**The Appearance of War in Discourse:
An Analysis of the Neoconservative Movement**

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Mark Ayyash
Ph.D Candidate
Department of Sociology
York University

Much has been written on the US policy of invading Iraq. Some of these accounts have focused on the neoconservative movement, and powerful criticisms have been directed towards it. This study adds to this literature by analyzing the neoconservative discourse preceding the invasion.[1] The specificity of this analysis lies in how it resists the temptation to launch an attack towards this discourse at every corner. While neoconservative discourse is often historically baseless, morally repugnant, or academically reprehensible, the principal aim here is to analyze the discourse on its own terms, so as to examine the way in which war appeared within it. This very appearance gives us a view of the paradoxical question that makes this discourse theoretically viable at the same time that it slowly destroys it.

The chief architects of this discourse began formulating their ideas during the latter part of the 1980s, but the materialization of those ideas into an actual plan for American defence and foreign policy did not seem to occur until the late 1990s.[2] Thus, the focus here is on the period 1998-2003. It was within this period that the ideas that led to, sparked, and informed the US policy towards Iraq were born. In the following analysis, I deconstruct the discourse into its principle components in order to open up an avenue for understanding how it was that war became the chosen path.

Building on this analysis, I explore a feature that permeates the discourse. This feature involves the idea that a tension between two concepts operates within the discourse: I call this the *'isolationism-expansionism' tension*. Isolationism here entails the neoconservative idea that the US does not actively pursue the expansion of its intervention around the world for the sake of garnering more power and wealth. Rather, the neocons view the US as already residing in a position of unrivaled power, and thus seek to maintain that position with all of the benefits which come along with it – most notably, the benefit of maintaining and enhancing American sovereignty and security. It is this desire to enhance and maintain America's freedom from the world that represents the isolationist elements of the discourse.

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[1] The term 'neoconservative' is an intriguing one. In his study, Kenneth Zagacki (1996) lays out the main features of the neoconservative discourse which emerged in the 1960s. One of these features dealt with how this discourse actively sought to defeat neoliberals and conservatives alike: "Neoconservatives depicted politics as endorsing rational action that promoted the social welfare – less action than liberals but more enlightened action than that proposed by traditional conservatives" (177). Essentially, they presented themselves as mediators who utilized the best of classic liberalism, conservatism, and the progressive elements of modernity (Ibid: 178-81). In this sense, these neoconservatives are as much progressive liberals as they are conservatives, and hence, the dubiousness of the term 'neoconservative.' For the purposes of this paper, I will not delve into the debate surrounding the term, its obviously Straussian roots, or the current state of its 'struggle' with neoliberalism. These are all extremely important questions, but I wish to first, outline the contours of the discourse within itself. That is, to illustrate the very make up of this discourse and examine how this particular strand of self-proclaimed neoconservatism operates. More specifically, I use the term neoconservative to denote a discourse which presents itself as the neoconservative alternative to the liberal, realist, and isolationist trends in American foreign policy debates. So, what makes a neocon a neocon? My answer to this question is provided through the five components that make up the discourse. The question regarding the neocons' peculiarity (or lack thereof) in the sphere of foreign affairs will be raised at the end of the paper.

[2] See Klare 2003 and Mann 2003 for a review and discussion on this movement's history.

Expansionism deals with the increased involvement and exertion of American power around certain regions of the world. The goal of this expansionism is to insert American-style political institutions in specific regions, and thus secure American interests and hegemony, as well as ensure American security. The most important characteristic of this expansionism is that this intervention is accompanied by the objective of quickly removing American power from the scene of intervention. Thus, expansionism entails both the increased exertion of American power in a region of interest, and the establishment of an indirect form of governance that is free of visible American influence and/or presence in the targeted region.[3]

I conclude this paper by engaging with the theoretical claim that makes this tension seem tenable (i.e., that war is a continuation of politics by other means). This claim introduces a paradoxical question into the discourse. This basically involves the Clausewitzian paradox, where resistance poses a challenge to this theoretical claim that is not easily overcome – indeed, it will be my contention that this discourse has thus far failed to overcome it, and will not likely do so.

The Five Components of the Neoconservative Discourse
Before discussing these, I will make a few methodological points. This study takes the view that these components operate in a space that Michel Foucault (1972) calls "discursive formations." Basically, this space consists of a number of components that produce and re-produce a specific discourse across time. While each of these components operates in all of the different texts of this discourse, they are given greater or lesser attention in each depending on the specialty of the author(s) involved. The connection between the texts lies in the fact that each author is dependent on each of these components in one way or another, sometimes explicitly, but mostly implicitly.[4] The dependence that each of these texts have on the others indicates that none of them have a 'total' handle on this discursive formation – i.e., the authors of these texts are not the discursive formation itself. Rather, together they represent the arch-type of this discourse, where each author has a specific kind of contribution to the larger discursive formation in which they all, nonetheless, operate.

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[3] This is different from the old colonial regimes in both their direct and indirect forms of governance. This due to the fact that past colonial regimes (e.g., the British Empire) adopted either a direct or indirect form of governance only after establishing a colonial administrative structure that was directed by the colonial power (Furnivall 1956). The neocons, on the other hand, seek to transfer the task of governance to the native people of a foreign land as fast as possible. Their governance is indirect in the sense that the American-style political structures that are constituted in these foreign lands are still intended to serve the interests of the intervening power.

[4] For instance, when Kagan and Kristol (2000) argue for a morally-driven foreign policy towards the Middle-East as a matter of strategic interests, they are very much dependant on the need to move away from the moral relativism that Frum and Perle (2003) discuss more deeply. The important connection here is that they all have a Manichean view of the world, and connect moral thinking with strategic interests.

In this study, then, discourse will be viewed as containing a set of components that shape it, determining its limitations and boundaries. The repeated appearance of these components across the various texts analyzed indicates a "discursive regularity," where correlations or themes can be found between the different texts (Foucault 1972: 21-76). These components will thus provide the crux of my description; as opposed to the individual texts themselves. Different texts will be used to help describe different components, but the relation between these components operates in all of these texts; hence their unity.

This is the extent of Foucault's influence on my methodology. The aim here is not to follow in this great thinker's footsteps, nor to add to the vast literature that has been inspired by him. Rather, it is to use some of his methodological insights in an attempt to explore just how one can analyze the appearance of certain ideas within a discourse. In a few words, I do not wish to analyze what the appearance of a discursive shift constitutes; I wish to analyze how it came to appear in the first place. Furthermore, I am engaged in an archeological analysis here, and not a genealogical one. That is, I am taking a snapshot of the discourse, and not tracing its historical trajectories. This means that I am not exploring discursive shifts *per se*, but rather the very make-up of a discourse.[5]

These points can perhaps be clarified with reference to how this work is in some sense similar to Roxanne Doty's, and different in another. In *Imperial Encounters*, Doty explores the politics of representations of the global north and south, by analyzing the imperial discursive formation in two encounters: the US and the Philippines, and Great Britain and Kenya. In her work, Doty guides us in developing an approach to discourse analysis in the study of international relations, and offers a well-established starting point from which I can launch my own analysis. My work is similar in that I intend to capture the (il)logic of the discourse in reference to its worldview – both in its representation of what is "fact" about various world actors/global processes/the security environment/etc., as well as the advocated practices that are attached to these representations: in other words in reference to its "representational practices" (Doty 1996: 10). This is my snapshot of the discourse. It does not mean that the discourse is closed within itself; it simply means that a "partial fixity" is present within this discourse – one that makes it possible for the discourse to represent and to act on that representation (Ibid.: 6). Thus, this 'partial fixity' serves as a delimitation of my space of analysis.

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[5] Generally speaking, I see archaeology in Foucault's thought as the method specific to the analysis of a particular epoch, institution, practice or set of practices, discursivity, etc. I see genealogy as the tactic he uses to juxtapose the different and competing elements within these various particularities (which archaeology has exposed) against each other. In short, genealogy is the design, and archaeology is the method (Foucault 1980: 85). I agree with Mitchell Dean's assertion that the relationship between the two has not been fully expounded upon by Foucault (Dean 1994: 14). Therefore, it is difficult to discuss this relationship any further. Suffice it to say, the distinction pertinent to my paper is that between analyzing a particular discursivity within itself, and juxtaposing to it various other elements which would illuminate the historical trajectories with which this discursivity interacts.

My work departs from that of Doty's in that I am not directing my analysis towards the relation with the 'Other,' which this discourse constitutes. No doubt, this is present in the analysis, but it is not its main focus. Thus, my analysis does not move towards Edward Said's (1979) Orientalist argument. But is rather concerned with the disruption of the discourse's 'partial fixity' by pointing out the components that make the appearance of war within this discourse possible, at the same time that the very character of this war makes this discourse theoretically viable and, in the last analysis, untenable. This character, as I will show, lies in the Clausewitzian paradox.

In this paper I focus on texts produced by authors such as Wolfowitz, Perle, and Kristol (to name a few); so why these texts for this war? There are three reasons for my choice of these texts in particular and this discourse in general. The first is the close association of the authors of these texts to high-ranking positions of decision-making in the US (e.g., Wolfowitz has clear connections with Rumsfeld).[6] The second reason is the reflection of their main ideas in official US policy statements. I will not go into detail here about what these similarities are. Once I discuss the main components of this discourse, it should become clear that they correspond closely to official American policy (namely The National Security Strategy of the United States of America document), as well as presidential speeches.[7] The third and main proof that these texts are pertinent to the analysis of the Iraq War is simple: the fact that the US did indeed carry out a policy of invasion. This is the important glue that holds (not unites) all of these different texts together: they unanimously initiated, advocated, and supported the war against Saddam and the invasion of Iraq. These three reasons guided my choice of the texts, and helped me determine what to include and exclude from the analysis.

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[6] It is important to note that these connections are not indicative of some kind of conspiracy between the architects of this discourse and the positions of power. Architects and supporters of the discourse (when not in position of power, e.g., Wolflowitz) are frank about their influence on American foreign policy, and do not consider this influence as representative of a secret 'coup' in Washington (see Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 65-75 for a historical overview of this rising influence). They simply believe that they presented the Bush administration with the best ideas for dealing with the threat of terrorism and the dangers of tyrannies:

> we suspect that the average Republican primary voter … thinks about foreign policy almost exactly as Washington's hawks do: that enemies cannot be palliated and must be fought. That sympathy of views, not conspiracy, explains why the advocates of a strong policy have prevailed since 9/11. The American public instinctively senses that in a dangerous world the toughest line is the safest line (Frum and Perle 2003: 191).

[7] I will not include these policy statements in my analysis. No doubt, these statements play a role in the discursive formation in question. An analysis of this role would have to, in my view, take into account the various forces and structures within the institution of US policymaking. This would be an interesting and important direction of research, but one that is beyond the scope of this paper. This paper will thus exclusively focus on the space (i.e., the works of PNAC and its members) in which the discursive formation took its original shape – a shape which was later formalized, re-enforced, and changed/altered/modified? through the institution of US policymaking.

I. The Language of 'Good' and 'Evil'

The attacks on 9/11 were a crucial element of this first component of the neoconservative discourse. For the neocons, two messages came with the attacks. The first was that enemies abroad could reach American soil and inflict enormous damage upon American society. The second, and more important message, was that evil had not been eradicated from existence with the fall of the Soviet Union. It had rather re-emerged in a new and dangerous form. This new evil was not as clearly definable as past evil enemies, for it did not come from any one particular state. It rather consisted of small units that could transcend the borders of sovereign states. Most frightening, this evil aimed to strike at the very core of civilization: the civil and open society. The attackers on 9/11 had shown a daunting ability to exploit every weakness of American and Western society to carry out their attacks. These weaknesses comprised lenient and incompetent domestic policies, which allowed suspected terrorists relative freedom of movement and communication, and soft foreign policies, which did not respond to terrorist attacks[8] firmly and wholeheartedly (Frum and Perle 2003: 62). American complacency, and more importantly, the era of 'moral relativism' had shown the neocons loud and clear what their consequences were.[9]

For the discourse's architects, 9/11 reminded Americans that not all people deserve the civil treatment an open society provides its subjects. More importantly, it had crystallized for the world what was good and what was evil. In this era, terrorism had shown itself to be "the great evil of our time," and democratic governance as the only counter to it on the side of good (Ibid.: 9). This clash between good and evil would not be a 'clash of civilizations,' a war between East and West, or between Christianity and Islam. It would be a *clash of ideologies*. On the good side lay the ideology of freedom, liberty, and democracy, and on the evil side lay the ideology of hate, destruction, and tyranny.

While this evil ideology only represented a small faction of the Arab Muslim world, the neocons asserted that it was nonetheless an expansionist one and its aims were nothing short of "world domination" (Ibid.: 42-3). Therefore, America had to reach the potential followers of this terrorist movement before the ideology of hate did. Evil's momentum in the region could not be allowed to proceed unopposed. Halting the expansion of this ideology therefore meant bringing the forces of good to a direct confrontation with the forces of evil for all in the region to witness. In other words, an alternative to this evil ideology had to be presented to the Arab world *on Arab soil*. The only question left was where would this occur?

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[8] The 1993 attack on the World Trade Center and the 2000 attack on the USS Cole are often cited as two such examples.

[9] This detestation of moral relativism runs through the neoconservative discourse across its various spheres of interest (Zagacki 1996: 182).

The populations this evil preyed upon inhabited states that were either too weak or unwilling to deal with terrorism (Ibid.: 118). The US had to be careful in its approach towards these weak states. If the state simply lacked the resources to fight terrorism, the US would simply aid them tactically, strategically, and monetarily. If these states sponsored terrorism, or colluded with terrorists, then a hard-line approach was necessary for two reasons (Ibid.: 118-9). First, it was necessary because it would lead to the destruction of terrorist networks and their infrastructure (e.g., Afghanistan). Secondly, it was necessary so that the clash of ideologies could be fought, and ultimately won. The latter point is where Saddam Hussein joined the war on terror. Iraq was the ideal theatre for an ideological confrontation between good and evil. The destruction of Saddam's tyrannical regime and the establishment of a democratic Iraq in its place would show the Arab world the alternative to terrorism. The presentation of a living example of this alternative in a democratic Iraq would make this possibility a reality for Muslim Arabs everywhere (Ibid.: 163-4).

In the absence of such an example, evil would have simply consumed the region – why? Because if Saddam were to beat the sanctions and remain in power, the terrorists would have been "emboldened and inspired" (Ibid.: 28). What Arabs may have perceived in Saddam as a courageous defiance to the US had to be presented to Arabs for what it really was: Arab fatalism (Ibid.: 32-3). There was no *middle ground* here: Arabs had to choose between an ideology of hate that preyed on their weaknesses, and an ideology of freedom that gave them a chance for a re-birth.

For the neocons, this war should not be settled through negotiations. Any attempt to understand why these terrorists hate America was meaningless. Even though the US had committed its mistakes in the region, these mistakes could not have given rise to "a hatred as all-consuming and self-destructive as the hatred encountered in radical Islam" (Ibid.: 48). This hatred was born, sustained, and continuously reborn in a tyrannical political atmosphere akin to a "swamp" (Ibid.: 161). It was these tyrannies that lay at the heart of the problem, not the democracies of the West. Since the roots of the problem lay in the camp of evil, there was no need for America "to apologize to anyone for its culture" (Ibid.: 148).

The battle lines in this war were unequivocally clear: you were either on the civilized side of good, or on the terrorist side of evil. An apologetic approach could not have conveyed this important message. It would have only invigorated the terrorists and sent the following message to the Arab world: your acts of violence have given you strength in the sense that you now have the attention of the West; the West is even somewhat afraid of you – your pride could thus be effectively restored through violence.

In this war, such a compromise or an appeasement of evil would have been disastrous for the neocons. A non-apologetic hard-line approach was needed to convince many Muslim Arabs around the world to begin the much-needed political, social, and economic transformations of the Arab world. Muslims alone can conclusively win this war of ideologies, but only the US can make that victory possible (Ibid.: 152).

II. American Superiority

For the neocons, the US could not afford modesty in the post 9/11 era – the various strengths of America's political, economic, and military institutions had to be used to their full capacity.[10] Moral clarity had to be accompanied with the use of superior American power to ensure that good prevailed. The use of power here comprises the spread of superior American-style political institutions and the belief in America's superior military capabilities to accomplish this feat.

First is the confidence in America's political institutions. This confidence stemmed directly from the belief in "'American Exceptionalism' – a belief in the uniqueness and the virtue of the American political system that, when translated into foreign policy terms, offers the United States as a model for the world" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 64). This is distinct from the "logic of cultural relativism," which only encouraged "a deep-seated reluctance to judge others and [a] lingering skepticism about America's founding ideals" (Ibid.). The neocons claimed to have wholly embraced America's founding ideals and viewed them as a source of strength and confidence, not as a source of discomfort and hindrance.

In their discourse, there was no doubt that what America was offering the Middle East was superior to their current way of life. In the case of Iraq, they argued, Americans had to avoid "moral evasion" (Ibid.: 94), and face the facts: Saddam Hussein "is at once a tyrant, an aggressor and, in his own avowed objectives, a threat to civilization" (Ibid.: 3). There were three ways in which the superiority of America's political institutions was established in this discourse. First, they argued that democracies simply never waged war against each other (Ibid.: 104). Second, democracies provided economic, religious, and individual freedoms that no other political system could (Ibid.: 95). Finally, they were universally applicable across time and space (Ibid.: 109-11). The spread of democracy was thus a positive undertaking. Over time, it would prove beneficial to Iraqis, Americans, and the world.

Second is the belief in America's ability to spread American-style political institutions. While diplomacy and multilateral institutions could aid in this task, the spread of democracy had to be backed by American power, and that included the use of force (Ibid.: 113). This belief in America's military capabilities had its roots in a 'new revolution in military affairs' (RMA). More specifically, it relied on a new strategy of Rapid Dominance (RD), which was developed to deal with the new dangers and threats of the post-Cold War era. RD's main advantage was the ability to strike an enemy with great speed and lethality. Its ultimate aim was to provide policymakers with maximal political flexibility and leverage (Ullman and Wade 1998: 1-2). It

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[10] The focus in this discourse is primarily on political and military issues. Economic strength is primarily brought up when a case for stronger military and defence funding is being advocated (see Kagan 2000: 241-65). It is important to note here, though, that this approach rests on the idea that, in the post-Cold War era, global economic interdependence is well under way, and heading into a direction that is favourable to American economic interests. Thus, the aim within the discourse is to accompany this economic project with a political one (Ibid.: 337-40).

would make 'rogue states' think twice before opposing American interests, particularly because RD would enter the thought process of their leaders and affect their will and that of their people (Ibid.: 78). In short, with the ability to strike hard and fast, the US could utilize its superior military power to impose its will upon its enemy with relative ease and within a short period of time. This was a crucial element of RMA that the neocons bought into and incorporated into their discourse.

When it came to the Middle East, this new military capability had to be used. For the neocons, this region was most impressed with military power and most accustomed to the language of force (Gerecht 2001). Its militants and political leaders only "understand strength and have only contempt for weakness" (Perle quoted in Schmitt 2003). If the period following 9/11 was allowed to pass without the maximum exertion of American military power, then the region would have perceived America as weak (Gerecht 2002). This could not be allowed to pass for "'weakness is provocative': that's one of Donald Rumsfeld's famous rules, and a decade of weakness in the Middle East had proved Rumsfeld right" (Frum and Perle 2003: 16). The neocons believed that the soft policies of the 1990s towards Saddam produced devastating results for American interests. When it became clear to Saddam and the people of the Middle East that America was not prepared to go to war with him, a set of inevitable consequences unraveled: most important of which was the loss of American credibility and the expansion of Saddam's power in the region.[11] America had the military capabilities to avoid such dire consequences. It was the political will that was missing.

Only through the application of its military power could the US *impose* its superior ideals on a region badly in need of resuscitation. The failures of past US administrations to act decisively against Saddam made him look stronger than the US in the eyes of the Arab world (Wolfowitz 2000: 322). For the neocons, this had to change. And this change which began with moral clarity had to be complemented with the embrace and utilization of American superiority for "A humane future … will require an American foreign policy that is *unapologetic, idealistic, assertive,* and well funded" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 120, emphasis added).

III. American Security

The neocons believed that prior to 9/11, Americans mistakenly felt invulnerable on domestic soil. After the attacks of that day, Americans were forced to re-think and re-conceptualize their security. The domestic changes – or the defensive reaction to 9/11 – were significant, but they were not enough on their own. In this era of terrorism, the preservation of homeland security rested more and more on the offensive act abroad.

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[11] These dire consequences were expressed in a letter sent to the Speaker of the House (Newt Gingrich), and the Senate Majority Leader (Trent Lott). This letter was signed by a number of people including: Richard Perle, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz ("Letter to Gingrich and Lott on Iraq" 1998).

This new security environment began to form well before 9/11. During the 1990s, civil wars broke out across different regions of the globe, developing various forms of unrest and instability with detrimental effects on America's strategic interests. The response of the US to most of these disturbances seemed to be: "we have no business intervening in conflicts among people we do not understand, where 'we have no dog in the fight'" (Wolfowitz 2000: 313). The neocons considered this response imprudent and short-sighted. With all of the uncertainty surrounding this era, one fact was certain – the US was the world's sole superpower. It was thus its duty to act like one. This demanded sound policy from the US, which required a proper understanding of the new security threats in the world.

Understanding such threats meant contextualizing them within the proper grand strategy concerns and goals of American foreign policy. In grand strategy terms, the main concern or national security issue facing America in the 21st century was the emergence of a hostile superpower that would seriously challenge US hegemony. This idea first surfaced in 1992, when Paul Wolfowitz outlined it in a draft memo from his office in the Pentagon. It subsequently formed the basis for the *Regional Defense Strategy* issued by, then Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney. The core idea of this strategy

> … suggested that a 'dominant consideration' in U.S. defense strategy should be 'to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power.' Those regions were specified as including Western Europe, East Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union and Southwest Asia (Ibid.: 309).[12]

While the neocons believed that the post-Cold War era seemed to have eradicated major philosophical confrontations, they nonetheless felt that "it would be a mistake to assume that the emergence of new powers in the world, *particularly China*, will automatically take a more peaceful course than the emergence of other great powers in the past" (Ibid.: 318, emphasis added).[13] China represented the greatest threat to American hegemony in the 21st century (Kagan 2003: 93). In order to deal with China and other potential threats,

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[12] The absence of the Middle East from this list is of immense importance. This stems from the pre-9/11 (early 1990s) belief that the rogue regimes of the region are threatening to American security only in so far as they represent potential allies to an emergent hostile superpower (from outside the region), where they would supply such a power with the necessary resources (e.g., oil) for a confrontation with the US and its allies (this will be discussed shortly). This is one of the few, yet crucial, points in which this discourse intersects with Samuel Huntington's (1996) famous thesis.

[13] This does not mean that communism is dead; it simply means that it has lost its "world-revolutionary spirit" (Ibid.). While some anxiety towards the rising popularity of Islamic rule exists in the discourse, it was not considered a serious revolutionary threat as of 2000. Wolfowitz sums this up here, "It is only in the Muslim world that a revolutionary notion of societal organization has philosophical roots, and that notion, at least for now, is very much on the defensive in Iran, its own home base" (Ibid.).

America had to strengthen its alliance with liberal-democracies around the world.[14] This would serve both to protect the security of allied nations, and more importantly, to bring them prosperity (economic and political). Two important positives would arise from this: (1) with the strength of an alliance security structure, it "demonstrates that problems are better solved within that alliance structure," and (2) with prosperity for those who are within this alliance, it makes "the status quo attractive to all comers" (Wolfowitz 2000: 333). Simply put, the best way to deal with the uncertainties of an emergent China, or any other potential threat for that matter, was to shape the future – to either eliminate the confrontation altogether by absorbing countries like China into an alliance structure, or to let the confrontation transpire in an atmosphere conducive to an American victory (Ibid.: 314-6).

With this grand strategy in mind, foreign policies should thus focus on how

> … to minimize the likelihood that we will be forced to engage in another major (hot or cold) war in the future and, if such a conflict can not be averted, to best position ourselves to wage it …. In general, a threat of this magnitude will require a major power that seeks to upset the international status quo, and *troubled waters in which it can fish* (Ibid.: 333, emphasis added).

The elimination of these prerequisites, or at the very least the reduction of their potential potency, should form the basis for immediate foreign policy decisions.[15] The US, therefore, had to effectively deal with "rogue states and minor disturbers of the international order" (Ibid.: 333). The elimination of such states would play a major role in depriving a future superpower of a potential ally: "A country determined to mount a major attack on the status quo would find a country like Iraq a willing ally and a source of leverage against the US and its allies" (Ibid.: 333-4). Therefore, the direct and pressing need of foreign policy was to deal with countries like Iraq.[16] In dealing with it, the aim ought not to be the morally deplorable and strategically futile goal of co-existence and/or developing better relations with a tyrant like Saddam; the aim ought to be the

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[14] This is a point that was continuously stressed in face of unilateral allegations. While testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, William Kristol (2003) asserts that "we continue to believe that the goal of maintaining peace and prosperity in the world is best accomplished by working with our democratic allies both to protect existing democracies and, where necessary or possible, to expand liberty's reach to other nations."

[15] It is important to note that this idea was indeed put into practice, under the leadership of Paul Wolfowitz, twice before it made its appearance in an official strategic document in 1992: "Paul Wolfowtiz … who as assistant secretary of state for East Asia in the Reagan administration was the crucial figure in forcing from power *two* Pacific Rim dictators: Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines in 1985 and Chun Doo Hwan of South Korea in 1986" (Frum and Perle 2003: 159-60).

[16] This point is reiterated by Kaplan and Kristol (2003) in their evaluation of the Iraq War:
> … members of the Bush team recognize that the present era offers both crisis and opportunity. In their view, the United States must pursue two goals at once: first, the promotion of a world order conducive to American interests and principles; and second, a defense against the most immediate and menacing obstacle to achieving that order (118).

This shows how this idea, which emerged in the mid 1980s – early 1990s, was alive and well in 2003.

transformation of Iraq – to rid the region and the world of Saddam's regime (Kagan and Kristol 2000: 20). The neocons believed that the 1990s policies towards Iraq ignored the fact that Saddam had made his plans for regional domination clear. The only scenario worse than a hostile Iraq joining an emergent superpower, was an Iraq *with regional dominance* joining such a power (Kagan and Kristol 1998).

They also believed that 9/11 had raised the prospects of a chemical or nuclear terrorist attack on American soil. This, they argued, left Americans with no choice but to face rogue states forcefully and swiftly, because such an attack could only occur if terrorists and rogue states with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) combined their forces to attack the US (Cheney quoted in Kristol 2002). This new reality made Saddam a grave threat to American security. To remove him from power, a political-military strategy was needed, and "let's not kid ourselves: In any such … strategy, the military element is central" (Kagan and Kristol 1998).[17]

To sum up, the neocons believed that the new security environment forced the US to contend with a number of global threats. The two oceans that had protected it in the past no longer formed the formidable barriers they once did. This environment consisted of three elements. In order of importance: (1) the possibility that a hostile superpower would rise and challenge US hegemony, (2) hostile rogue states that already possessed, or are near possessing, WMDs, and (3) terrorist cells, which formed small units that could maneuver with great stealth and inflict a great deal of destruction. Rogue states were arguably the most unique of these three threats. They can play a role in strengthening both the first and third elements. They can ally themselves with a future hostile superpower, and supply it with necessary resources; and they can combine forces with small terrorist cells and thus increase the terrorists' potency (e.g., supply them with WMDs, intelligence, or simply embolden terrorists from a distance). Thus, any security strategy had to consider ways of eliminating these threats (or at the very least, reducing their potency) if it is to ensure American security in the future – if it is to re-build the security the two great oceans once provided. Since rogue regimes form a double-barreled threat, their removal was seen as integral for it would reduce the potency of the first and third elements of danger, not to mention the second in its own right.

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[17] In addition, PNAC sent a letter to the office of President Clinton in 1998 which made a request for such a shift in policy:

> The only acceptable strategy is one that eliminates the possibility that Iraq will be able to use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction. In the near term, this means a willingness to undertake military action as diplomacy is clearly failing. In the long term, it means removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American foreign policy ("Letter to President Clinton on Iraq" 1998).

This letter was signed by a number of people including: Richard Armitage, Richard Perle, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz. With the exception of Armitage, another letter was signed by the figures above which carried the same message to the Speaker of the House (Newt Gingrich), and the Senate Majority Leader (Trent Lott).

This view of the security environment existed well before 9/11. The events of that day simply strengthened its resolve and for the neocons, proved it right: "September 11 did not create the threat of Saddam Hussein, or even make the imperative of dealing with the threat more urgent. Rather, it dramatized a threat that was there all along" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 73). It illustrated the dire consequences of inaction and shortsightedness, and made official the dawn of the new security environment.

IV. American Hegemony

With the fall of the Soviet Union, America became the world's sole superpower. No single state, coalition, or ideology could challenge it. The US had entered its "unipolar moment" (Kagan and Kristol 2000: 6).[18] The neocons believed that this historical development had to be greeted with enthusiasm by American politicians. After all, this 'unipolar moment' was the fruit of America's perseverance in years of fighting hot and cold wars across the globe. Following the Cold War, the goal of American diplomacy should have been to turn this 'unipolar moment' into a "unipolar era" (Ibid.). The policies of the 1990s, however, squandered this opportunity. This was a period largely marked by a hesitancy to exert America's hegemonic power – American policymakers were too concerned with, and even feared, world-wide resentments of such power. The question that should have been asked, however, was: who is behind these voices of resentment? An ambitious China which aims at East-Asian domination, an envious France eager to counter American power in order to promote its own economic and political interests, or a fearful Russia still reeling from its Cold War defeat, just to name a few (Ibid.: 21). Considering such resentments in policy decisions meant that the policymakers of the 1990s accepted the moral ambiguity of the post-Cold War world as fact; the neocons did not. These resentments were "to be expected as part of the price for American global pre-eminence;" they did not, "however, add up to a convincing argument against preserving that pre-eminence" (Ibid.).

The problem was not America's power; the problem lay in the actions, desires, and world-views of a few world actors. For the neocons, the fact of the matter was that the preservation of American hegemony was both favourable for America and the world. It was favourable for America because post-Cold War conditions had been "unusually conducive to peace and to the goals and values of the United States, its allies and friends" (Kagan 2000: 339). They were conducive in the sense that they allowed for enhanced American sovereignty over its domestic policies.[19] Sovereignty here basically dealt with the ability of the US to pursue its national interests, whatever they may be, unabated (Kagan 2003: 76). This, however, should not arouse the fears of *hubris* or imperialism, because America's interests are almost always congruent with those of the world.

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[18] This phrase was originally coined by conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer.

[19] By this I mean economic, political, juridical, as well as foreign policies. The primary concern within this discourse is on foreign policies, and the ability of the US to shape its foreign policies as it pleases. It is this ability that allows the US to then pursue other kinds of policies, and ensure American economic and political prosperity.

If, for instance, world democratization could achieve a pragmatic goal of self-interest and spread liberty and freedom around the world, then "what is wrong with [American] dominance, in the service of sound principles and high ideals?" (Ibid.: 112). The strategy of regime change would thus not only be carried out to deal with immediate threats to American security and to serve American interests. It would also serve as a strategy geared towards the creation of a better and more secure future for the whole world.[20] Such a strategy would combine American national interests with a universal moral cause that would bring peace and prosperity to the international order (Bennett 2000: 294).

The neocons considered extensive multilateralism to be incapable of carrying out such progressive and necessary world transformations. The US had the power to do so, and this power had to be preserved in order for it to continue to be able to do so. This power could not be maintained easily however; America had to be willing to intervene in the affairs of world actors who wished it harm. This meant that "American preeminence cannot be maintained from a distance. The United States should instead conceive of itself as at once a European power, an Asian power and, of course, a Middle Eastern power" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 123).

For the neocons, America could not rest in its era of global dominance. Such dominance will not last forever, and America's ability to prolong this dominance will depend on how it deals with this particular moment of unrivaled dominance. Clarity about one's position, the ability to see foreign countries' intentions for what they are, and the will to act accordingly were all crucial to the preservation and enhancement of American hegemony (Kagan 2000: 338). On these points, the neocons believed that contrary to what realists or liberals claim, America *is* the world's benevolent force. Americans also have to realize that certain world actors have hostile intentions towards American security and interests. Finally, Americans have to realize that these hostile intentions must be met with fierce determination, and the *will to fight*. In the absence of these three points from American policy, Americans are likely to face devastating wars in the future.

The neocons also continuously stressed the importance of solidifying their alliances (Kagan 2003: 97-103). They argued that America's dominance is different than that of the Romans for instance. In their discourse, America was not seen as a central power that dominated all other nations of the world and dictated specific orders to them. The US was rather seen as the "leader" and "dominant member" of a network of power, which consisted of a number of key, prosperous, and powerful allies (Wolfowitz 2000: 317). Most central to their role in this position was America's ability to provide security for the alliance. The core of this alliance, of course, lay in Europe, and just as "Europe's evolution into its present state occurred under the

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[20] An important point behind this thinking is that, historically, this has been America's calling (Ibid: 77-8). Lest the world (and especially Europe) forget, the Kantian dream of 'perpetual peace' that is emerging in today's Europe (i.e., the European Union, economic and cultural integration, and the relative disappearance of war within the Western part of the continent) "is very much the product of American foreign policy" (Ibid: 70-4).

mantle of the US security guarantee," so would its future (Kagan 2003: 72).[21] Under America's security umbrella, this alliance could prosper. If it does, then the rest of the world will follow and join it. Ultimately, the surest way of preserving American hegemony would be to advance this alliance. Through it, the world could be made conducive to American principles and values – this comprised: democracy, free-trade, and human rights (Bennett 2000: 289-305). Since these principles and values are universal, what is good for America becomes good for the world (PNAC 1997).[22]

V. American Leadership

In this discourse, we find that power is seen to always come at a price; to always come with a heavy responsibility. For the neocons, America's place in history would be written on the basis of how it acts in its moment of pre-eminence. A visionary, sound, and effective leadership was required for America to positively fulfill its role as the world's sole superpower. America did not ask for this leadership role, nor did it forcefully assert itself as such. History demanded it from America.

After the Cold War, some believed that multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), could fulfill the role of world leader and provide security around the world.[23] This approach, however, was believed to be misguided in the discourse on two levels: (1) the UN lacked the moral authority to carry out a mission as important as the spread of peace and freedom around the world, and (2) it lacked the structure necessary for ensuring security, particularly an effective decision making structure.[24]

The idea that the UN held a position of higher moral authority was considered absurd in the discourse. When dealing with such a question, the neocons focused on the make-up of the UN. For them, the UN "is simply a collection of sovereign states. The organization makes no distinctions based on political systems; a tyranny

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[21] I should add that this peculiar relationship between America and Europe means that
    although the United States has played the critical role in bringing Europe into this Kantian
    paradise, and still plays a key role in making that paradise possible, it cannot enter the paradise
    itself. It mans the walls but cannot walk through the gate. The United States, with all its vast
    power, remains stuck in history, left to deal with the Saddams and the ayatollahs, the Kim Jong Ils
    and the Jiang Zemins, leaving most of the benefits to others (Ibid.: 75-6).
Make no mistake, though, this is a relationship the neocons are comfortable with (Ibid.).

[22] The Statement of Principles document was signed by a number of people including Dick Cheney, Lewis Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz.

[23] One of the important philosophical forces behind this thinking can be most clearly seen in the rift between American and European thinking "over where exactly mankind stands on the continuum between the laws of the jungle and the laws of reason. Americans do not believe we are close to the realization of the Kantian dream as do Europeans" (Kagan 2003: 91).

[24] The mammoth failures of the UN in places such as Rwanda and Bosnia are often cited to attest to this fact (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 87-90; Schmitt 2003).

is as welcome as a democracy" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 91). It was laughable for them to think that an institution which placed states like Syria on Human Rights Committees had the moral authority to lead the world.

Besides the moral backwardness of the UN, it was believed that its structure for reaching decisions could only breed impotence. For instance, decisions of war and peace are made in the Security Council, where permanent members have to reach an agreement over such matters. For the neocons, such an agreement could never be reached in this structure. China and Russia are far from liberal-democracies, and do not uphold the core and universal values and principles of the US and its Western allies. Their objections to decisions of war and peace are often based on their attempts to "use the UN for their own geopolitical ends" (Ibid.). France was seen as guilty of such practice as well.[25] Since WWII, Europe had grown weak while America had gained enormous power. As a result, it was only natural that former European powers such as France and Germany would use the only tool they have to advance their self-interests: multilateralism (Kagan 2003: 38-40). Much of the French and German opposition to the Iraq war, for instance, was seen as due to this power dynamic. These countries were seen to be threatened by American power, because that power questioned the viability of the Europe which emerged from WWII (Ibid.: 61-2). In short, multilateralism was seen as nothing more than a tool of the self-interested weak to suppress the strength of the powerful. Thus, consensus in the Security Council in particular and the UN in general was almost impossible to reach.[26]

For the neocons, the inaction of multilateralism was disastrous for the world. If anything was to be achieved, America had to fill the role of leadership – and this meant acting alone if necessary. Those who wish to choose peace, prosperity, and order have nothing to fear from America's power. Indeed, they could bask in its light. The neocons claimed to share the dream of a world governed by the rule of law, and not by any one single power. However, in order for this to occur, America had to first build a world that *could* be governed by the rule of law (Kagan 2003: 41-2). The international community was simply not there yet. This world remained a dangerous one for them, and until this fact changes, military force and might were needed (Ibid.: 95).

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[25] The point of French hypocrisy is often cited in this discourse. For instance, a report from the <u>Washington Post</u> is cited here to support this view: "Even as [Prime Minister] Chirac was proclaiming the sanctity of the United Nation's authority over war-making, some 1,000 French troops were intervening unilaterally to protect French interests in Ivory Coast" (quoted in Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 91). In another instant, Richard Perle focuses on French interests in maintaining oil contracts with Saddam's regime as well as France's desire to create a counterweight to American power as the real reasons behind French opposition to the war (Schmitt 2003).

[26] For the neocons, this was evident in the Iraq War. The Security Council resolutions for inspections only created a "trap" for the Bush administration in an attempt to postpone or eliminate military action against Saddam (Kagan and Kristol 2002).

In this discourse, the necessity to lead and the aim of creating a peaceful international system were claimed to be behind the assertion of American power, not the 'will to power' or the aim of world domination. The alternative to America's benevolent influence was presented as "a chaotic, Hobbesian world where there is no authority to thwart aggression, ensure peace and security or enforce international norms" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 121).

If some in the world perceived this as American unilateralism, then so be it. They were not the ones being targeted for hatred directed at the West – America was. Being the leader and *protector* of liberal-democratic states, the neocons argued, brings the burden of facing the ideologies of hate alone, and therefore being their primary target of attack (Kagan 2003: 34). In the case of Iraq, they alleged that America was unilaterally acting to ensure international peace and its own security. They claimed that this was a war of necessity; it was necessary for the Middle East, the US, and the world. Order, peace, and the cause of civilization were at stake; and nothing short of the world's moral, political, economic, and military leader was necessary to answer the call of History. America and the world cannot lose sight of "the simple but fundamental point … that it matters more what purposes our power serves than that we have power" (Schmitt 2003).

The American mission, for the neocons, is to stay the course and to fulfill this historical mission. Iraq was merely the first step. The maturation of America had reached a new stage in the post-Cold War era. It represented the dawn of global American leadership, and its moment to set the course of History.

The 'Isolationism-Expansionism' Tension

Based on this exploration of the discourse, an important feature of it stands out. This feature involves what I call the *'isolationism-expansionism' tension*.[27] In *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri differentiate between their concepts of 'imperialism' and 'empire' by arguing that Theodore Roosevelt's approach resembled that of past imperialism (i.e., to spread power linearly), while Woodrow Wilson's approach resembled that of contemporary empire (i.e., power that operates in networks). Furthermore, they argue that American power in contemporary times is only built on, or operates on the basis of, the Wilsonian approach (Hardt and Negri 2000: 174-82). I agree with this differentiation. However, it seems that the neoconservative discourse does not operate on only one of these approaches, but is rather infused with elements from each.

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[27] This is certainly not the only feature of the discourse. I simply think it is the most pertinent one. Another potentially fruitful line of inquiry might explore, what I would call, the *asymmetrical two-level thinking* feature of the discourse. What I am referring to here is the fusion of moral and strategic thinking in the discourse. It seems to me that strategic interests hold the upper hand in this fusion, and thus occupy the higher level in the discourse. That is, morality seems to be *primarily* brought up to serve America's strategic interests – e.g., democracy is 'good' only in so far as it serves American strategic interests, it is not simply 'good' in and of itself. It would be interesting to see how this plays out in the discourse's push for democracy in Iraq, the partial retreat from this task we find within the discourse once it seemed too difficult to carry out, and finally the discourse's reaction to the attempt/implementation(?) of this retreat.

This Wilson-Roosevelt combination is the starting point from where we can begin to see the isolationism-expansionism tension. While the long-term aim, here, is to build a world 'beyond power,' where power is spread across networks rather than a central power, there exists a strong advocacy of an approach that is very much influenced by Roosevelt's. The neocons advocate a forceful America, one that exercises its political, economic, and most importantly its military might around the world unabated. For them, America must utilize Roosevelt's approach in order for it to build Wilson's dream.

What is Wilson's dream within this discourse? It is a world where Americans can enjoy freedom from the world, where they are not forced to police it, to solve its problems, or to protect the causes of freedom and liberty from evil enemies alone. Only networks of power can take this heavy burden away from America's shoulders. Such networks, however, can only come about through the use of America's powers. All of America's might must be used to expand America's influence around the world (and forcefully if need be), so that one day, the world *could* be run by networks of power. The bringing about of such a world would, in turn, entitle the US to the sole position of leadership.[28] Such a position would allow America to pursue cultural, economic, and political prosperity free from the constraints that any given international system would impose. The US would be left relatively isolated from the world's problems and dangers. As leader of the globe, the US would maintain and enhance the priceless position of having sovereignty over its policies and national directions. After all, they are the ones who would build this stable world order. This is where Roosevelt's approach comes in.

This approach involves an aggressive and forceful America. It requires an America that is willing to "lean forward" in its foreign policy, and "meet the standard of a global superpower that intends to shape the international environment to its own advantage" (Kagan and Kristol 2000: 14). Basically, this foreign policy strategy embraces American power and puts it to use. It rests on the belief that war can bring peace and progress to the world, not always destruction and chaos, primarily because the 'gift' of democracy is seen as the ultimate end of such wars (Ibid.: 23). Through the spread of democracy, American security and hegemony can be enhanced and preserved. Any attempts to challenge this expansion are thus to be met fiercely. Rogue regimes which attempt to disrupt the road towards this international order would not be negotiated with – they should be transformed.

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[28] There is an interesting intersection here between the neoconservative discourse and the RMA. When making the case for a strategy of 'Rapid Dominance,' Ullman and Wade (1998) argue that once this strategy establishes itself as the new and revolutionary method of conducting war in the coming century, America would guarantee itself the sole position of military leadership in the world. They envisioned that an arrangement similar to NATO's would take place, where America leads unquestioned with its allies fulfilling the 'minor' tasks of conducting war (e.g., peacekeeping) (84).

The neocons, of course, admit that there are multiple methods to carry out regime change, and that each specific case ought to be treated differently. However, because of their firm belief in the superiority of America's political institutions and military might, along with their view of humanity as still moving in the 'laws of the jungle' direction and guided by the good-evil split, the discourse's architects were more likely, or less hesitant, to advocate the use of force for the sake of enhancing America's interests (Kagan 2003: 41-2, 95). What is at work here is simple: humanity has not advanced very far in the 'laws of reason' direction. Indeed, much of humanity still operates on the 'laws of the jungle' path; many only understand the language of force. Faced with this perceived reality, the neocons did not hesitate to advocate the utilization of their military capabilities when American interests were believed to be at stake. Add to this the neocons' fear of an uncertain future and the consequent urgent need to deal with these uncertainties before they materialized into a full-fledged threat, and war becomes indispensable to their strategy.[29] This is, in my view, how war made its appearance in this discourse. But one question remains, what is the character of this war and what place does it occupy in the discourse?

This brings us closer to the isolationism-expansionism tension, which can be now seen in the neocons' 'in-and-out' approach towards the Iraq War. In <u>Colossus</u>, Niall Ferguson argues a similar point, when he labels the US as an "empire in denial" (Ferguson 2004: 3-7). For Ferguson, the US falls short of the imperial force he wishes it to be precisely because it refuses to establish and run colonial administrative structures akin to those of the British Empire in the past (Ibid.: 202-14). What Ferguson fails to appreciate, however, is that this discourse is driven by forces somewhat different than those of the British Empire.[30] The neocons prefer this 'in-and-out' approach precisely because they do not want to be like the British Empire, or any other past empire for that matter.[31] Past Empires only claimed that they were interested in advancing the 'civilizing mission.' In reality, they were only pursuing their own, narrowly defined, self-interests – it was those

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[29] A defining feature of the discourse is its aim to eliminate perceived dangers at their roots, before they reach American soil. In this discourse, we find a detestation of realist policies, which were alleged to wait for dangers to materialize before they took action. There is rather a desire here to take action at the very sources of danger, before it materialized (Kagan and Kristol 2000: 12). This approach was based on the belief that the conditions of danger "may be significantly ameliorated through the vigorous application of American power and ideals" (Kaplan and Kristol 2003: 65). Dealing with threats in this manner meant that America had to ward off *potential* adversaries that, in the future, could be capable of disrupting international peace and the post-Cold War world order.

[30] He is indeed fully aware of these forces, as he goes through great lengths in the first part of his book to lay them out (Ibid: 33-166).

[31] This is a point that Ferguson quickly refutes, or brushes aside, in the beginning of his book: "To those who would still insist on American "exceptionalism," the historian of empires can only retort: as exceptional as all the other sixty-nine empires" (Ibid.: 15). While this may be true – that is, while all other empires may have also believed themselves to be exceptional – I do not believe that this raises solid grounds for dismissing this feature or characteristic of empire from the analysis. If anything, it makes it more pertinent. In this case, American exceptionalism is clearly an integral part of this discourse, and it plays an important role in its development.

interests that dictated their presence as colonial powers in foreign lands. For the neocons, the US has no interest in such a project, and this is what makes American power unique (Schmitt 2003c).

This assertion of American power is primarily driven by the isolationist elements of the discourse: to enhance and sustain American security (i.e., to maintain a healthy distance from the world's dangers), and American sovereignty (i.e., the ability to choose domestic policies in spite of the rest of the world – or more properly, in spite of an international system). Erecting colonial administrative structures could not, and would not, satisfy these goals. Such an approach would only entangle the US deeper and deeper into the affairs of others; thus making Americans more vulnerable to attacks at home and abroad, as well as forcing the US to have to consider its colonial administrations (and hence the affairs of foreign peoples) in its national policymaking decisions.

Conversely, of course, the US could not act in a completely isolationist manner: it could not simply pursue its own well-being without paying some attention to the outside world. It could not sit back and hope that the threats to its political hegemony and economic prosperity would simply disappear on their own. It must exert its power to ensure that such threats are defeated.[32] Simply put, to maintain sovereignty, hegemony, and security, an aggressive tool was necessary. Since history had shown the neocons that democracies simply do not fight wars with each other – that they do not create the destruction found in militant Islam for instance – the solution to their predicament was clear: spread democracy and fast. The fastest method for this solution was also clear: war.

The neocons believed that war can create a situation in which change and transformation become faster to introduce and implement. Once democracy is introduced to Iraq (and consequently the Middle East), the US can pull-out and maintain a healthy distance from it.[33] In this process of constituting democracy, Iraqis would have to play a major part, but they would also have to follow the boundaries set to them by the US. This would further ensure that American influence and presence in the region would slowly subside over the years. The two-step plan that was developed for Iraq was that simple: (1) war was the tool for expansion; (2) political reconstruction was the tool for isolation.

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[32] Although security is of foremost importance in this discourse, economic prosperity and political hegemony are also considered important. Indeed, these three elements are interconnected and interdependent. The stronger America is economically and politically, the more it is effective in pursuing its enemies and crushing them. Conversely, the more secure America is, the more it is able to maintain and enhance its economic prosperity and political hegemony. For the neocons, American economic and political power is not everlasting or invincible; it must be proactively maintained and enhanced for the future (Kagan and Kristol 2000: 7-9).

[33] Pulling-out does not entail the outright removal of American forces from Iraq or the region. It only entails the removal of American forces from the streets of Iraq – where the process of ensuring the day-to-day security of Iraqis can be transferred over to an Iraqi security force. Similar to Japan and Germany, American military bases would most likely maintain a presence in Iraq for a long period to come (Kagan 2003: 93).

The perceived necessity for constituting democracy abroad, and *fast*, within this discourse led to the utilization of war as a means toward a political end. Essentially, war only became necessary once the quick constitution of democracy abroad became necessary. In other words, this is not a war of necessity in the sense that the hand the US was dealt absolutely forced it to play this card; it was a war of necessity in the sense that the hand the American neocons *chose* to play forced them to play this card. War, therefore, plays a subordinate role to politics in the sense that politics, not war, would form the decisive solution to the American predicament with the Middle East.

If the discourse's ideas regarding American superiority and its good vs. evil outlook made it more likely to choose the path of military force, it was the need to find a fast solution to what was believed to be a rising threat that *facilitated* the use of a pre-emptive war in the plan. When these two forces combined, they fueled the Clausewitzian character of war that is pertinent in the discourse. In turn, this Clausewitzian idea makes the 'in-and-out' approach and, more abstractly, the 'isolationism-expansionism' tension, a theoretically viable one.

Concluding Comments – The Clausewitzian Paradox

In <u>Society Must Be Defended</u>, Foucault (2003) embarks upon the task of formulating a schema for the analysis of power. The first schema he puts forth is 'war-repression' (i.e., examining the relations of domination, characteristic of any opposition between two sides, as they are fought over in the battlefields of history) (46); the second schema he puts forth is 'contract-oppression' (i.e., examining the opposition between two sides as it resides between "the legitimate and illegitimate" apparatuses, forms, and mechanisms of governance) (Ibid.: 17). For Foucault, each schema serves a specific strategic utility. 'Contract-oppression' aims to hide the battles of the past and, thus, solidify the legitimacy of the social orders established through these battles. 'War-repression,' on the other hand, aims to re-awaken the history of these past battles and, thus, the injustices and the illegitimacy of the social orders established through them (Ibid.: 57-8, 98-9, 110-1).

Foucault clearly prefers the 'war-repression' schema for the analysis of power. For him, the resistance that is born of war never stops. It must, therefore, be continuously crushed by political means – means that, first and foremost, are meant to preserve the relations of domination born of war. Resistance here cannot be judged on a short timeline. It goes through peaks and valleys in ferocity and intensity – it can even fully terminate for a period of time, only to be resurrected at a later point in history.[34] What is crucial here is the idea that the relations of domination established through war do not simply terminate when the political end

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[34] A good summary of this point (and the interplay between the two strategic utilities) is given when he is discussing the Saxon-Norman struggle (Ibid.: 107).

is initiated and fully underway.[35] Rather, these relations of domination will continue to shape and influence the political end: the forms it takes, its tensions, and the struggle over its future directions.

Now, I do not wish to favour one schema over another in this work. In my view, the most important point made visible by Foucault here is that while each schema aims to dissociate itself from the other strategically, they are connected in the sense that they are both concerned with the relations of domination operating within the relationship between war and politics. The main difference between them is that one schema aims to preserve these relations, the other aims to overthrow them. As a result, each schema ends up focusing on a different aspect of this little understood relationship between war and politics. Viewed in this light, one is left with this question: is war the continuation of politics by other means, or is politics the continuation of war by other means? My answer is that it is irrelevant and futile to enter into a debate concerning which precedes which – war or politics. This debate essentially attempts to either subordinate politics to war or war to politics. I wish to discuss war and politics on an equal level – as two equal contexts which bring to our attention that which lies at the core of each: the establishment and contestation of relations of domination. This connection allows an understanding of the Clausewitzian paradox pertinent to the neoconservative discourse.

This paradox arises in the form of a question – one that, in my view, has not been answered yet by the neoconservative discourse: since it relies on a Clausewitzian view of war, what will this discourse's architects do when they have to face the same problem with which Clausewitz struggled and, in my view, never really overcame? That being, how do you account for resistance? How do you know when the war really ends, and when politics begin? How is it possible to make the theoretical claim that an instrument such as war – an instrument with its own laws, logic, and even its own means and ends – be subordinate to a higher objective?[36] Could not the ferocious conflict and violence of this instrument overshadow, if not replace, the political projects this most volatile and untamable of instruments was meant to achieve? And if you stuff the process of political reconstruction down the throat of the resistance in order to eliminate it (like so many of the neocons advocate), then are you not admitting that politics is the continuation of war by other means?

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[35] Although that is precisely what the 'contract-oppression' schema attempts to accomplish and what the 'war-repression' schema aims to re-awaken.

[36] W.B. Gallie (1978), along with other Clausewitz commentators, makes the point that Clausewitz fails to convincingly or successfully make this claim and surpass this paradox in his work. While most of these commentators attempt to overcome this paradox by abandoning or reducing the importance of Clausewitz's ideas regarding war as a thing in and of itself (i.e., that it has its own inner logic) and by focusing on his discussion of war as a servant to politics; I wish to take into account both of Clausewitz's conceptions of war, and maintain the paradoxical nature of the relationship between war and politics without attempting to make intelligible or coherent what seems to me to be inherently paradoxical.

If you make such an admission, then does not the entire theoretical assumption underpinning this discourse crumble, and with it this policy of invasion? If war and political reconstruction are not two separate steps that can be clearly differentiated; if rather, they form a continuum in which relations of domination are not only established, but also continuously resisted, modified, inverted, and negotiated; then what does this all mean for the two-step plan and this policy of invading Iraq?

The discourse's architects have already admitted that the smooth transition between the two steps can now be considered a misplaced assumption (see Schmitt 2003; Donnelly and Schmitt 2003; Kagan and Kristol 2004; Kagan 2004; Kagan and Kristol 2004a). With this I agree, but the reason for this is not the insufficient number of troops; Rumsfeld's mistakes; or any other number of tactical reasons and excuses given; it was always the inability of this discourse's architects to comprehend the volatile and unpredictable nature of the relationship between politics and war. And in my view, this is due to a paradoxical mixture of isolationism and expansionism that is undertaken in this discourse: *The forceful 'in' of expansionism is proving to be too powerful for the quick 'out' of isolationism to take place.*

This is slowly leading the US into a protracted conflict not only in Iraq, but in the Arab world in general. The Wilsonian dream found in this discourse – the vision of a prosperous, free, and relatively speaking, isolated America – seems far from reachable at this point in time. Add to this the very dire, deplorable, and unimaginably painful conditions that the Iraqis find themselves in today because of this policy, and one has to begin a serious and long questioning of this type of discourse – a type of discourse that combines a Manichean outlook, a love for superiority, a fear of the uncertain, a drive to shape the whole of the future, an assertive will, and an overly simplistic and one-dimensional (mis)understanding of war and politics, to make possible and advocate a policy of invasion.

Seeing the neocons through the discursive formation in which they operate poses a few important questions that are in need of further exploration. First, to all of those who have opposed them in the past, and continue to oppose them in the present (this is particularly pertinent to "liberal" opposition): are you very different from them – do you not operate in a similar discursive formation? Slavoj Žižek (2004) has already laid out this warning when he shows (by exploring the debate over torturing 'terrorists') that the strength of the neocons lies in their ability to change and shape the *boundaries of the debate* over the game – thus keeping their *characterization of the game* intact (50-66). Future research over this issue is a necessary aspect of further critical engagements with this discourse and its components. Second, should we re-examine how the fields of conflict and/or peace studies have reacted to the Clausewitzian paradox? Should we re-visit Bradley Klein's warning in 1987 about the need to evaluate the Clausewitzian influence on strategic studies? Has the field of peace studies, for instance, ignored (or more properly – downplayed) the Clausewitzian paradox to an extent that makes it complicit (in one way or another) in introducing this paradox into this discourse through strategic studies, via RMA? If so, how are academics in these fields to re-evaluate the relationship

between war and politics? That, I think, is the major challenge for theory – to attack (or re-attack) the simplistic understanding of war as a servant to politics or of politics as a servant to war for that matter (these two formulations are indeed two sides of the same coin), and construct new ways of understanding this relationship.

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