed the attacks, because they were "probably what we deserve," and went on to list the following offenses:

> …throwing God out successfully with the help of the federal court system, throwing God out of the public square, out of the schools. The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way – all of them have tried to secularize America – I point the finger in their face and say, "You helped this happen."[69]

Robertson, added: "…I totally concur, and the problem is we have adopted that agenda at the highest levels of our government."[70] Once the remarks hit the news and backlash erupted, however, Robertson quickly said that he had misunderstood Falwell's words.

In their efforts to provoke the American populace to think deliberately and analyze the American policy decisions that may or may not have contributed towards 9/11, rather than "be stupid together," in Sontag's words, these individuals (with the exceptions of Falwell and Robertson, who had defined their own agenda) were not telling the public what they wanted to hear. Some of them likely anticipated the furious reaction they would receive -- Chomsky, for

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[69] Pat Robertson (feat. Jerry Falwell), *700 Club*, September 13, 2001.

[70] Ibid.

example, seemed resigned to a military response and a silencing of debate -- while others, like

Sontag herself, expressed shock that their remarks had been so inflammatory.[71]

What might have surprised Sontag was the way 9/11 provoked such widely divergent

views amongst moderates and the left. David Halberstam, who had made his name excoriating

the U.S. government's policy in Vietnam and whose book *The Best and the Brightest* remains

one of the great critical analyses of American conduct during that conflict, was still moved to

say: "People should think what the world would be like without the backdrop of American

leadership with all its flaws over the past sixty years. Probably, I think, a bit like hell."[72] A year

removed, with war in Iraq imminent, the editor of *The Atlantic*, Michael Kelly (who would later

be among the first journalists to die in Iraq), described the critics on the left as "objectively pro-

terrorist" and "not serious people."[73] Political commentator Andrew Sullivan – former editor of

The New Republic and, at the time, a self-identifying neoconservative writer with *The New York*

Times Magazine -- went further, disparaging "the decadent left in its enclaves ... amount[ing] to a

fifth column."[74] E.J. Dionne, one of the more visible members of the Christian Left, a writer for

the progressive Catholic journal *Commonweal*, and author of the popular 1991 book *Why*

Americans Hate Politics, took aim at the rationalizing of his colleagues in the *Washington Post*.

"Progressives should be wary," Dionne warned:

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[71] David Talbot, "The 'Traitor' Fires Back," *Salon.com*, October 16, 2001, http://www.salon.com/2001/10/16/susans/ [accessed March 16, 2013].

[72] Cited in Editors, "Halberstam's Legacy," *New York Post* (online archive), April 25, 2007 http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/editorials/item_ciVKb8tndAwXH0ObFane5O [accessed January 20, 2013].

[73] Michael Kelly, "Pacifist Claptrap," *Washington Post*, September 26, 2001.

[74] Cited in Andrew Sullivan, "A Response to a Roast: A 'Fifth Column' Apology," *The Atlantic* (online archive), October 12, 2010 http://www.theatlantic.com/daily-dish/archive/2010/10/a-response-to-a-roast-a-fifth-column-apology/181356/ [accessed January 30, 2013].

of any attempts to excuse or rationalize the horrors of this month. It is important to insist that human misery *does* breed support for terrorism. But using the existence of poverty and injustice to explain away these suicide attacks will only undermine arguments for alleviating injustice.[75]

Christopher Hitchens, a British-American essayist, journalist, outspoken atheist, and noted contrarian, adopted a similar stance. Addressing Chomsky's comparison of 9/11 to Clinton's Khartoum bombing, Hitchens, while making clear his recorded criticism of that previous attack, wrote in *The Nation* that: "To mention this ... degradation of the United States in the same breath as a plan, deliberated for months, to inflict maximum horror upon the innocent is to abandon every standard that makes intellectual and moral discrimination possible." Hitchens also dismissed all causal attributions that blamed America's support of Israel, noting that the Taliban had rarely, if ever, expressed any interest in the Palestinians, and expressing his belief that the "root cause" predated the Balfour Declaration.[76] In fact, he said, the "root cause" had *nothing* to do with poverty or American imperialism at all. Rather, there was a fundamental incompatibility between American society and even the most basic, historical, forms of militant Islam -- whether it could be extended to Islam as a whole was unclear. Going back to the denial of Central Europe to the Ottomans at the Battle of Vienna, Hitchens described an enemy that "is not us ... Someone with whom coexistence is, fortunately I think, not possible. (I say 'fortunately' because I am also convinced that such coexistence is not desirable.)"[77]

While Hitchens, who was himself moving from the left towards the center of the political spectrum, Dionne, Kelly, and others battled the left from within, neoconservatives seized the momentum of the argument. Tweaking some of the observations of their leftist counterparts,

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[75] E.J. Dionne, "Peace Later," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 25, 2001.

[76] The Balfour Declaration made clear the British government's support for a Jewish homeland in the Middle East.

[77] Christopher Hitchens, "Of Sin, the Left & Islamic Fascism," *The Nation*, October 8, 2001.

they manufactured one of the more peculiar developments of the post-9/11 period: the rise of

what might be called "intellectual anti-intellectualism." While the "anti-intellectual" strain has

long been firmly embedded within American culture, its post-9/11 incarnation was distinct in two

ways: first, its intensity, and, second, its sources, which included not only demagogues and

assorted religious leaders, but *neoconservatives*, a group generally consisting of highly educated

individuals, prominent academics, and scholarly authors.[78]

Donald Kagan, a professor of classics at Yale University, author of one of the most

respected histories of the Peloponnesian War, and founding member of the Project for the New

American Century think tank, delivered one of the stronger condemnations of the leftist

intellectuals. While he addressed no one individual or group of individuals by name, his

November 4, 2001 talk to students and faculty at Yale University took aim first at his fellow

academics, including those at Yale, and then at his fellow intellectuals in general. Of the reaction

to the attacks, Kagan said:

> Most Americans … expressed a new unity … and love of their country not seen among us
> for a very long time. That is not what we have seen and heard from the faculty here at
> Yale or … on most elite campuses in the country, and certainly not from the
> overwhelming majority of people designated as "intellectuals"…[79]

Echoing Hitchens's concern about Chomsky's moral equivalencies, Kagan expressed the

neoconservative impatience with cultural relativism, and warned his audience that efforts to

rationalize the attacks or understand the attackers were futile, even dangerous. Kagan's speech

made one of its most biting criticisms with a borrowed Winston Churchill quote:

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[78] For one of the most respected and thorough explorations of the anti-intellectual character in America, see Richard
Hofstadter's 1963 monograph *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*.

[79] Donald Kagan, "Terrorism and the Intellectuals," *The Intercollegiate Review* (online archive) Spring 2002 http://
www.mmisi.org/ir/37_02/kagan.pdf [accessed January 20, 2013].

> The worst difficulties from which we suffer … come from within. They do not come from the cottages of wage earners, they come from a peculiar type of brainy people always found in our country, who, if they add something to its culture, take much from its strength.[80]

His equation of 1930s Britain, on the verge of the Second World War, and post-9/11 America, drawn into a conflict that was indefinite in aim and scale, placed Kagan among the intellectuals resurrecting the "clash of civilizations" motif.

In the aftermath of the attacks on New York and the Pentagon, Samuel Huntington's 1992-93 "Clash of Civilizations" thesis had assumed an eerily prophetic quality. Huntington's prediction that the conflicts of the future would be between cultures with fundamental and irreconcilable differences – religion foremost among them – and that the processes of globalization would facilitate these collisions, appeared to have come true. The "global war on terror," first referred to by President George W. Bush as a "crusade," pitted the West, led by the United States, against a group of shadowy enemies, formally identified first as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, but then extended to include such sponsors of terrorism as the "Axis of Evil" – Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.[81]

Within this atmosphere, the neoconservatives rediscovered their purpose. The Cold War rhetoric and clarity of vision that had languished for almost a decade of Clintonian international collectivism found a new, highly receptive audience – and powerful pulpit – in the Bush Administration. In his September 20, 2001 address to Congress, the President embraced the language of the Cold War era, with its emphasis on diametrically opposed ideologies, saying that Al-Qaeda's "goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere."

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[80] Ibid.

[81] "Today We Mourned, Tomorrow We Work," September 17, 2001 http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html [accessed February 12, 2013].

Reworking both these neoconservative/Cold War-era talking points and Huntington's "West vs. the Rest" theory, Bush emphasized the national greatness that the country's enemies apparently loathed:

> Americans are asking: "Why do they hate us?"
> They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other … We're not deceived by their pretenses to piety. We have seen their kind before. They're the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.[82]

The first generation of neoconservatives had condemned Soviet Communism as the heir of Italian fascism and Nazi Germany. The second generation now designated terrorism the descendant of all three. The term "Islamofascism" reflected these efforts to link Muslim terrorism with the great antagonists of Western civilization during the previous century. Emphasizing this adoption of a new national purpose, one of the most famous lines from President Bush's speech was a revision of the text of the New Testament itself: "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists," from Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me."[83]

The neoconservative ascendancy frustrated and mortified not only the left but other conservatives. The neoconservatives were themselves members of a small, intellectual, elite, and, almost to the man, had no prior military experience. They were able, however, to fend their

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[82] "President George W. Bush: 'History's Unmarked Grave of Discarded Lies' Speech to Joint Session of Congress, September 21, 2001," *Fordham University Modern History Sourcebook* http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/2001Bush-speech-sep212001-onWTC.asp [accessed February 12, 2013].

[83] Ibid.; Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me."

critics off by labeling them anti-American, out-of-touch, elitist, or, simply, "intellectuals" (often

using a combination of all of these epithets). As historian Matthew Lyons summarized in an

October, 2003 article:

> Despite their own role as professional intellectuals with privileged access to the circles of
> power, neocons castigated U.S. critics of the war on terrorism as elitist intellectuals who
> sneered at ordinary Americans. To the neocons, any effort to contextualize the September
> 11 attacks in relation to the United States' long history of military intervention and
> support for repressive regimes was simply an expression of hatred for America. They
> dismissed as groundless any concern about the human costs of bombing Afghanistan,
> nativist attacks against Middle Easterners and South Asians in the United States, or
> growing domestic repression associated with the war on terror.[84]

It is not surprising, but nevertheless significant, that Bush's address and almost all of the

innumerable political speeches, scholarly articles, and public debates about terrorism that

developed in the wake of the September 11th attacks addressed the subject without a cultural

qualifier. Few of them, however, were discussing terrorism in its full international context; the

Provisional Irish Republican Army, the Basque ETA, the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers, and other

long-operating groups were omitted from the discussion. It became clear that "terrorism" –

especially in the United States – was now meant to be understood as synonymous with militant

Islamic extremism. Thus, for all the President's declarations to the contrary, including: "…the

war against terrorism is not a war against Muslims… " much of the anxiety that developed

around the issue of terrorism during the fall of 2001 was rooted in the growing concern that

Islam as an entity was incompatible with the West.[85]

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[84] Matthew Lyons, "Fragmented Nationalism: Right-Wing Responses to September 11 in Historical Context," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. CXXVII, No. 4 (October 2003), 377-418.

[85] "Remarks by President George W. Bush and President Megawati of Indoneisa," September 17, 2001 http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/ramadan/islam.html [accessed February 12, 2013].

As a small number on the left agitated against the October 7, 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, a similarly small number of paleoconservatives, led by former Nixon, Ford, and Reagan advisor, and three-time presidential candidate, Patrick Buchanan, also diverged from the Administration's neoconservative line. They expressed a concern that the War on Terrorism, unabashedly global in scale, and making full use of America's powerful alliance structure, was yet another regrettable step away from what little shreds of Washingtonian isolationism President Woodrow Wilson had left almost a century before. While the paleoconservative fears of international obligation may have seemed a little late – N.A.T.O. and the U.N. were, at this point, 52 and 56 years old, respectively – many of their fears were common among left-leaning intellectuals as well. Even among those who supported a War on Terror in theory, including most of the nation's Congressional leaders, who voted 518-1 to authorize the invasion of Afghanistan, there was concern over the open-ended nature of the mission.

Indeed, post-9/11 America seemed to some paleoconservatives to be the *perfect* time to restate the case for isolationism. Those like Sontag on the left were right, some argued, though not mentioning her directly, of course – America's misadventures overseas had brought about this reckoning. If this assertion was accepted, it seemed logical that, if the U.S. turned inward and ceased its overseas involvement, there would be no more attacks. Buchanan, who founded *The American Conservative* magazine during this time as an independent conservative journal, wrote: "We are not hated for who we are. We are hated for what we do." Three years after the attack, in *Where the Right Went Wrong: How Neoconservatives Subverted the Reagan Revolution and Hijacked the Bush Presidency*, Buchanan elaborated on his skepticism of the Administration's position during the 2001-2003 period:

US dominance of the Middle East is not the corrective to terror. Were we not over there, the 9/11 terrorists would not have been over here. And while their acts were murderous and despicable, behind their atrocities lay a political motive. We were attacked because of our imperial presence on the sacred soil of Mecca and Medina, because of our enemies' perception that we were strangling the Iraqi people with sanctions and preparing to attack a second time, and because of our uncritical support of Israel. Terrorism is a symptom, terrorism is not the disease … Terrorism is the price of empire. If we do not wish to pay it, we must give up the empire.[86]

Change, however, was not only required abroad – many paleoconservatives argued that domestic measures must be taken as well, and their proposed actions both ingratiated them with, and alienated them from, their leftist counterparts. Their historic antagonism toward Washington's ever-encroaching authority bound itself to the left's concern over civil liberties, and many within the two groups agreed that the USA PATRIOT ("Uniting *and* Strengthening America *by* Providing Appropriate Tools Required *to* Intercept *and* Obstruct Terrorism") Act was a threatening overreach by the federal government.

Where they diverged, however, was over the question of whether the constitutional protections afforded American citizens included: a) Americans of all cultural backgrounds, and b) citizens and non-citizen residents alike. Samuel Francis, best known as a columnist for the *Washington Times* and for courting controversy in the 1990s by expressing his distaste for miscegenation, capitalism, immigrants, and a host of other elements of modern American society, wrote that, "Islam … is not part of [Western society or its heritage], and those who subscribe to Islam and its civilization are aliens."[87] Both paleoconservatives and neoconservatives tended to support the employment of military courts and institutions like Guantanamo Bay to deal with the new flood of captured noncitizen enemy combatants. Paleoconservatives argued that not only

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[86] Patrick Buchanan, *Where the Right Went Wrong* [London: Macmillan, 2007], 80, 238.

[87] Cited in Matthew Lyons, "Fragmented Nationalism: Right-Wing Responses to September 11 in Historical Context," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. CXXVII, No. 4 (October 2003), 377-418.

should American citizens and residents of Middle Eastern extraction be surveyed and screened

by the government, but that *all* immigration into the United States should cease. Thus,

paleoconservatives often held two competing notions of the role that government should play on

the home-front, beliefs that were dependent very much on the religious, ethnic, and political

status of those subjected to government oversight.[88]

Buchanan and the paleoconservatives, along with many on the left, wanted the United

States to relinquish its international reach; some even brought out the ever dirty word –

"imperialism." Neoconservatives, however, embraced what they saw as an American

responsibility to remake the world in the aftermath of 9/11. Some, like Russian-American

journalist and historian Max Boot, launched an effort to reclaim "imperialism" and save it from

its negative past, by reinterpreting its very past: "Afghanistan and other troubled lands today cry

out for the sort of enlightened foreign administration once provided by self-confident

Englishmen in jodhpurs and pith helmets."[89]

II. Columbia Answers the Call:

The Invasion of Afghanistan (Fall 2001) and the Question of Iraq

Not only was the Afghan War a mission to stamp out the Taliban and capture, kill, or

expel Al-Qaeda operatives from that nation, it was "Operation Enduring Freedom," an effort on

the part of the West's grandest alliance to completely redesign a nation's political and cultural

model. During the 2001-2003 period, and extending into the early phases of the Iraq War, there

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Max Boot, "The Case for American Empire," *The Weekly Standard*, October 15, 2001.

was a genuine belief in both the feasibility and the *justness* of a broader set of aims. Proponents

envisioned a massive remaking of both nations, complete in its political effects but also far-

reaching in the cultural realignments it anticipated. Such sentiments and optimism were not

restricted to the neoconservatives, but generally found their strongest advocates in them.

By the fall of 2001, the neoconservatives were in a position to turn their beliefs, nursed

since the Cold War and modified after 9/11, into the official policy of the United States of

America. Indeed, one of the most important developments during this period was the bringing in

of the neoconservatives from their Clinton-era cold. Over the next several years, and particularly

during the crucial period of 2001-2003, neoconservatives would set the Bush Administration's

foreign policy agenda, drawing upon the "political capital" that the attack gave the nation, to

forge a Middle East of America's making.

> ... [A]mbitious intellectuals were beginning to see scholarship as a road to high office in
> the new American state. World War II had given intellectuals a turn in the new action-
> oriented atmosphere of government, and many liked it. The Cold War perpetuated a
> cause and a crisis and encouraged the rationale that intellectuals could provide an
> expertise lacking among the corporation lawyers, investment bankers, and businessmen
> who had traditionally monopolized the senior appointive posts.[90]

Reporter and author Neil Sheehan had written this passage in his 1988 Pulitzer Prize and

National Book Award-winning history of the Vietnam War, *A Bright Shining Lie*. He was writing

of the influx of men like McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., John Kenneth Galbraith, and

Henry Kissinger, into the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon Administrations. He might equally have

been describing the stream of neoconservatives who followed the second president Bush into

Washington in much the same way. September 11th and the ensuing War on Terror established a

state of permanent warfare, one that required not only – or even primarily – generals and

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[90] Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie* [New York: Random House, 1988], 590.

soldiers, but regional experts, forensic accountants who specialized in tracing illegal financial activities, and intelligence specialists. The War on Terror was a "cause and a crisis," and it was one that, while radically different from the previous conflicts that had confronted the U.S., was amenable to neoconservative rhetoric and beliefs.

Among those who took up positions in the capital were a number of familiar neoconservative intellectuals who had last held power during the tenure of the elder Bush. Many had remained in Washington, becoming members of prominent neoconservative think tanks during Clinton's interregnum. Particularly important neoconservatives returning to official capacities in 2001 were: Paul Wolfowitz, as Deputy Secretary of Defense; I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby as Vice-President Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff; John Bolton, who went first to the State Department and then to the United Nations as the American ambassador; and Elliott Abrams, who assumed the position of director of Middle Eastern affairs on the National Security Council. Wolfowitz and Abrams had contributed to William Kristol and Robert Kagan's 2000 book *Present Dangers*, which urged Americans to reassess their neglect of foreign policy, and to wield American power forcefully in an effort to shape the world "in its own image."[91] These neoconservatives, as well as those on the "outside" of the Administration, in unofficial advisory roles, would play the single most critical part in the development of the War on Terrorism, and would be especially vital in its redirection from Afghanistan to other targets – particularly Iraq.

Within hours of the September 11th attacks, and extending past the circulation of the knowledge that they were the work of Al-Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and Iraq were assigned culpability by many in the neoconservative fold. Laurie Mylroie, who had spent much of the

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[91] Patrick Allitt, *The Conservatives* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009], 262.

late-1990s attempting to connect every variety of terrorist act to Hussein, published an op-ed in

the September 13th, 2001, edition of *The Wall Street Journal* in which she wrote: "It does not

make a great deal of sense to attribute to one man -- Osama bin Laden -- all the acts of terrorism

which are regularly ascribed to him..." Mylroie suggested that the attacks might be a distraction

from a more serious move by Hussein, and that bin Laden and Hussein had long worked in

"lockstep":

> Whether Osama bin Laden was involved in Tuesday's terrorist assault remains to be seen.
> Yet ... it is extremely unlikely that he acted on his own. It is far more likely that he
> operated in conjunction with a state -- the state with which the U.S. remains at war,
> namely Iraq.[92]

James Woolsey concurred, writing in both the *Wall Street Journal* and *New Republic* of the "Iraq

Connection."[93] On September 20th, 2001, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC)

sent another open letter to the President, signed by neoconservatives like Kristol, Francis

Fukuyama, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Donald and Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, and liberal

hawks like Martin Peretz. It began by agreeing that capturing bin Laden was "a key goal, but by

no means the only goal," and, "*even if the evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack*, any

strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism … must include a determined effort to remove

Saddam Hussein…[emphasis added]."[94]

　　Almost immediately, Iraq entered the discussion as to the appropriate response, with

Defense Department neoconservatives Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld pressing the Administration for

retaliation far broader than just strikes at Al-Qaeda, or even Afghanistan. The neoconservative

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[92] Laurie Mylroie, "The Iraqi Connection," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 2001.

[93] James Woolsey, "The Iraq Connection," *The New Republic* (September 13, 2001) and *The Wall Street Journal* (October 18, 2001).

[94] William Kristol, et. al. "September 20, 2001 Letter to the President," *PNAC* (online archive) http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm [accessed March 1, 2013].

interest in Iraq extended back at least to the government of George H.W. Bush, and was vividly

evidenced by an earlier January, 1998 PNAC letter urging President Clinton to topple Saddam

Hussein, whom they considered both a "conventional" and terrorist threat even then, with force

of arms. At the first National Security Council (NSC) meeting after the attacks, Rumsfeld

reportedly asked, "Why shouldn't we go against Iraq, not just Al-Qaeda?"[95] In the succeeding

weeks, after Secretary of State Colin Powell and President Bush vetoed the idea, and the

bombing of Afghanistan began, Wolfowitz called up the head of the neoconservative American

Enterprise Institute (AEI), Christopher DeMuth. Wolfowitz asked him to consult with several

other members of the Institute about state sponsorship of terrorism. Four days later, DeMuth

delivered a brief called the "Delta of Terrorism" that was distributed to Bush's Cabinet. The

document made the case for tackling terrorism at its roots, for preparation for a "two-generation

war" involving Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and, most of all, Iraq. In what appears to have been a

somewhat arbitrary decision, Iraq was designated the first to fall, as Saddam was perceived to be

in the weakest condition[96]

　　　　Membership in the "Delta of Terrorism" would change over the next month or so, and the

new grouping would emerge in public as Bush's "Axis of Evil" during his 2002 State of the

Union address. Over a year before the invasion of Iraq, Bush revealed the extent to which the

neoconservatives in the Administration had wrested policy away from the hands of more

traditional conservatives like Powell:

> What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against
> terror is only beginning … These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we
> must pursue them wherever they are. So long as training camps operate, so long as

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[95] Bob Woodward, *Bush At War* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002], 49.

[96] Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush At War* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007], 84.

nations harbor terrorists, freedom is at risk. And America and our allies must not and will not allow it.[97]

The President then began the long process of preparing the nation for war against Iraq:

> …We must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world … Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime had plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade … This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world … the price of indifference would be catastrophic … and … America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security.[98]

Neoconservatives also sought to influence and persuade adherents of different ideologies.

Conservative William F. Buckley, editor of the *National Review*, and one of the central figures in rightist thought during the latter half of the twentieth century, wrote as early as September 14, 2001, that Hussein was a logical target of American response, citing his nuclear program, biological weapons activity, and general intractability. He shared some of the paleoconservative reservations that 9/11 was not an event that occurred devoid of history, that there were reasons behind the animosity toward America that saturated the Middle East, even if they did not dissuade him from favoring military confrontation. As with the neoconservatives, there was a degree of "because we can" logic behind Buckley's argument as well:

> The terrorist act of September 11 was the fruit of a culture nourished by hatred of America as an aggressive infidel, and of its ways as incomprehensibly liberal. The strain that produced Osama bin Laden is perhaps the most toxic immediately experienced, but it isn't by any means the whole of the plant. And it isn't a growth that would go away if Israel ceased to exist. It is a culture fed by religious and imperial history and by the dogged cultivation of animus. To cope with this requires, in an age of technological weaponry, a decisive confrontation, and the theater for this is Iraq.[99]

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[97] "State of the Union Address 2002," http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html [accessed February 12, 2013].

[98] Ibid.

[99] William F. Buckley, "War on Hussein," *National Review* (online archive), September 14, 2001 http://old.nationalreview.com/buckley/buckleyprint091401.html [accessed February 12, 2013].

In essence, Buckley, like the neoconservatives, sought a more "conventional" conflict within the amorphous "War on Terror," whose victories and defeats were often vague and intangible. Such a conflict would clearly favor the United States, with its sophisticated equipment and weapons costing hundreds of billions of dollars, and would, theoretically, be an easy and "decisive" triumph. A year later, the Christian Right also lent support to the Administration. In the "Land Letter" authored by Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention and co-signed by four other prominent Protestant leaders, Land wrote that Bush's war against Iraq would "fall well within the time-honored criteria of just war theory…"[100]

In addition to support from the neoconservatives and more traditional conservatives like Buckley, the Iraq War earned its bipartisanship with endorsement by some members of the left. Hitchens was an enthusiastic supporter of the War in Iraq from the outset. Both the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker* published frequent editorials that expressed varying degrees of backing for the conflict, while former President Bill Clinton took to the pages of London's *Guardian* to urge Britons, and, presumably, his American audience as well, to trust in the "British-American partnership" and its commitment to "the progress of the world." While expressing support for the war, in the same article, Clinton also gave a centrist opinion of the neoconservative strategy for Iraq:

> Some ... want regime change for reasons other than disarmament, and, therefore they have discredited the inspection process from the beginning ... they believe the world community will quickly unite on rebuilding Iraq as soon as Saddam is deposed.[101]

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[100] Richard Land, "The So-Called 'Land Letter,'" *The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention* [accessed http://erlc.com/article/the-so-called-land-letter] October 3, 2002 [accessed February 12, 2013].

[101] Bill Clinton, "Trust Tony's Judgment," *The Guardian*, March 18, 2003.

Paul Berman, a noted writer and essayist on both politics and the arts, and author of *Terror and Liberalism*, released just around the period of the invasion, qualified his support for the war. In *Terror and Liberalism*, he developed the fascism-Islam connections first proclaimed by the neoconservatives, and, with regards to Iraq, said he would "favor an invasion for a larger purpose ... which is ... to begin a roll-back of the several tendencies and political movements that add up to Muslim totalitarianism."[102] Martin Peretz, owner and editor of the liberal journal *New Republic,* was another firm liberal supporter. Peretz, who had fired Michael Kelly in 1997 for his criticism of the Clinton Administration, and elevated Peter Beinart, who would be another vocal liberal supporter of the Iraq War, had the magazine publish repeated editorials advocating for the invasion for both security and humanitarian reasons.

Thus, while some on the left opposed the war in theory and practice, a large number of liberals actively supported the conflict. Many, perhaps the majority, registered a passive assent. *The New York Times*, one of the American fourth estate's most influential organs, declared on the day after the invasion of Iraq that: "[W]e are in this fight to bring freedom of speech to Iraq."[103] They voiced support of the President's ultimatum diplomacy in the days immediately preceding the attack: "Mr. Bush is right to insist that the choice between war and peace has been in the hands of Saddam Hussein."[104] Many opponents of Bush's diplomatic efforts, in government and media, reversed course once the war started: "Those of us who have questioned the administration's approach … will now be rallying behind the men and women of our armed

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[102] "Roll Call," *Slate.com*, February 19th, 2003, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2003/02/roll_call.html [accessed March 1, 2013].

[103] Editors, "The War Begins," *New York Times,* March 20, 2003.

[104] Editors, "President Bush Prepares for War," *New York Times*, March 17, 2003.

forces to give them the full support they deserve as it now seems certain we will soon be at war," said Senator Carl Levin (D-MI).[105]

However, as it became clear that the War in Afghanistan would very soon lead to a War in Iraq, others on the left lamented the squandering of the "*Nous sommes tous Américains*" ("We are all Americans") sentiment plaintively expressed by a Frenchwoman the day of the attacks, a feeling that had united much of the world in the days and weeks after 9/11.[106] There was a smaller but vocal chorus of opposition on the right -- still trying to hearken back to Washington's cautionary 1796 Farewell Address, in which he warned of the dangers of "entangling alliances" -- despite all of the developments of the 20th century.

Despite the controversy in the rest of the world, the Iraq War Resolution was passed by wide margins in both houses of Congress – 297-133 in the House of Representatives and 77-23 in the Senate -- with significant majorities in both parties. Among the American public, approval of the idea of an invasion fluctuated greatly over the year prior, and was conditional on the U.N. Security Council's decision regarding the invasion. However, roughly half of all Americans supported an invasion of Iraq, with a majority of the nation's citizens believing Hussein was connected with the 9/11 attacks. Only a quarter of Americans opposed the planned war by the late winter of 2003, and the percentage of Americans believing that the war was justified, even without the proof of nuclear or biological weapons programs, would climb to almost 80% following the opening phase of the war.[107]

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[105] Cited in "Both Parties Close Ranks Behind the President," *New York Times*, March 18, 2003.

[106] Jean-Marie Colombani, "Nous Sommes Tous Américains," *Le Monde*, September 13, 2001.

[107] USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll, March 16, 2003.

III. The Invasion of Iraq: March-May, 2003

Over the protestations of most of the international community and anti-war intellectuals and isolationists on both left and right, bombs exploded on Saddam Hussein's Presidential Palace on the 19th of March, 2003, marking the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The objectives, as General Tommy Franks explained on the 22nd of March, 2003, were:

> First, end the regime of Saddam Hussein. Second, to identify, isolate and eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Third, to search for, to capture and to drive out terrorists from that country. Fourth, to collect such intelligence as we can related to terrorist networks. Fifth, to collect such intelligence as we can related to the global network of illicit weapons of mass destruction. Sixth, to end sanctions and to immediately deliver humanitarian support to the displaced and to many needy Iraqi citizens. Seventh, to secure Iraq's oil fields and resources, which belong to the Iraqi people. And last, to help the Iraqi people create conditions for a transition to a representative self-government.[108]

Even at this early stage, the weapons of mass destruction – the Bush Administration's primary stated justification for invasion – were secondary. Hussein was depicted as a sufficiently villainous character to merit ejection for that reason alone. Equally telling was the relegation of post-invasion plans to the last position.

The view that neoconservatives somehow "hijacked" the Bush Administration and misled the government and the nation into conflict, while not without some basis in fact, acquits the left of *its* role in abetting the Iraq War. It is important to note that the neoconservatives never "had" a party, nor did they seize control of one; they did not have the backing of a broad-based or grassroots movement. Rather, they might be better understood as a small, cohesive group of

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[108] Cited in Michelle Sale and Javid Khan, "Missions Accomplished?" *New York Times Blog*, April 11, 2003 http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2003/04/11/missions-accomplished/ [accessed February 12, 2013].

policy-minded intellectuals who attached themselves to the administrations of various presidents, and with particular effectiveness to that of Bush II.

The neoconservatives had reached the zenith of their influence. While the Iraq conflict was not "their" war, as is often claimed, it was a war consistent with their vision of foreign policy, of remaking entire regions in America's image. National unity – both *against* an enemy, and *for* a strategy and President – had already started to fray, but not enough to derail either of the two conflicts under way. The *Times* wrote on the 18th of March that the coming period would reflect "a long standing practice in American government of not criticizing a president when the nation is at war."[109] Thus, the neoconservative advisors seemed "safe," and the position of the pro-war intellectuals appeared vindicated. Certainly this was the sentiment when, on May 1, 2003, President Bush landed on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* and declared "Mission Accomplished."

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

As Laurie Mylroie would write later in 2003, "I take satisfaction that we went to war with Iraq and got rid of Saddam Hussein. The rest is details."[110]

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[109] "Both Parties Close Ranks Behind the President," *New York Times*, March 18, 2003.

[110] Cited in Peter Bergen, "Armchair Provocateur," *Washington Monthly* (online archive) December 2003 http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2003/0312.bergen.html [accessed February 12, 2013].

Part Three: War, Security, and the Revolt Against Multiculturalism

On May 1, 2003, President George W. Bush landed a Lockheed S-3 Viking on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* to deliver his "Mission Accomplished" speech, announcing an end to major combat operations in Iraq. The President declared, "[W]e have seen the turning of the tide. No act of the terrorists will change our purpose, or weaken our resolve, or alter their fate. Their cause is lost."[111] Despite the President's declaration that the worst of the Afghan and Iraqi wars was over, violence in both countries escalated. The conflicts that had been supported, to various degrees, and with attending caveats, by a majority of intellectuals across the political spectrum, began to incur untenable expenses, both in blood and money. From the spring of 2003 through the May 2, 2011 killing of Osama bin Laden, however, the War on Terror continued apace, through the second term of the Bush presidency and into the first term of Democrat Barack Obama.

The years, however, were also marked by radical change. A perceived lack of progress in the War on Terror, and a growing doubt in the ability of the United States to export democracy, prompted a general decline in the influence of the neoconservatives. Concurrently, there was a rediscovery of purpose and power on the left, and a reassessment of identity by the right. Domestically, this was reflected in the 2006 and 2008 elections, in which the Democratic Party, campaigning on an anti-Iraq War platform, captured first Congress, and then the White House, with the ascent of Illinois Senator Obama to the presidency.

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[111] "Announcement of the End of Major Combat Operations in Iraq," http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030501-15.html [accessed February 2, 2013].

As the duties of America's troops in Afghanistan and Iraq shifted from conquest to occupation, both conflicts became increasingly unpopular, though the latter at a much faster rate. The War on Terror's domestic apparatuses became targets as well, particularly the hastily passed PATRIOT Act, and the domestic surveillance program, which came under scrutiny from a wide swath of American society. Civil rights liberals, anti-"big government" conservatives, and many of those in between were expressing an unease over the loss of personal privacy rights. Across the Atlantic, Europe's struggles with Islam prompted a tremendous amount of unsolicited advice from American intellectuals both left and right, as well as debate over America's own multiculturalist framework and how it would incorporate a growing number of Muslim citizens.

I. The Iraq War: 2003-2011

The War in Iraq -- with its ever-evolving complications -- dominated the eight years from May 2003 to May 2011. With the invasion of Iraq and Osama bin Laden's presumed escape from Tora Bora into Pakistan in late 2001, Afghanistan had been pushed from the forefront of the American political consciousness and discussion, and remained the "second front" of the War on Terror for the duration of the Iraqi conflict.

The relationship of the Iraq War to the War on Terror must first be clarified. Iraq was *not* a lone outpost supporting Islamic terrorists. Saddam Hussein was in fact a ruthlessly secular dictator – and apparently possessed no weapons of mass destruction, certainly none that he was going to give to al-Qaeda members. Thus, the Iraq War technically had very little to do with the strategic objectives of the broader struggle against Muslim terrorism. However, the Iraq War

was a crucial, perhaps the single most crucial, element of the War on Terror from the historical perspective, for the damage it inflicted upon the government that prosecuted it, the intellectuals who supported it, and the strategic program of which it was a part. As the years went on, support of the war became a political albatross, while the burden of the war upon the American treasury, people, and conscience became less and less tolerable. In its influence upon the politics and thought of the time, and upon the prospects of any future foreign endeavors that might have been justified as part of the War on Terror, the Iraq War retained a tremendous relevance.

The expedition in Iraq had commanded support from across the political spectrum at the time of the invasion in Spring 2003. While it would subsequently *lose* support from intellectuals in every corner, it was among the left that the most precipitous withdrawal of favor may be observed. It was political "flip-flopping" that drew the most attention: former President Bill Clinton, for example, who had approved of the 2002 Senate resolution granting war-making authority to the President, declared in 2004 that "I would not have done it [invade Iraq] until after Hans Blix [the U.N. weapons inspector] finished the job." Four years later, while campaigning on behalf of his wife, Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton, against Obama, who had registered his opposition to the war before the initial invasion, Clinton declared that he had opposed the Iraq War "from the beginning."[112]

Just as historians, journalists, and polemicists began to write the history of the Iraq conflict and the neoconservative role in it, American leftist intellectuals looked inward, to determine just what had happened amongst their own ranks over the past several years. Central

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[112] Patrick Healy, "Bill Clinton Flatly Asserts He Opposed War at Start," *New York Times* (online access), Nov. 28, 2007 http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/28/us/politics/28clinton.html?_r=0 [accessed February 12, 2013].

to their retrospection was a question best summarized by political scientist Corey Robin in the

September 26, 2005 edition of *The Nation*:

> [H]ow is it that few liberals and no leftists in 1968 believed that Lyndon Johnson,
> arguably the most progressive President in American history, would or could airlift
> democracy to Vietnam, while many liberals and not a few leftists in 2003 believed that
> the most reactionary President since William McKinley could and would export
> democracy to Iraq?[113]

What had become of the robust American left? Had it been thoroughly duped by the Bush

Administration? Or had the left genuinely believed in the democratizing mission? Robin, for his

part, laid much of the blame upon American liberals rather than American leftists, as he found

little to differentiate the former from the neoconservatives. "Today's liberal," he wrote,

"believes there is only evil and progress is measured by the distance between ourselves and that

evil."[114]

Robin had in mind the "liberal hawks," liberals (and some leftists) who had supported the

initial decision to invade Iraq and, in many cases, supported the war for years afterwards. Of the

liberal hawks, four – Peter Beinart, Christopher Hitchens, Martin Peretz, and Paul Berman –

were particularly prominent in the debates that emerged regarding Iraq from 2003 onward.

Beinart, the young editor of *The New Republic*, had been an early and outspoken proponent of

the War in Iraq; by 2006, however, he had decided that the invasion of Iraq was a misstep that

would "haunt American politics for years to come."[115] Still, he maintained an optimistic view of

the nation's capacity to engage in liberal interventionism: his 2006 book was titled: *The Good*

Fight: Why Liberals – and Only Liberals – Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great

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[113] Corey Robin, "The Fear of the Liberals," *The Nation* (online archive), Sept. 26, 2005 http://www.thenation.com/article/fear-liberals [accessed March 16, 2013].

[114] Ibid.

[115] Peter Beinart, *The Good Fight* [New York: HarperCollins, 2006], xiii.

Again. Beinart's faith, though, deteriorated further over the years. His second book, fittingly

and notably titled *The Icarus Syndrome: A History of American Hubris*, compared the Iraq

invasion (identified, importantly, as a neoconservative venture) with liberal interventionism's

most spectacular failure – the Vietnam War.[116]

　　With the 2006 release of Beinart's *Good Fight*, Hitchens jumped on the misplaced

enthusiasm and vision of one of his colleagues. In a review published in *The Atlantic*, Hitchens

saw no value in Beinart's wistful reminiscing about the Truman Administration and the Golden

Age of liberal interventionists. The comparison to the present was "hopelessly inexact," because

the modern left (and some liberals) lacked any of the courage and initiative to re-appropriate the

War on Terror. The majority of the left, Hitchens wrote, had not even *wanted* the War on Terror:

> One *knew*, before that terrible day [9/11] was out, what would be said by the academic
> and journalistic and Hollywood Left. Much of the rhetoric of that time has been
> forgotten … and now those who never wanted a fight in Afghanistan in the first place are
> free to complain that the war with al-Qaeda in Iraq is a distraction from the struggle they
> opposed … the liberal consensus has already demonstrated a want of spine and sinew [117]

"Thus," Hitchens wrote, "however ineptly [they] may have been … implemented," the Bush

Administration's policies presented the only extant way forward in the prosecution of the War on

Terror.[118]

　　Hitchens remained a particularly firm proponent of the Iraq War. A longtime self-

identifying socialist, Hitchens had begun to drift from the left during the Salman Rushdie/*Satanic

Verses* episode, during and after which he castigated leftists for not speaking strongly enough

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[116] George Packer, "Air America," *The New Yorker*, June 28, 2010; Elizabeth Wasserman, "Beinart Talks Back," *The Atlantic* (online archive), April 12, 2006 http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/05/beinart-talks-back/304843/ [accessed March 10, 2013].

[117] Christopher Hitchens, "Blood for No Oil!" *The Atlantic*, May 2006.

[118] Ibid.

against Ayatollah Khomeini's call for Rushdie's murder. Following the 9/11 attacks, Hitchens

adopted a more militant posture, that of a leftist venturing into the neoconservative camp. The

transformation dismayed some of his (former) friends. Tariq Ali, a British-Pakistani New Leftist

whose own "revolutionary tendencies" had led him from a hostile military regime in Pakistan

into the circles of Black Power figures like Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael and British rock

and rollers like John Lennon and the Rolling Stones, penned a mock obituary for "Hitch": "On

11th September 2001, a small group of terrorists crashed the planes they had hijacked into the

Twin Towers of New York. Among the casualties, although unreported that week, was a middle-

aged *Nation* columnist called Christopher Hitchens. He was never seen again." He went on to

say that, "The vile replica currently on offer is a double."[119]

Hitchens, for his part, denied any changes in his politics, and expressed his belief that the

left had missed an opportunity to seize direction of the national debate. "When armed force is

used specifically against civilians ... by a theocratic organization backed by two or three of the

most revolting governments in the world ..." he said in a 2004 interview, "I don't see any

difficulty making up my mind who I'm against ... This should be a huge opening for the Left.

Instead, a huge number of intellectuals, some posing as leftists or liberals, decided the problem is

with American society itself ..."[120] Never one who showed any signs of discomfort alienating or

angering people, Hitchens expressed disgust with his ideological colleagues, and called out his

fellow leftists for what he understood to be their hypocrisy. Calling to mind both Donald

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[119] Tariq Ali, *Bush in Babylon: The Recolonization of Iraq* [London: Verso Books, 2004], 256.

[120] Christopher Hitchens, interview by Ed Rampell, "Christopher Hitchens: Left, Right, and Center," January, 2004 [online access: http://www.larryflynt.com/notebook.php?id=16] [accessed January 16, 2013].

Kagan's Yale speech and David Halberstam's post-9/11 attitude, he said in another 2004

interview:

> The United States was attacked by theocratic fascists who represent all the most
> reactionary elements on earth. They stand for liquidating everything the Left has fought
> for: women's rights, democracy ... And how did much of the Left respond? By
> affecting a kind of neutrality between America and the theocratic fascists ...
> However bad the American Empire has been, it is not as bad as this [bin Laden and
> other terrorists]. It is not the Taliban, and anybody -- any movement -- that cannot
> see the difference has lost all moral bearings.[121]

Hitchens found some support for his views amongst liberals and leftists. Beinart himself argued

that "anyone who won't stand up to 'Global Jihad' just isn't a consistent defender of liberal

values."[122] Similarly, Jacob Weisberg, editor of *Slate*, wrote that liberal critics of the Iraq War

did not "take the wider ... battle against Islamic fanaticism seriously."[123] Not wishing to be

accused of hypocrisy himself, Hitchens maintained his distance from other branches of American

conservatism. He rejected the paleoconservative, isolationist, conservatism of Patrick Buchanan,

and the realpolitik brand epitomized by Henry Kissinger. He argued that the neoconservative

variety was *different*, a powerfully visionary set of policies aimed at "backing democracy." Of

his own enchantment with the neoconservatives, Hitchens expressed his support of the

"neocons'" post-9/11 philosophy that, "... we can't carry on with the approach to the Middle East

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[121] Christopher Hitchens, interview by Johann Hari, "In Enemy Territory?" September 23, 2004 [online access: http://johannhari.com/2004/09/23/in-enemy-territory-an-interview-with-christopher-hitchens/] [accessed February 20, 2013].

[122] Cited in Tony Judt, "Bush's Useful Idiots," *London Review of Books* Vol. 28, No. 18 (September 21, 2006) http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n18/tony-judt/bushs-useful-idiots [accessed November 12, 2012].

[123] Jacob Weisberg, "The Democrats Face Another Vietnam," *Financial Times* (online), August 9, 2006 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/1/c1cdd104-27cd-11db-b25c-0000779e2340.html#axzz2PWNMFpNX [accessed March 10, 2013].

we have had for the past fifty years ... We have to take the risk of uncorking it and hoping the more progressive side wins."[124]

Peretz, like Hitchens, showed support for the Iraq War that outlasted some of his fellow liberal hawks, and certainly extended past what little grace period the left in general afforded the conflict. For the duration of the Iraq War he scolded leftists and the Democratic Party for being so willing to, first, leave Iraq subject to the Hussein dictatorship and, second, abandon the democratizing mission no sooner than it had begun. As late as 2010, Peretz claimed in his *New Republic*: "Sorry, but the verdict is in on the long American excursion in Iraq. And it is favorable."[125]

Unlike his three colleagues, Paul Berman attempted to recast himself as an anti-war leftist, a significant transformation from his earlier tone. In the months immediately before the invasion of Iraq, Berman had sounded positively hawkish. Like Beinart, he believed in the liberal interventionist vision for Iraq, and thought that the Bush Administration could have been far more successful in its coalition building efforts had it used this rhetorical approach: "…the Bush administration … has failed to present the main argument, which is the single huge argument that has always sustained the Western alliance … the argument that says the totalitarians are dangerous to themselves and to us, and we had better fight them." Like Hitchens and the neoconservatives, Berman saw Islamic fundamentalism as "a continuation of the long

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[124] Christopher Hitchens, interview by Johann Hari, "In Enemy Territory?" September 23, 2004 [online access: http://johannhari.com/2004/09/23/in-enemy-territory-an-interview-with-christopher-hitchens/] [accessed February 20, 2013].

[125] Martin Peretz, "Sorry, But the Verdict is in on the Long American Excursion in Iraq. And it is Favorable," *New Republic* (online archive), March 6, 2010 https://www.newrepublic.com/blog/the-spine/sorry-the-verdict-the-long-american-excursion-iraq-and-it-favorable# [accessed March 1, 2013].

struggle against Nazism and fascism…"[126] At the beginning of 2004, he continued to adhere to

the neoconservative and liberal hawk rationale for Iraq:

> The totalitarian visions live on. Only, instead of being called fascism or some other name from the past, the visions of the present are called radical Islamism and Baathism [a reference to the ideology behind Hussein's Iraq] … What was the reason for the war in Iraq? Sept.11 was the reason … But Sept. 11 did not come from a single Bad Guy – it was a product of the larger totalitarian wave…[127]

Berman, however, later provoked the ire of the left in his representation of his record on the war,

saying that he "approved on principle the overthrow of Saddam" but "never did approve of

Bush's way of going about it … Bush was leading us over a cliff … it is a matter of satisfaction

to me that … I have not made a career of saying 'I told you so.'"[128] Matthew Yglesias, a writer

and editor at *The Atlantic*, criticized him for the dubious slanting of his record. After

highlighting Berman's position as expressed above, he concluded that the:

> reason [Berman] hasn't made a career of telling us 'I told you so' is that … he *didn't* tell us so … all he told us was that had Bush employed more Berman-style rhetoric then maybe more of Berman's friends would, like Berman, have wrongly decid[ed] that an invasion of Iraq was a good idea.[129]

 Berman was, of course, not the only intellectual left-of-center to reconsider his stance on

Iraq, and Yglesias was certainly not the only leftist to censure fellow leftists and liberals for their

advocacy of the Iraq conflict (whether they continued to support the war or not). While criticism

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[126] Paul Berman, "Why Germany Isn't Convinced," *Slate.com*, February 14, 2003 http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2003/02/why_germany_isnt_convinced.html [accessed February 1, 2013].

[127] Paul Berman, "Liberal Hawks Reconsider the Iraq War: Entry 5," *Slate.com*, January 12, 2004 http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/features/2004/liberal_hawks_reconsider_the_iraq_war/stopping_muslim_totalitarianism.html [accessed February 1, 2013].

[128] Paul Berman, in reply to Ian Buruma, "'His Toughness Problem – and Ours': An Exchange," *New York Review of Books* (online archive), November 8, 2007 http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2007/nov/08/his-toughness-problemand-ours-an-exchange/?pagination=false [accessed February 1, 2013].

[129] Matthew Yglesias, "Did Paul Berman Tell Us So?" *The Atlantic* (online), November 12, 2007 http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2007/11/did-paul-berman-tell-us-so/46994/ [accessed February 1, 2013].

of the Iraq War remained the foundation of debate on the left in the post-invasion years, many on

the left who had opposed going to war in Iraq since it first became a possibility exploited their

position as the "original" anti-war intellectuals to berate their colleagues.

Michael Moore, controversial documentary filmmaker and social activist, whose 2004

film *Fahrenheit 9/11* would become the highest grossing documentary ever made, was among

those who faulted the left for permitting the Iraq War to occur. Toward the end of the conflict,

Moore wrote, "I blame the [*New York*] *Times* more for this war than Bush. I **expected** [Moore's

emphasis] Bush and Cheney to try to get away with what they did. But the *Times* -- and the rest

of the press -- was supposed to STOP them by doing *their* job." Moore criticized figures

including radio-show host, comic, and soon-to-be-Senator Al Franken, *New York Times*

columnist Nicholas Kristof, *Times* editor Howell Raines, and *New Yorker* editor David Remnick,

in addition to the 29 "turncoat" Democrats who voted for the war in the Senate, as facilitators of

the "undisputed Crime of the ... Century."[130]

More academic in tone, but equally forceful in his criticism of American liberal

intellectuals, was British historian Tony Judt, creator and director of New York University's

Erich Maria Remarque Institute, a frequent contributor to several American publications

including *The New York Review of Books*, and a member of both the American Academy of Arts

and Sciences and the British Academy.[131] In a mordant September 2006 article for the *London

Review of Books*, Judt conceived a phrase -- "useful idiots" -- that would linger in discussions

and analyses of the American left. The phrase encompassed two perspectives: pro-war leftists

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[130] Michael Moore, "Never Forget: Bad Wars Aren't Possible Unless Good People Back Them," *MichaelMoore.com OpenMike*, September 15, 2010 http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/mike-friends-blog/never-forget-bad-wars-arent-possible-unless-good-people-back-them-message-michael-moore [accessed January 10, 2013].

[131] While Judt never had American citizenship, I am including him because of his long-time residency at New York University, and his contributions to American political discussions, particularly the article discussed.

and liberals were "idiots" from the perspective of anti-war leftists like Judt, while these same individuals were "useful" to the neoconservatives and Bush Administration, their support making the war effort bipartisan. Like Hitchens, Judt asked why "the liberal intelligentsia of the United States ... kept its head safely below the parapet?" Unlike Hitchens, however, who found in the left a hypocritical sympathy with radical Islam, Judt saw the left's apparent timidity as a "fearful conformism," with "Magazines and newspapers of the traditional liberal centre -- the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic* ... the *New York Times* ... f[alling] over themselves in a hurry to align their editorial stance with that of a Republican president bent on exemplary war." Describing colleagues like Hitchens, Beinart, and *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman as "America's liberal armchair warriors," he summarized their contributions to American debate as such: "In today's America, neo-conservatives generate brutish policies for which liberals provide the ethical fig-leaf. There really is no other difference between them."[132]

Judt's criticism, which no doubt resonated with many of the original anti-war intellectuals and those on the left rapidly backpedaling from a pro-war position, was marked by a tendency towards exaggeration and partisanship. Judt neglected entirely the divergence of *purpose* for going into Iraq that had been evident between the neoconservatives and the pro-war left and liberal hawks. The former had envisaged the conflict as one important for strategic reasons -- namely the security of the United States -- on the basis that Saddam Hussein was supposedly supplying terrorists and attempting to build weapons of mass destruction. The liberal hawks, however, argued for the Iraq War for the same reason that many of them had argued for

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[132] Tony Judt, *Bush's Useful Idiots*, London Review of Books Vol. 28, No. 18 (September 21, 2006) http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n18/tony-judt/bushs-useful-idiots [accessed November 12, 2012].For a more nuanced examination of the "useful idiots" - Maria Ryan's article

intervention in the Balkans in the 1990s -- humanitarian concerns.[133] In fact, Judt omitted one of

the most interesting developments of the pro-war argument during the course of 2003, a broad

shift, following cues from the Bush Administration, towards the *liberal* rationale for war.[134]

Judt is also guilty of some rhetorical contrivances used to further his argument. For

example, he includes Michael Walzer, a Princeton professor and co-editor of the liberal

interventionist *Dissent* magazine among the pro-Iraq War "useful idiots." Despite the

magazine's internationalist history, Walzer *opposed* the Iraq War -- what, then, did he do to merit

inclusion in such an assemblage? Support Israel. Indeed, in Judt's view, traditional

neoconservative sympathy with Israel, a rapport that now, of course, included the new liberal

"idiots," was the root of all that was wicked in American foreign policy. Judt characterized

Israel's foreign policy as a history of "wars of choice" (with only the Yom Kippur War as an

exception), and a half-century worth of "preventive wars, disproportionate retaliation, and efforts

to redesign the map of the whole Middle East." He identified the neoconservatives, and most of

their pro-war liberal "cheerleaders" as "unreconstructed supporters of Likud."[135] Israel's foreign

policy history, Judt suggested, formed the intellectual heritage of the neoconservatives and their

"useful idiots," and the playbook for the Bush Administration.

Judt was not alone in his efforts to identify pro-war American intellectuals as ideological

servants of Israel, nor was he the first to tie America's foreign policy issues to that nation. In the

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[133] This is not to suggest that each group was exclusive in its reasoning -- there were certainly neoconservatives who argued for invasion on humanitarian grounds and leftists who emphasized the security threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

[134] See Gen. Franks mission statement near the end of the previous chapter.

[135] Ibid. Likud is Israel's largest conservative rightist party, founded in 1973 by Menachem Begin. It was led from 1993-1999 by Benjamin Netanyahu, from 1999-2005 by Ariel Sharon, and from 2005 to the present by current Prime Minister Netanyahu. For one take on the role of Israel and Judaism in the creation of the neoconservative movement, see Murray Friedman's 2005 *The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy.*

immediate aftermath of 9/11, Patrick Buchanan and many paleoconservatives were questioning

the benefits of U.S. commitment to Israel. Members of the far left, perhaps Noam Chomsky

foremost among them, had long criticized Israeli policies and American support of Israel, and

claimed that 9/11 was little surprise given the American failure to press its ally on the Palestinian

question.[136]

A similar process of inter-ideology debate occurred on the right. Whereas on the left,

these disputes took place between liberal hawks and anti-war leftists, on the right the argument

was between the neoconservatives and paleoconservatives. Following the 2006 elections, in

which the Republicans were swept out of power in both houses of Congress, this criticism was

elevated as the paleoconservatives and Christian Right sought to reassert their control over the

Republican Party.

The American Conservative, originally co-founded by Patrick Buchanan in late 2002 in

reaction to the pro-war policies of *The Weekly Standard* and *National Review*, led the way.

Around the time of the 2006 elections, in which it urged its readers to vote *Democrat* as a

method of registering protest, the magazine began to step up confrontational reporting. One

article, "Selective Amnesia," went after the "pundits who sold the Iraq War" and who now

sought to "bury their records."[137] Among the article's high profile targets were Michael Ledeen

and Charles Krauthammer. Ledeen held an endowed chair for two decades at the American

Enterprise Institute and was a contributing editor at *National Review*, where he wrote, in

response to a *Vanity Fair* article about him: "I do not feel 'remorseful,' since I had and have no

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[136] See previous chapter for a discussion of anti-Israeli statements in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. For comparison with the neoconservatives, see David Brooks's two-part series in *The Weekly Standard*, "Among the Bourgeoisophobes," in April 2002.

[137] Glenn Greenwald, "Selective Amnesia," *The American Conservative*, January 15, 2007, 20-23.

involvement with our Iraq policy. *I opposed the military invasion of Iraq before it took place …* [emphasis added]."[138] *American Conservative*, however, directed its readers to a number of Ledeen's statements in the summer and fall of 2002, in which Ledeen characterized his support of the Iraq War as a "cherished conviction," and bemoaned that the war had not started *sooner*: "I think that if President Bush is to be faulted for anything in this so far, it's that he's taken much too long to get on with it…"[139] In September 2002, Ledeen was explicit enough to dispel any possible remaining uncertainties regarding his position on the Iraq conflict: "Saddam Hussein is a terrible evil, and President Bush is entirely right in vowing to end his reign of terror." In fact, Ledeen had implied that Iraq was not enough: "If we come to Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran as liberators, we can expect overwhelming popular support…"[140]

Krauthammer, while not quite as brazen as Ledeen, misrepresented the reasons for his support of the Iraq War. Krauthammer had long been a powerful voice among American commentators, a writer for *Time* (where he coined the term "Reagan Doctrine"), *The New Republic*, and *The Washington Post* (where he won a Pulitzer in 1987). "Hawks favor war on the grounds that Saddam Hussein is reckless, tyrannical … and that if he comes into possession of nuclear weapons in addition to the weapons of mass destruction he already has, he is likely to … share them with terrorists," he had written in the fall of 2002.[141] For Krauthammer, the entire

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[138] Michael Ledeen, "The Latest Disinformation from *Vanity Fair*," *National Review Online*, November 4, 2006 http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/131835/latest-disinformation-vanity-fair/michael-ledeen [accessed March 1, 2013].

[139] Michael Ledeen, "Scowcroft Strikes Out," *National Review Online*, August 6, 2002 http://old.nationalreview.com/ledeen/ledeen080602a.asp [accessed March 1, 2013]; Michael Ledeen on MSNBC's "Hardball," Aug. 19 2002.

[140] Michael Ledeen, "The War on Terror Won't End in Baghdad," *The Wall Street Journal* (online archive) September 4, 2002 http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB1031093975917263555,00.html [accessed March 1, 2013].

[141] Charles Krauthammer, "Delaying Democrats Can't Have It Both Ways," *The Seattle Times* (online archive, among others), October 14, 2002 http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=20021014&slug=krauthammer14 [accessed March 1, 2013].

raison d'être of the Iraq War was to eliminate the WMD threat posed by Hussein – at least

initially. Once it became apparent that the weapons did not exist, Krauthammer "whitewashed"

his record: "Our objectives in Iraq were twofold and always simple: Depose Saddam Hussein

and replace his … regime with a … democratic government."[142] The weapons argument in fact

figured nowhere in his rationale for continued support of the war. He had totally adopted the

humanitarian goals first put forth by the liberal hawks.

II. Intellectuals and American Counterterrorism Efforts: 2003-2011

Passed shortly after the September 11th attacks, the PATRIOT Act prompted increasingly

fierce legislative battles later in the Bush Administration, and continued to cause consternation

(particularly among the left) into the Obama Administration years. Opposition generally came

from the left and civil libertarians on the Right. Former Republican congressman Bob Barr said

that parts of the Act "smack[ed] of the very type of fascist or communist government we fought

so hard to eradicate in other countries in decades past."[143] He was joined by other libertarians,

including the party's most visible luminary, Representative Ron Paul. More interesting was the

coalition formed between the left and these rightists. It was an actual coalition, there being

several groups dedicated to organizing opposition whenever the Act came up for renewal or

expansion. Al Gore, former Vice President, compared President Bush to *1984*'s omnipresent,

omniscient, and menacing "Big Brother."[144] Bernie Sanders, whose political affiliation ran

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[142] Charles Krauthammer, "Why Iraq is Crumbling," *The Washington Post* (online archive) November 17, 2006 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/16/AR2006111601359.html [accessed March 1, 2013].

[143] Byron York, "Off Course," *National Review*, February 13, 2006, 20-22.

[144] Adam Nagourney, "Gore Says Bush's War on Terrorism is Ineffective," *New York Times*, November 21, 2002.

between independent and socialist, proclaimed in the pages of *The Nation* that the Bush

Administration "is doing more than any in recent history to undermine our basic constitutional

rights."[145]

Coming into force on February 1, 2002, the USA PATRIOT ACT ("Uniting and

Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct

Terrorism Act," hereafter Patriot Act) was first passed by Congress six weeks after the 9/11

attacks. The Act contained ten main provisions, enumerated (in much simplified form) here:

Title I authorized the president to seize the property of any foreign person suspected of attacking

the United States and expanded the National Electronic Crime Task Force Initiative; Title II

"Enhanced Surveillance Procedures," permitting the interception of "wire, oral, and electronic

communications" related to terrorism and fraud, the creation of roving surveillance, mandating

the cooperation of internet service providers in disclosing online activity of citizens, and

"delayed notification" search warrants, whereby law enforcement could conduct a search of

property *then* notify the owner of said property; Title III concerned international money-

laundering and the finance of terrorism; Title IV aimed to enhance border security by banning the

entry of foreign nationals with suspected affiliations to terrorist organizations, augmenting the

surveillance of foreign students, and providing for renewable detention of suspected terrorists;

Title V strengthened "National Security Letters," extending the power of law enforcement to

issue these demands for all information and documents related to a subject of investigation, and

making them applicable to U.S. citizens without probable cause or judicial review restrictions;

Titles VI and X provided for compensation to victims of terrorism and contained several other

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[145] Bernie Sanders, "A Patriotic Challenge," *The Nation*, February 6, 2006, 14.

appended provisions; Titles VII and IX facilitated the sharing of information at both the local-federal and inter-agency levels; and Title VIII expanded the list of terrorist crimes while increasing the penalties for them.[146]

In the period immediately following its passage and entrance into the American code, the Patriot Act was overshadowed by the contentious debate over the Iraq War. In later years however, particularly during the reauthorization battles of 2003-2006 and 2010-2011, the Act was the subject of intense scrutiny.[147]

The left was relatively coherent in its opposition to the Act, although liberal support for the Patriot Act would be crucial to its renewal in 2011. Leftists suggested that most members of Congress had never read the Act, and accused their ideological foes of not knowing what it said.[148] *The Nation* frequently led the charge against the controversial Act, and David Cole, a Georgetown University Law School professor and legal correspondent for the magazine, was at the vanguard. For Cole, the Patriot Act reeked of McCarthyism, and, at its most basic, "allow[ed] the government to label groups and individuals as 'terrorist' without the most basic elements of due process."[149] Cole expressed dismay with the Obama Administration's continued defense and use of the Act's provisions in 2011, and argued that, as the threat of war and terrorist violence supposedly ebbed, "shouldn't we be reconsidering the sacrifices that we made to fight that war?"[150] Katrina vanden Heuvel, *The Nation*'s editor, opposed the Act throughout the

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[146] USA PATRIOT ACT Public Law 107-56 Oct. 26, 2001 H.R. 3162 115 Stat. 272

[147] The Act was actually extended in 2005, 2006, and 2011, but debates regarding addenda took place over the longer periods mentioned above.

[148] See Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, in which Democratic Representative John Conyers of Michigan remarks that "no one" in Congress actually read the Patriot Act prior to its passage.

[149] David Cole, "Bush's Lingering Blacklist," *The Nation*, May 11, 2009, 7-8.

[150] David Cole, "The War on Civil Liberties," *The Nation*, July 18/25, 2011, 7-8.

period, and went as far as to take the government to court, joining the American Civil Liberties Union in a 2008 lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the law.[151] Leftist journal *Progressive* featured an editorial titled "King George" that denounced the "President's authorizing of NSA to spy on Americans."[152] *Mother Jones* featured a series of articles dedicated to the librarians challenging the Patriot Act's allowance for government inspection of library records, approvingly calling them "Defenders of the Free World."[153] Jesse Jackson believed the wiretappings had nothing to do with terrorism: "We have gone from being lied to about the war to being spied on for protesting the war."[154]

Pro-war liberals like Christopher Hitchens also opposed the Patriot Act. Hitchens termed it "Orwellian," and criticized leftist groups for not doing enough to oppose it, out of fear of the political consequences.[155] Paul Berman, in the beginning stages of rebranding himself as a good anti-war leftist, compared Patriot Act-America to the fictional, Nazi-fied United States of novelist Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*. As a parallel to the anti-Semitism of National Socialism, Berman saw "the hardships of immigrants from Muslim countries in the last few years, not to mention the unfortunate fate of the Geneva Conventions of war …"[156]

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[151] Katrina vanden Heuvel, "Our Warrantless Wiretapping Lawsuit," *The Nation Blog* (online), July 10, 2008 http://www.thenation.com/blog/our-warrantless-wiretapping-lawsuit# [accessed February 1, 2013].

[152] Editors, "Comment: King George," *The Progressive* (online archive), February 2006 http://www.progressive.org/mag_comm0206 [accessed February 1, 2013].

[153] See the January/February 2004 issue.

[154] Jesse Jackson, interviewed by Amy Goodman, "Jesse Jackson on Samuel Alito, Domestic Spying and Poverty in America" Democracy Now! Radio Jan. 9, 2006.

[155] Christopher Hitchens, interview by Ed Rampell, "Christopher Hitchens: Left, Right, and Center," January, 2004 [online access: http://www.larryflynt.com/notebook.php?id=16] [accessed January 16, 2013].

[156] Paul Berman, "The Plot Against America: Review by Paul Berman," *New York Times Sunday Book Review* (online archive), October 3, 2004 http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/03/books/review/03BERMAN.html?pagewanted=all [accessed March 1, 2013].

While the left and the libertarians concerned themselves with the ethical implications of the Act and the (largely) hypothetical violations of civil rights that could occur, the supporters of the Act positioned themselves as "practical warriors." These supporters included rightists of several persuasions and a smattering of liberal intellectuals. Sometimes reluctant in their sacrifice of values, other times aggressive in their advocacy of the sweeping investigative powers, the right portrayed itself as the realist member of America's political family. Dismissing the libertarian-leftist alliance, one writer in the *National Review* noted that this bipartisan group was operating in vain against a much greater bipartisan alliance -- the U.S. Congress, which voted 455-67 (collectively) to authorize the Act.[157] Asking the troubling question whether Americans preferred safety or legal bureaucracy -- the Act was rarely portrayed as a sacrifice of legal protections and was depicted rather as a streamlining of the investigative process -- conservatives thought they answered on behalf of Americans everywhere when they said "safety."

Conservative supporters of the Act also accused their opponents of ignorance of it, wondering, like leftists, whether their foes had ever read it. The law, in their minds, swiftly became Washington's favorite whipping boy when debate over additions to the act erupted in summer 2003. "Hysterical critics," the *National Review* wrote, misrepresented the law as a "power grab by a would-be totalitarian state."[158] A year later, former terrorism prosecutor Andrew McCarthy wrote in the *National Review* that the law had become "mythologized" and the debate over it clouded by overwrought, knee-jerk, civil libertarians who misled the public with phrases like "assault on rights" or "erosion of freedoms." "At a time when the 9/11

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[157] Byron York, "Off Course," *National Review*, February 13, 2006, 20-22.

[158] Kate O'Beirne, "Congress's Patriotic Act," *National Review*, September 15, 2003, 23.

Commission's public hearings highlight intelligence lapses and investigative backwardness,"

McCarthy wrote, "... it is remarkable that elected officials would have *any* priority other than

making the Patriot Act permanent."[159] In this, conservatives were joined by liberals like Beinart,

who accused leftist group MoveOn of "grossly inflat[ing] the Act's effect," and mocked them for

fearing the Act more than the "danger from Al Qaeda … civil libertarian alarmism at its worst –

vastly exaggerating the threat from [Attorney General] John Ashcroft in order to downplay the

threat from Al Qaeda."[160]

III. Islam and the West: 2004-2011

Over roughly two years from early 2004 to early 2006, terrorist attacks in Europe

temporarily unchained the War on Terror from its Iraqi albatross, and permanently re-elevated

the struggle against Islam to a "Clash of Civilizations."

On the 11th of March 2004, ten bombs exploded on the Madrid transit system, killing 191,

and injuring almost two thousand commuters. The attack, initially blamed on Spain's own

Basque separatists, was soon linked to an Islamic terrorist cell. The bombing was successful in

forcing the new Spanish government, elected three days after the attack, to quickly withdraw

from Iraq. Later that year, on November 2, provocative Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh was

murdered in broad daylight on an Amsterdam street by a Dutch-Moroccan fundamentalist, who

shot van Gogh eight times, attempted to decapitate him, and plunged a knife so deep into his

chest that it touched his spine. Van Gogh had recently directed a short film, *Submission*, which

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[159] Andrew McCarthy, "The Patriot Act Without Tears," *National Review*, May 31, 2004, 32-35.

[160] Eric Alterman, "A Reply to Peter Beinart," *The Nation*, January 10, 2005. This was, interestingly, the exact same reason Hitchens said he left the nation in 2002.

featured passages from the Koran painted onto the backs of bruised women. *Submission*'s script

had been written by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Somalia-born Dutch parliamentarian known for her

outspoken views on the treatment of women in Islamic societies.[161] On July 7, 2005, during the

G8 summit in Scotland, four British-Muslim suicide bombers set off explosions that rocked the

London public transport system, killing 55 and paralyzing the capital. Finally, beginning in fall

2005 and continuing through the late winter of 2006, the Danish "cartoon controversy" --

initiated by the publication of several "blasphemous" cartoons depicting Mohammed in the

Danish *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper -- brought violent protests by offended Muslims to Europe,

the Middle East, and the United States.

These four events would prompt critical developments in European politics, but they also

had an ideological impact that crossed the Atlantic, and provoked a transformative debate

between left and right in which American intellectuals played an important role. By 2011, half a

decade after the Danish cartoon controversy had subsided, something had changed in the

European psyche -- multiculturalism, long a vital block of the civic foundation of the European

Union, was pronounced a failure by the leaders of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

When Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, and Prime

Minister David Cameron of the U.K. said that multiculturalism was a foundering experiment, the

implicit suggestion (made explicit in some comments) was that Islam, not just radical Islam, had

proven incompatible with the liberal democratic tendencies of their own nations. From across

the ocean, while in many cases acting as "observers" to this transformation, American

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[161] In fact, the note pinned to van Gogh with the knife was addressed to Hirsi Ali, labeling her an "infidel fundamentalist" in the employ of "Jewish masters."

intellectuals pondered the meaning of such declarations, and aired their own concerns about the success of multiculturalism in American public affairs.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The reaction to the bombings in Madrid and London, particularly the latter, was starkly different from the reaction to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon just a few years before. In *The Nation*, two correspondents from London wrote dryly that, "These attacks didn't come out of the blue. After the events of the past four years, there is no blue for them to come from anymore. No one here was asking 'Why us?'" The consciousness of prior "motivating factors" was far stronger than after 9/11. Indeed, among leftist publications like *The Nation*, the lack of professed sympathy and the desire to blame not the perpetrators themselves but Bush and Blair was evident: "Tony Blair and [former Spanish Prime Minister] José Maria Aznar were head boys in Bush's coalition of the willing; now all three countries share a common grief." Or: "Before London's scars can truly heal, we will have to acknowledge, and mourn, the infinitely larger wound inflicted on Iraq, and the old wounds still festering inside our own society."[162]

In the same edition of *The Nation*, the editorial board proclaimed "Terror Comes to London." Fulfilling the adage that the most interesting part of a sentence comes after a "but," the board began with a disclaimer-like statement that "The London bombings ... were despicable acts ... " before adding, " but ... Blair's claim that the chief motivation of the terrorists was 'a desire to impose extremism on the world' rang as hollow George W. Bush's claim after the September 11 attacks that Islamic terrorists 'hate our freedoms.'" According to the editor,

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[162] D.D. Guttenplan and Maria Margaronis, "After the Bombs," *Nation*, August 1/8, 2005, 4-5.

Katrina vanden Heuvel, the "rationale for the London attacks appeared plain enough."[163] The

bombings, while tragic, were essentially anti-war protests and the implication of *The Nation* and

other leftist publications was that the attacks were *justified*, a position that went beyond even the

"extreme" dissenting views expressed by Susan Sontag and other leftists in the aftermath of 9/11.

While the Madrid and London bombings dealt with terrorism and geopolitics on a grand

scale, the van Gogh assassination and the Danish cartoon controversy refined an equally

important but even broader debate -- not about the struggle between terrorists and governments

but about the relationship between Islam itself and the "West" as a cultural leviathan. In the

process, American intellectuals, liberal and conservative, and their European counterparts,

underwent a fascinating exchange of traditional values and causes.

The Danish cartoon controversy in particular prompted a tremendous amount of

introspection and polemicizing. Many on the left defended *not* the right of the media to publish

the cartoons (*Jyllands-Posten* was joined by dozens of newspapers across Europe and the United

States that published the cartoons in "solidarity") but those protesting the cartoons. In *The*

Nation, Gary Younge, the Alfred Knobler Journalism Fellow at The Nation Institute and a New

York correspondent for the British *Guardian* newspaper, proclaimed a co-equal right to the

freedom of speech -- "The Right to Be Offended."[164] Freedom of speech was, for Younge, the

"right to offend," which entailed the counter-freedom to "be offended," and the responsibility of

the offenders to "weather the consequences." Younge acknowledged that the editors and

publishers should not have had to fear death threats, and that perhaps Danish and Norwegian

embassies in the Middle East should not have been torched, but his primary concern was one

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[163] Editors, "Terror Comes to London," *Nation*, August 1/8, 2005, 3.

[164] It must be remembered that freedom of speech laws are generally much more restricted in European countries.

shared by many others on the left: "If our commitment to free speech is important, our belief in antiracism should be no less so" -- in essence, freedom of speech must be tempered by consideration for the sensitivities of others.[165]

Others on the left were not quite so sure. Several years later, Michael Mechanic, senior editor at *Mother Jones*, was reminded of the controversy when Trey Parker and Matt Stone, creators of the popular comedy series *South Park*, were the target of threats after depicting Mohammed in one of their episodes.[166] Mechanic expressed a restraint similar to Younge -- "Fight for the *right* to draw Mohammed, but then decline doing so" -- but moreover a belief that the right to freedom of speech overruled any possible offense that could ensue:

> ... free speech, when tested is never pretty. It pays to remember that Supreme Court free-speech cases don't involve polite Midwesterners and the like, but rather people ... who say and do and print extremely offensive things. And if they offend you, well, don't buy their magazines -- or try and sue them if you like. But nobody should be allowed to use religion to take away other peoples' right to self-expression.[167]

The right, like the left, was split in its reaction to the cartoon controversy. Some members of the Christian Right joined Europeans like the Archbishop of Canterbury in condemning the cartoons on a general, anti-blasphemy platform. Dinesh D'Souza, a conservative commentator, affiliate of the Hoover Institution at Stanford, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute, and a former advisor to President Ronald Reagan, contended that the cartoon riots were an unsurprising and not altogether unjustified

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[165] Gary Younge, "The Right to be Offended," *Nation*, February 27, 2006.

[166] *South Park* had depicted Mohammed in the past, but this was the first occasion since the cartoon controversy and the assassination of van Gogh.

[167] Michael Mechanic, "Everybody Draw Mohammed ... Oops!" *Mother Jones* (online), April 28, 2010 http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2010/04/south-park-censorship-comedy-central-muhammad-mohammed-cartoon-trey-stone-matt-parker [accessed February 20, 2013].

response. He lamented that the cartoons served only to verify the pronouncements of Islamic fundamentalists that there was a "war against Islam."[168]

More common among the right, particularly among the neoconservatives, was an aggressive assertion of Western-style freedom of speech. Columnist Charles Krauthammer asked why the American left and "moderate" Muslims did not condemn "grotesque caricatures of Christians and, most especially, Jews that are broadcast throughout the Middle East on a daily basis" and declared that "what passes for moderation in the Islamic community -- 'I share your rage but don't torch that embassy' -- is nothing of the sort."[169] One of the issues raised by leftist intellectuals had been the discrepancy between strict European laws regarding Holocaust denial and forms of anti-Semitic speech and the comparative lack of regulation regarding offensive speech about Muslims (and, presumably, Christians and Buddhists and Hindus). The cartoons were incitements to violence, so went the logic, and should thus be subject to the same regulations.

William Kristol dismissed these arguments, and the lack of historical awareness that he believed to be behind them. In a particularly sarcastic *Weekly Standard* article, he wrote: "Oh, the anguish! And why not? You remember -- don't you? -- the wave of bloody pogroms against Muslims living in Denmark following the ... publication." The *real* provocateurs, Kristol argued, were the Danish imams who took a tour of the Middle East in late 2005 to spread awareness of the cartoons, with some of their own, generally *more* insulting additions, after their protests had run up against a defiant Danish prime minister. Kristol also questioned the general silence of the

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[168] Dinesh D'Souza, *The Enemy at Home* [New York: Doubleday, 2007], 174.

[169] Charles Krauthammer, "Curse of the Moderates," *Washington Post*, February 10, 2006.

left, paraphrasing Robert Frost and suggesting that "they're incapable of taking their own side in a fight."[170]

Kristol, Krauthammer, and the neoconservatives were joined by their honorary ally Hitchens, who discovered a fierce kinship for the Danes that led him to assemble a small group to gather, "in a quiet and composed manner," to "affirm some elementary friendship" at the Danish embassy in Washington. Hitchens blasted the attitude of the left and the cartoon protesters ("Let's be sure we haven't hurt the vandals' *feelings*") and, like Kristol, firmly denied any parallels with the laws regulating anti-Semitic expressions.[171] He was also dismayed by the lack of support for Denmark -- threatened with boycotts, embassy attacks, and other acts of economic and physical warfare -- from Western governments, including the Bush Administration. Presciently, he predicted that the charge of "Islamophobia" would continue be leveled at those who criticized Islam.[172]

While the cartoon protests subsided in early 2006, the questions of compatibility between Muslim and Western values lingered. The neoconservatives were not the only members of the right to defend the right to criticize Islam. Roger Kimball, editor and publisher of *New Criterion*, and author of several books dealing with art and political correctness, addressed the issue of "free speech in an age of jihad" in mid-2008. He declared "efforts to suppress criticism of ... Islam" as "one of the most serious threats to freedom of expression since 1683," when the Ottoman extension into Europe was checked at Vienna. Characterizing anti-free speech efforts

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[170] William Kristol, "Oh, the Anguish!" *Weekly Standard*, February 20, 2006.

[171] Hitchens defended, for instance, the right of David Irving, British anti-Semite and Holocaust denier, to declare his views.

[172] Christopher Hitchens, "Stand up for Denmark!" *Slate.com*, February 21, 2006 http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2006/02/stand_up_for_denmark.html [accessed March 1, 2013].

like "libel tourism" as "soft jihad," Kimball went on to write that "soft jihad ... abuses the

language and the principles of democratic liberalism not to secure the institutions and attitudes

that make freedom possible but ... to undermine that freedom and pave the way for theocratic

intolerance."[173] In essence, the West, particularly Western leftists and liberals, were complicit in

the destruction of their own values.[174]

Debates over Islam and the West continued through the next half-decade. During these

five years, "Eurabia" continued to be the proving ground for some progressive, conservative, and

"progressively conservative" solutions to the Islam-West gulf, and the scene of what seemed to

be a quickly eroding political and social harmony. One region in Germany altered its

immigration requirements, mandating acceptance of same-sex marriage as a condition of entry.

Likewise, the Netherlands began to show videos of topless women, and gays being married, in

the civic education videos for would-be immigrants. Death threats greeted a French high school

philosophy teacher who called "Mohammed ... a master of hatred," as well as a delegate to

Germany's Bundestag (the lower house of Germany's Parliament), who said that Muslim

immigrants who wore head scarves did not live in "the historical present." Pope Benedict XVI

prompted an uproar by quoting a Byzantine emperor who criticized Mohammed as one who

"spread by the sword the faith he preached." Both Britain and France considered restrictions on

the niqab (a veil worn by Muslim women that showed only the eyes), and the burqa (a head-to-

toe garment), with France banning the burqa, niqab, and all other face-concealing attire in 2011.

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[173] Libel tourism referred to the process whereby, in several cases, Saudis accused of helping fund terrorism sued American authors in British courts -- with their much harsher libel laws -- to force the destruction or removal of said books.

[174] Roger Kimball, "Free Speech in an Age of Jihad," *The New Criterion*, Summer 2008, 1-4.

The potential for Turkish membership in the European Union provoked anxiety across the Continent.[175]

The Nation lamented the "intemperate and overheated" reactions to the above events, and suggested that "reasonable and fair-minded" discussion about Islam and the West had become impossible because, in the Western mind, "'Islam' has become inextricably associated with 'Islamic fundamentalism.'"[176] Richard Wolin, a professor of history and political science at CUNY Graduate Center, took a clinical approach to Europe's "Muslim problem." Depression, he wrote, is prominent among first-generation immigrants; among second- and third-generation immigrants, however, schizophrenia is most prominent, and these "maladjusted" youths are susceptible to radicalization. They would not be, Wolin wrote, if only Europe did a better job of integrating them, of making them feel at home. "Fundamentalist Islam provides 'existential meaning,' a sense of belonging," Wolin continued. Wolin and other leftists often discussed immigration to European nations as if it had been forced, a compulsory relocation into an "ethnic and cultural no man's land" ruled by "Western mores ... often perceived as 'corrupt' and 'materialistic.'" Wolin's approach was the antithesis of the French values that would later be articulated by President Nicolas Sarkozy. Wolin characterized "French republican ideology" as "studiously tone-deaf to considerations of difference," and suggested that it was the Republique, not the immigrants, who needed to assimilate.[177]

In the United States, the situation was of course very different. The nation's experience with centuries of substantial levels of immigration had compelled it to negotiate new identities

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[175] Ian Buruma, "Europe's Turn to the Right," The Nation, August 29/September 5, 2011, 10-14.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Richard Wolin, "Veiled Intolerance," Nation, April 9, 2007, 25-30.

for itself along the way, and to forever reassess the notion of what it meant to "be American."

Nevertheless, the European "crisis" resonated. While American leftist intellectuals busied

themselves with prescriptive remedies to the situation in Europe, American rightists were

focused more on preventing the U.S. from going the way of Europe. While the Muslim

population in the United States is small (roughly one percent) compared to that of, say, France

(roughly ten percent), it nonetheless prompted anxiety on the right. Samuel Huntington, in a

2004 book *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity* wrote that Muslim

immigrants were an "indigestible" group.[178] In reality, some American conservatives (neo- and,

more often, paleo-) took advantage of the atmosphere of cultural and social discomfort to address

these problems in their widest possible frames: not just Muslim immigration but *any*

immigration, not just Islam but *any* non-Christian (or even non-Protestant) faiths, etc.

In October, 2011, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stood before a gathering of the

youth wing of her party. Addressing the young Christian Democrats from the podium, she

declared that "the approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side by side ... has

failed, utterly failed."[179] Several months later, Prime Minister David Cameron of the U.K. stated

that public funds should not be distributed to groups that did not adhere to a core set of "British"

values, that "passive tolerance" of these groups should end, and that "state multiculturalism had

failed."[180] Roughly a week after Cameron's speech, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said:

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[178] Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004], 188.

[179] "Merkel Says German Multicultural Society Has Failed," BBC, October 17, 2010 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451 [accessed February 20, 2013].

[180] "State Multiculturalism Has Failed, Says David Cameron," BBC, February 5, 2011 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994 [accessed February 20, 2013].

> We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him ... [multiculturalism] is a failure ... If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept that, you cannot be welcome in France.[181]

The leaders of Western Europe's largest and most powerful countries had all openly criticized the decades-old process that, by their estimation, had made Germany, the U.K., and France nations composed of *communities*, rather than a single *community*. Moreover, each of the three leaders referenced their Muslim population as the critical component of failed multiculturalism (Merkel was subtler, speaking instead of "foreign workers" who had refused to leave).

Running beneath all of these events and the debates that they provoked was a concern about Islam and the West, a sociocultural incarnation of Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations." As Europe had a far greater Muslim population than the United States, American intellectuals projected their own hopes and insecurities (mainly the latter) onto the developing "crisis" across the Atlantic.

For some on the left, particularly those in Europe, one of the distressing elements of the London attacks was the provenance of the attackers. As *The Nation* put it:

> We knew something like this was going to happen, but most of us assumed that when it did the culprits -- like the attackers in Manhattan and Madrid -- would be foreigners. Like an aftershock, the news that the attackers were homegrown, cricket-loving Muslim lads from Leeds may yet do more damage than the initial attacks.[182]

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[181] "Multiculturalism Has Failed, Says French President," AFP, February 10, 2011 http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jR1m5BpdMrDES3u4Cso1v3FwQRUg?docId=CNG.6b096ac0cdcfce7a0f599fbbb1c85c27.911 [accessed February 20, 2013].

[182] D.D. Guttenplan and Maria Margaronis, "After the Bombs," *Nation*, August 1/8, 2005, 4-5.

It was a sentiment shared, in its broadest form, by members of the right. Within hours of the

London transit bombings, one Conservative MP was urging his colleagues to reconsider their

"business-as-usual-Northern Ireland/the Blitz" mentality.

> I want to talk about Islam. Islamic society has a devotion and a commitment that we in
> this country do not have ... Islam is a different kind of religion from Christianity. A
> Muslim has to redeem history. That means that state affairs are not a distraction from
> spirituality, but the stuff of religion itself.[183]

Similar concerns occupied American paleoconservatives, who began publishing books on

the corrupting effects of immigration on the West prior to the events discussed above, tracts that

took on new meaning in light of the refocusing of the assimilation/multiculturalism debate

around Islam. Patrick Buchanan's *The Death of the West*, Tony Blankley's *The West's Last*

Chance, and Bruce Bawer's *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from*

Within all expressed an apocalyptic fear of the corrupting effect of "non-Western" (read: Muslim)

communities within Europe and, for Buchanan and Blankley, the United States and the West as a

whole. Huntington, whose "Clash of Civilizations" had been so influential to the

neoconservative understanding of large-scale international confrontation, lent himself to

paleoconservative arguments, denouncing multiculturalism as an essentially "anti-Western

ideology."[184]

In their warnings about the dangers of multiculturalism, these authors, likely

unconsciously, echoed the jeremiads of the Christian Right -- Jerry Falwell's lamentation that

"We have kicked God out the back door"; Senator Rick Santorum's book-length mourning the

growth of secularization, *It Takes a Family*; Pat Robertson's proclamation that the "moral

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[183] Peter Viggers MP (Gosport-Conservative), *The Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 6th Series, Vol. 436, Pt. 1. House of Commons Official Report, 54th Parliament, 1st Session, July 7, 2005, 447-565.

[184] Roger Kimball, "Free Speech in an Age of Jihad," *The New Criterion*, Summer 2008, 2.

education of our children [has been] trampled underfoot by a tiny left-wing minority."[185] While

Falwell, Santorum, and Robertson were writing about what they understood to be a general

secularization of American society (often legislated from the bench by so-called "judicial

activists"), their fears, like those of their counterparts in Europe, were tied to underlying

demographic shifts. The America that these men looked out upon was one muddled not just by

people of countless faiths, ethnicities, languages, and backgrounds, but one that continued to be

the destination of large numbers of immigrants. The "problem" was not so much Muslim

immigration, as in Europe, but immigration tout court, a landscape that one scholar summarized

as:

> ... a political environment characterized by immigration, cultural and religious pluralism,
> evolving understandings of human liberty and dignity, and a demographic shift away
> from white majorities -- a nation that grows less Protestant, less Christian even, with each
> passing year.[186]

From a cultural and educational standpoint, Kimball wrote of what he saw as the double

standards of multicultural education, which he colorfully termed an "orgy of self-flagellating

guilt." Kimball argued that, together with the equally dubious theory of "cultural relativism,"

multiculturalism prompted American universities to elevate non-Western influences to a status

not of parity with the Western tradition, but of *supremacy* to it: "Preferring Western culture or

intellectual heritage is culpable in a way that preferring other traditions is not." The

consequence? The culture of multiculturalism and political correctness (associated with

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[185] Andrew R. Murphy, "Longing, Nostalgia, and Golden Age Politics: The American Jeremiad and the Power of the Past," *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 7, No. 1 (March, 2009) http://www.jstor.org/stable/40407220 [accessed February 12, 2013], 131.

[186] Ibid.

American leftists and liberals), were "critical intellectual and moral enablers for the agenda of radical Islam."[187]

A few high profile voices on the right disagreed. Francis Fukuyama, in reviews of some of the books discussed above, saw a failure on Europe's part to assimilate Muslim immigrants. For Fukuyama, who had come far from his optimistic "end of history" ideas, the failure was not rooted in "trendy multiculturalist ideas embraced by the left," but in the "blood-and-soil understanding of identity" that rightists like Buchanan espoused. Yet he also understood the left to be blocking any substantive efforts to create national identities that would preserve a broader national, universalist character, while incorporating "the dignity of the individual," a *leitkultur* ("reference culture") that was derailed by "charges of racism and anti-immigrant prejudice."[188]

In the United States, the Islamic population was thrust into the spotlight by Representative Peter King's (R-NY) decision to convene a series of hearings on the "radicalization" of the nation's Muslims in spring 2011. When the Republicans seized the majority in the House of Representatives in fall 2010, King became Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, and used this position to question Muslim cooperation with anti-terrorism efforts, the beneficiaries of Muslim charities, and whether extremism was being preached in the nation's mosques.

The left, not surprisingly, expressed doubts about King's purpose and methodology. One writer in *The Nation* called out as a "myth" King's claim of Muslim "noncooperation with law enforcement."[189] Another columnist suggested that King's hearings were the culmination of a

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[187] Roger Kimball, "Free Speech in an Age of Jihad," *The New Criterion*, Summer 2008, 2.

[188] Francis Fukuyama, "Identity, Immigration, and Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2006) http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/gratis/Fukuyama-17-2.pdf [accessed January 20, 2013].

[189] Moustafa Bayoumi, "Fear and Loathing of Islam," *Nation*, July 2/9, 2012.

personal vendetta that had grown out of his fury that "Muslims in his own area of Long Island ...

initially doubted Al Qaeda's responsibility for the attacks."[190] The left pointed out two troubling

elements of King's own past that they believed shed light on his "McCarthy-esque" "witch

hunt." First, King's fiction writing from 2001-2003 in which a heroic Congressman fights vast

terrorist conspiracies and attempts to thwart their violent machinations, suggested, to the left, a

dangerous hero complex. Referring to King as the Republican Representative of "Hysteristan,"

Mother Jones criticized King as a "blathering," "grandstanding," demagogue.[191] The second part

of King's past that was quickly unearthed were his ties to the IRA and, allegedly, through them,

Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. *Mother Jones* senior correspondent James Ridgeway dismissed

King's efforts thus: "Peter King is the last person in the world to be preaching about terrorism,

including Muslim terrorism. The very idea that the U.S. Congress would but on such an odious

display, led by this consummate hypocrite, humiliates the country at large."[192]

Conservatives were less troubled by King, both his hearings and his past.

Neoconservative magazine *Commentary* ridiculed suggestions that King was focusing unfairly

on Muslims, and should have included other races and faiths, by pointing out that "Islamic terror

attacks have been more problematic recently than, say urban Asian gangs or the White Power

movement..."[193] The *National Review* defended King, pointing out that a Senate probe of the

2009 Fort Hood shooting by a radicalized Muslim U.S. Army Major had reached similar

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[190] Michelle Goldberg, "The 'Hero' of the War on Terror," *Nation*, February 28, 2011.

[191] Kevin Drum, "Grandstanding Watch," *Mother Jones Political Blog*, December 29, 2009 http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2009/12/quote-day-grandstanding-watch [accessed January 28, 2013].

[192] James Ridgeway, "Peter King, Qaddafi, and the IRA," *Mother Jones*, March 11, 2011 http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2011/03/peter-king-qaddafi-ira [accessed January 28, 2013].

[193] Alana Goodman, "A Different Sort of Conference on Homegrown Radicalization," *Commentary Blog*, March 22, 2011 http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/03/22/a-different-sort-of-conference-on-homegrown-radicalization-2/ [accessed January 28, 2013].

conclusions to those of King. *The American Conservative*, however, more "Old Right" than the

National Review and certainly more traditional than *Commentary*, condemned King's "radical

ignorance," and his hearings as Washington's "typical grandstanding buffoonery." King was not

the only guilty party in their eyes, however. Until Republicans began to talk about *all* of the

roots of Islamic fundamentalism, not just a Muslim failure to assimilate, but U.S. actions as well,

they might as well be discussing "teenage sex while leaving raging hormones completely out of

the equation."[194]

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[194] "Peter King's Radical Ignorance," *The American Conservative* (online), March 15, 2011 http://www.theamericanconservative.com/tactv/peter-kings-radical-ignorance/ [accessed January 28, 2013].

Conclusion

Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden had been born to a life of extreme privilege

in Saudi Arabia, son of one of the wealthiest contractors in the kingdom. He became, through a

series of turns and events, the face of Islamic terrorism in the Western world. For more than a

decade, he had eluded the world's greatest military power. He was the thin, bearded, almost

spectral figure relentlessly pursued through mountains, caves, and villages, appearing

occasionally in recorded sessions to remind his trackers that he was still free, and his followers

that their work was not yet done. On the night of May 2, 2011, Osama bin Laden, age 54, was

killed by U.S. Special Forces in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

President Barack Obama's announcement of the death of bin Laden prompted reactions

ranging from spontaneous street celebrations in Times Square, to the more sober responses of

American intellectuals. Prominent leftist academic Noam Chomsky wrote that:

> the operation was a planned assassination, multiply violating elementary norms of
> international law … We might ask ourselves how we would be reacting if Iraqi
> commandos landed at George W. Bush's compound, assassinated him, and dumped his
> body in the Atlantic. Uncontroversially, his crimes vastly exceed bin Laden's…195

The paleoconservatives, represented by Eric Margolis in *The American Conservative*,

noted that "Osama bin Laden predicted long ago he would die a martyr at the hands of U.S.

forces, and so it has come to pass ... It is most unfortunate that bin Laden was so bluntly rubbed

out." In keeping with the paleoconservative opposition to the Iraq and Afghan conflicts,

Margolis went on to write: "Grotesquely overblown military outlays and debt addiction are

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[195] Noam Chomsky, "My Reaction to Osama bin Laden's Death," *Guernica* (online access) May 6, 2011 http://
www.guernicamag.com/daily/noam_chomsky_my_reaction_to_os/ [accessed February 26, 2013].

crippling the United States and undermining its global power. That may be the most pernicious

legacy of the man who thought he could defeat the United States."[196]

The neoconservatives, who helped cowrite the script for the War on Terror, unsurprisingly

had a different reaction. Max Boot applauded bin Laden's death, but wrote that it "chang[ed]

little."[197] *The Weekly Standard* urged the government to "Press the Advantage," while warning

that bin Laden's death would do little to "advance the evanescence of jihadism."[198] Liberal

hawk, and sometime neoconservative ally, Christopher Hitchens wanted the President to turn to

Pakistan:

> The martyr of Abbottabad is no more, and the competing Führer-complexes of his
> surviving underlings will perhaps now enjoy an exciting free rein. Yet the uniformed and
> anonymous patrons [the Pakistani military and intelligence services] of that sheltered
> Abbottabad compound are still very much with us, and Obama's speech will be entirely
> worthless if he expects us to go on arming and financing the very people who made this
> trackdown into such a needlessly long, arduous and costly one.[199]

The New York Times, a more temperate proponent of the liberal philosophy, included an

editorial that cautioned: "Even as we now breathe a bit more easily, we must also remember that

the fight against extremists is far from over. Al Qaeda may strike back, or other groups may try

to assert their rising power."[200]

<div align="center">***</div>

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[196] Eric S. Margolis, "Osama's Ghost," *The American Conservative*, July 2011, 6-7.

[197] Max Boot, "Bin Laden's Death Changes Little," *Wall Street Journal* (online access) May 9, 2011 http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703859304576306941215709576.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADSecond [accessed February 26, 2011].

[198] Gary Schmitt, "Press the Advantage," *Weekly Standard*, May 23, 2011; Reuel Marc Gerecht, "Whither Jihad?" *Weekly Standard*, May 16, 2011.

[199] Christopher Hitchens, "Death of a Madman," *Slate.com* May 2, 2011 http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2011/05/death_of_a_madman.html [accessed March 16, 2013].

[200] Editors, "The Long-Awaited New," *New York Times*, May 2, 2011.

The period following bin Laden's death was distinguished *not* by dramatic change or a sense of conclusion, but by a solemn, underlying continuity. The War on Terror, or Overseas Contingency Operation, as the Obama Administration had renamed it, continued apace, even expanding as the president escalated the unmanned drone strike campaign in Pakistan. The Patriot Act was renewed twenty-four days after bin Laden's death. Representative Peter King's hearings on the radicalization of American Muslims would return to the Capitol. The intellectual debates accompanying all of this continued without faltering.

One reason for this continuity was the simple fact that bin Laden's death did not end the threat of terrorism. A much more significant factor was that the intellectual arguments had long since detached themselves from the issues of terrorism and counterterrorism that had contributed to their genesis or evolution. Indeed, during the two decades from 1991 to 2011, and particularly the post-9/11 years of 2001 to 2011, terrorism was as often as not a *pretext* for discussion of issues like rogue states, homeland security, and immigration and assimilation. To be sure, the development of terrorism contributed to varying degrees to the parameters and substance of these discussions. However, as this paper has shown, many of the anxieties apparently provoked by 9/11 in fact have origins, if broader, in pre-9/11 America: the neoconservative fixation with Iraq, for example.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Henry Adams wrote in "The Dynamo and the Virgin" that "Historians undertake to arrange sequences,—called stories, or histories,—assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect." This story of the American intellectual reaction to terrorism is an attempt to examine and categorize the response of American leftists and liberals, neoconservatives and paleoconservatives. Any such history must tackle the fundamental *fluidity* of thought and

ideological allegiances that typified the twenty years from the end of the Cold War in 1991, to

the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011. Ideologies are not synonymous with political parties,

though there certainly are correlations between the two. A leftist like Hitchens does not turn in

his card, and receive in return a new liberal or neoconservative one. Nor does the intellectual

assume all of the ideas of the group with which he or she identifies. Because of this, an

intellectual history is always complicated, as the historian seeks not only the strands of

commonality both between and within groups, but the strains of protest, dissent, and radicalism.

Beginning in 1991, American intellectual history entered an era of swift and profound

transformation. The Cold War, which had formed the parameters of debate within the United

States for half a century, evaporated. The divisions that it had established between capital "Left"

and "Right," and within those two groups between left and liberal, paleo- and neoconservative,

began to deteriorate as well.

Between 1991 and 2001, American intellectuals continued to operate within a Cold War

framework, preoccupied with nation-state crises in Yugoslavia, Somalia, and China. They were

also, however, introduced to terrorism, which arrived in the United States on a grand scale with

the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and the 1995 attack in Oklahoma City. As the

threat of militant Islamic extremism rose through the second half of the decade, albeit overseas,

neoconservatives bound it to the threat they believed posed by Saddam Hussein and Iraq.

It was not until the 2001-2003 period, however, with the quadruple hijackings and assault

on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on 9/11, that terrorism forced its way to the forefront of

intellectual debate in the United States, and became one of the defining issues that defied the old

labels and led to the convergence of new intellectual affiliations. As the government

contemplated its response to 9/11, intellectuals began their own long-running conversation about

what that reaction should be. Discussions often began with attempts to assign blame for the attacks, and then moved on to the justification, or lack thereof, for military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, and what the ambition of that intercession was.

From 2003 to 2011, the Iraq War lost much of its support among American intellectuals, although some of the liberal hawks and neoconservatives continued to defend it. More introspective intellectuals, focusing not on the nation's legions in the Middle East but the counterterrorism measures initiated within the country itself, debated the threats and merits of the PATRIOT Act. As European leaders proclaimed the death of multiculturalism, American intellectuals grappled with the ramifications of this pronouncement for their own nation's diverse population and traditions.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The death of Osama bin Laden brought a dozen-year manhunt came to an end. The significance of the killing of the world's most wanted terrorist was a subject of debate, but the man certainly appears minuscule next to the efforts -- foreign and domestic -- launched in the name of defeating him and his fellow terrorist actors. He seems even smaller when figured among the wrangling of American intellectuals over the key tenets of their nation's identity, past, and character, fierce discourse and sometimes less-than-civil dialogues that have continued in his absence.

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