

**Chomsky, N. (2006). *Failed states: The abuse of power and the assault on democracy*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.**

**Chapter 1  
Stark, Dreadful, Inescapable**

Half a century ago, in July 1955, Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein issued an extraordinary appeal to the people of the world, asking them "to set aside" the strong feelings they have about many issues and to consider themselves "only as members of a biological species which has had a remarkable history, and whose disappearance none of us can desire." The choice facing the world is "stark and dreadful and inescapable: shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?"<sup>1</sup>

The world has not renounced war. Quite the contrary. By now, the world's hegemonic power accords itself the right to wage war at will, under a doctrine of "anticipatory self-defense" with unstated bounds. International law, treaties, and rules of world order are sternly imposed on others with much self-righteous posturing, but dismissed as irrelevant for the United States—a long-standing practice, driven to new depths by the Reagan and Bush II administrations.<sup>2</sup>

Among the most elementary of moral truisms is the principle of universality: we must apply to ourselves the same standards we do to others, if not more stringent ones. It is a remarkable comment on Western intellectual culture that this principle is so often ignored and, if occasionally mentioned, condemned as outrageous. This is particularly shameful on the part of those who flaunt their Christian piety, and therefore have presumably at least heard of the definition of the hypocrite in the Gospels.<sup>3</sup>

Relying solely on elevated rhetoric, commentators urge us to appreciate the sincerity of the professions of "moral clarity" and "idealism" by the political leadership. To take just one of innumerable examples, the well-known scholar Philip Zelikow deduces "the new centrality of moral principles" in the Bush administration from "the administration's rhetoric" and a single fact: the proposal to increase development aid—to a fraction of that provided by other rich countries relative to the size of their economies.<sup>4</sup>

The rhetoric is indeed impressive. "I carry this commitment in my soul," the president declared in March 2002 as he created the Millennium Challenge Corporation to boost funding to combat poverty in the developing world. In 2005, the corporation erased the statement from its website after the Bush administration reduced its projected budget by billions of dollars. Its head resigned "after failing to get the program moving," economist Jeffrey Sachs writes, having "disbursed almost nothing" of the \$10 billion originally promised. Meanwhile, Bush rejected a call from Prime Minister Tony Blair to double aid to Africa, and expressed willingness to join other industrial countries in cutting unpayable African debt only if aid was correspondingly reduced, moves that amount to "a death sentence for more than 6 million Africans a year who die of preventable and treatable causes," Sachs notes. When Bush's new ambassador, John Bolton, arrived at the United Nations shortly before its 2005 summit, he at once demanded the elimination of "all occurrences of the phrase 'millennium development goals' " from the document that had been carefully prepared after long negotiations to deal with "poverty, sexual discrimination, hunger, primary education, child mortality, maternal health, the environment and disease."<sup>5</sup>

Rhetoric is always uplifting, and we are enjoined to admire the sincerity of those who produce it, even when they act in ways that recall Alexis de Tocqueville's observation that the United States was able "to exterminate the Indian race . . . without violating a single great principle of morality in the eyes of the world."<sup>6</sup>

Reigning doctrines are often called a "double standard." The term is misleading. It is more accurate to describe them as a single standard, clear and unmistakable, the standard that Adam Smith called the "vile maxim of the masters of mankind: . . . All for ourselves, and nothing for other people." Much has changed since his day, but the vile maxim flourishes.<sup>7</sup>

The single standard is so deeply entrenched that it is beyond awareness. Take "terror," the

leading topic of the day. There is a straightforward single standard: *their* terror against us and our clients is the ultimate evil, while *our* terror against them does not exist—or, if it does, is entirely appropriate. One clear illustration is Washington's terrorist war against Nicaragua in the 1980s, an uncontroversial case, at least for those who believe that the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council—both of which condemned the United States—have some standing on such matters. The State Department confirmed that the US-run forces attacking Nicaragua from US bases in Honduras had been authorized to attack "soft targets," that is, undefended civilian targets. A protest by Americas Watch elicited a sharp response by a respected spokesman of "the left," *New Republic* editor Michael Kinsley, who patiently explained that terrorist attacks on civilian targets should be evaluated on pragmatic grounds: a "sensible policy [should] meet the test of cost-benefit analysis" of "the amount of blood and misery that will be poured in, and the likelihood that democracy will emerge at the other end"—"democracy" as defined by US elites, of course.<sup>8</sup>

The assumptions remain beyond challenge, even perception. In 2005, the press reported that the Bush administration was facing a serious "dilemma": Venezuela was seeking extradition of one of the most notorious Latin American terrorists, Luis Posada Carriles, to face charges for the bombing of a Cubana airliner, killing seventy-three people. The charges were credible, but there was a real difficulty. After Posada escaped from a Venezuelan prison, he "was hired by US covert operatives to direct the resupply operation for the Nicaraguan contras from El Salvador"—that is, to play a prominent role in Washington's terrorist war against Nicaragua. Hence the dilemma: "Extraditing him for trial could send a worrisome signal to covert foreign agents that they cannot count on unconditional protection from the US government, and it could expose the CIA to embarrassing public disclosures from a former operative." A virtual entry requirement for the society of respectable intellectuals is the failure to perceive that there might be some slight problem here.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time that Venezuela was pressing its appeal, overwhelming majorities in the Senate and House passed a bill barring US aid to countries that refuse requests for extradition—US requests, that is. Washington's regular refusal to honor requests from other countries seeking extradition of leading terrorists passed without comment, though some concern was voiced over the possibility that the bill theoretically might bar aid to Israel because of its refusal to extradite a man charged with "a brutal 1997 murder in Maryland who had fled to Israel and claimed citizenship through his father."<sup>10</sup>

At least temporarily, the Posada dilemma was, thankfully, resolved by the courts, which rejected Venezuela's appeal, in violation of a US-Venezuelan extradition treaty. A day later, the head of the FBI, Robert Mueller, urged Europe to speed US demands for extradition: "We are always looking to see how we can make the extradition process go faster," he said. "We think we owe it to the victims of terrorism to see to it that justice is done efficiently and effectively." At the Ibero-American Summit shortly after, the leaders of Spain and the Latin American countries "backed Venezuela's efforts to have [Posada] extradited from the United States to face trial" for the Cubana airliner bombing, but then backed down, after the US embassy protested the action. Washington not only rejects, or merely ignores, extradition requests for terrorists. It also uses the tool of presidential pardons for acceptable crimes. Bush I pardoned Orlando Bosch, a notorious international terrorist and associate of Posada, despite objections by the Justice Department, which urged that he be deported as a threat to national security. Bosch resides safely in the United States, perhaps to be joined by Posada, in communities that continue to serve as the base for international terrorism.<sup>11</sup>

No one would be so vulgar as to suggest that the United States should be subject to bombing and invasion in accord with the Bush II doctrine that "those who harbor terrorists are as guilty as the terrorists themselves," announced when the government in Afghanistan asked for evidence before handing over people the United States accused of terrorism (without credible grounds, as Robert Mueller later acknowledged). The Bush doctrine has "already become a de facto rule of international relations," writes Harvard international relations specialist Graham Allison: it revokes "the sovereignty of states that provide sanctuary to terrorists." Some states, that is, thanks to the exemption provided by the single standard.<sup>12</sup>

The single standard also extends to weapons and other means of destruction. US military

expenditures approximate those of the rest of the world combined, while arms sales by thirty-eight North American companies (one of which is based in Canada) account for more than 60 percent of the world total. Furthermore, for the world dominant power, the means of destruction have few limits. Articulating what those who wish to see already knew, the prominent Israeli military analyst Reuven Pedatzur writes that "in the era of a single, ruthless superpower, whose leadership intends to shape the world according to its own forceful world view, nuclear weapons have become an attractive instrument for waging wars, even against enemies that do not possess nuclear arms."<sup>13</sup>

When asked why "should the United States spend massively on arms and China refrain?" Max Boot, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, provided a simple answer: "we guarantee the security of the world, protect our allies, keep critical sea-lanes open and lead the war on terror," while China threatens others and "could ignite an arms race"—actions inconceivable for the United States. Surely no one but a crazed "conspiracy theorist" might mention that the United States controls sea-lanes in pursuit of US foreign policy objectives, hardly for the benefit of all, or that much of the world regards Washington (particularly since the beginning of the Bush II presidency) as the leading threat to world security. Recent global polls reveal that France is "most widely seen as having a positive influence in the world," alongside Europe generally and China, while "the countries most widely viewed as having a negative influence are the US and Russia." But again there is a simple explanation. The polls just show that the world is wrong. It's easy to understand why. As Boot has explained elsewhere, Europe has "often been driven by avarice" and the "cynical Europeans" cannot comprehend the "strain of idealism" that animates US foreign policy. "After 200 years, Europe still hasn't figured out what makes America tick." Others share these mental failings, notably those close by, who have considerable experience and therefore are particularly misguided. Of the countries polled, Mexico is among those "most negative" about the US role in the world.<sup>14</sup>

The course and outcome of a May 2005 review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which we will return, illustrates the gravity of our responsibility for the persistence—and enhancement—of severe threats to our endangered species. A leading concern of participants in the NPT conference was Washington's intent to "remove the nuclear brakes," thereby "taking a big—and dangerous—step that will lead to the transformation of the nuclear bomb into a legitimate weapon for waging war." The potential consequences could not be more stark.<sup>15</sup>

### **Risking Ultimate Doom**

The risk of nuclear destruction highlighted by Russell and Einstein is not abstract. We have already come close to the brink of nuclear war. The best-known case is the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, when our escape from "nuclear oblivion" was nothing short of "miraculous," two prominent researchers conclude. At a retrospective conference in Havana in 2002, historian and Kennedy adviser Arthur Schlesinger described the crisis as "the most dangerous moment in human history." Participants at the conference learned that the dangers were even more severe than they had believed. They discovered that the world was "one word away" from the first use of a nuclear weapon since Nagasaki, as reported by Thomas Blanton of the National Security Archive, which helped organize the conference. He was referring to the intervention of a Russian submarine commander, Vasily Arkhipov, who countermanded an order to fire nuclear-armed torpedoes when his vessels were under attack by US destroyers, with consequences that could have been dreadful.<sup>16</sup>

Among the high-level planners who attended the Havana retrospective was Kennedy's defense secretary, Robert McNamara, who recalled in 2005 that the world had come "within a hair's breadth of nuclear disaster" during the missile crisis. He accompanied this reminder with a renewed warning of "apocalypse soon," describing "current US nuclear weapons policy as immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, and dreadfully dangerous." This policy creates "unacceptable risks to other nations and to our own" (both the risk of "accidental or inadvertent nuclear launch," which is "unacceptably high," and of nuclear attack by terrorists). McNamara endorsed the judgment of Clinton's defense secretary William Perry that "there is a greater than 50 percent probability of a

nuclear strike on US targets within a decade."<sup>17</sup>

Graham Allison reports that the "consensus in the national security community" is that a "dirty bomb" attack is "inevitable," while an attack with a nuclear weapon is highly likely if fissionable materials—the essential ingredient—are not retrieved and secured. Reviewing the partial success of efforts to do so since the early 1990s, under the initiatives of Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, Allison describes the setback to these programs from the first days of the Bush administration. Bush planners put to the side the programs to avert "inevitable nuclear terror," as they devoted their energies to driving the country to war and then to efforts to contain somehow the catastrophe they created in Iraq.<sup>18</sup>

In the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, not given to hyperbole, strategic analysts John Steinbruner and Nancy Gallagher warn that the Bush administration's military programs and its aggressive stance carry "an appreciable risk of ultimate doom." The reasons are straightforward. Pursuit of total security by one state, including the right to wage war at will and "to remove the nuclear brakes" (Pedatzur), entails the insecurity of others, who are likely to react. The terrifying technology now being developed in Rumsfeld's transformation of the military "will assuredly diffuse to the rest of the world." In the context of "competition in intimidation," the action-reaction cycle creates a "rising danger, potentially an unmanageable one." If "the United States political system cannot recognize that risk and cannot confront the implications," they warn, "its viability will be very much in question."<sup>19</sup>

Steinbruner and Gallagher express hope that the threat the US government is posing to its own population and the world will be countered by a coalition of peace-loving nations—led by China! We have come to a pretty pass when such thoughts are expressed at the heart of the establishment. And what that implies about the state of American democracy—where the issues scarcely even enter the electoral arena or public discussion—is no less shocking and threatening, illustrating the democratic deficit mentioned in the preface. Steinbruner and Gallagher bring up China because of all the nuclear states it "has maintained by far the most restrained pattern of military deployment." Furthermore, China has led efforts in the United Nations to preserve outer space for peaceful purposes, in conflict with the United States, which, along with Israel, has barred all moves to prevent an arms race in space.

The militarization of space did not originate in the Bush administration. Clinton's Space Command called for "dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment," much in the way armies and navies did in earlier years. The United States must therefore develop "space-based strike weapons [enabling] the application of precision force from, to, and through space." Such forces will be needed, US intelligence and the Space Command agreed, because "globalization of the world economy" will lead to a "widening economic divide" and "deepening economic stagnation, political instability, and cultural alienation," thus provoking unrest and violence among the "have-nots," much of it directed against the United States. The space program fell within the framework of the officially announced Clinton doctrine that the United States is entitled to resort to "unilateral use of military power" to ensure "uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources."<sup>20</sup>

Clinton planners (STRATCOM) advised further that Washington should portray itself as "irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked," including the threat of first strike with nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. Nuclear weapons are far more valuable than other weapons of mass destruction, STRATCOM noted, because "the extreme destruction from a nuclear explosion is immediate, with few if any palliatives to reduce its effect." Furthermore, "nuclear weapons always cast a shadow over any crisis or conflict," extending the reach of conventional power. Again, the strategic doctrine is not new. For example, Carter's defense secretary Harold Brown called on Congress to fund strategic nuclear capabilities because with them, "our other forces become meaningful instruments of military and political power," which must be available everywhere in the Third World because, "largely for economic reasons," there is "increased turbulence from within as well as intervention from the Soviet Union"—the latter more a pretext than a reason, a fact sometimes frankly recognized.<sup>21</sup>

Under the Bush administration, the threats have become even more serious. Bush planners

extended Clinton's doctrine of control of space for military purposes to "*ownership*" of space, which "*may mean instant engagement anywhere in the world.*" Top military commanders informed Congress in 2005 that the Pentagon is developing new space weaponry that would allow the United States to launch an attack "very quickly, with very short time lines on the planning and delivery, any place on the face of the earth," General James Cartwright, head of the Strategic Command, explained. The policy subjects every part of the globe to the risk of instant destruction, thanks to sophisticated global surveillance and lethal offensive weaponry in space—reciprocally endangering the people of the United States.<sup>22</sup>

The Bush administration has also broadened the first-strike option, and has increasingly blurred the line between conventional and nuclear weapons, thus heightening "the risk that the nuclear option will be used," military analyst William Arkin observes. Weapons systems now under development could "deliver a conventional payload precisely on target within minutes of a valid command and control release order," conforming to an air force doctrine that defines space superiority as "freedom to attack as well as freedom from attack." Weapons expert John Pike comments that the new programs allow the United States "to crush someone anywhere in the world on thirty minutes' notice with no need for a nearby air base," a substantial benefit given the regional antagonism aroused by the hundreds of US bases placed all over the world to ensure global domination. The national defense strategy that Rumsfeld signed on March 1, 2005, "enables us to project power anywhere in the world from secure bases of operation," recognizing "the importance of influencing events before challenges become more dangerous and less manageable," in accord with the preventive war doctrine. General Lance W. Lord, head of the Air Force Space Command, informed Congress that systems currently under development will allow the United States to "deliver a conventional payload precisely on target within minutes of a valid command and control release order"—and a nonconventional payload as well, needless to say.<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, these actions have elicited concern, criticism, and reactions. Senior military and space officials of the European Union, Canada, China, and Russia warned that "just as the unleashing of nuclear weapons had unforeseen consequences, so, too, would the weaponization of space." As anticipated, Russia responded to Bush's vast increase in offensive military capacity by sharply increasing its own capacities, and has reacted to Pentagon leaks about militarization of space by announcing that it would "consider using force if necessary to respond." "Missile defense"—recognized on all sides to be a first-strike weapon—is a particularly severe danger to China. If the programs show any signs of success, China is likely to expand its offensive capacities to preserve its deterrent. China is already developing more powerful missiles with multiple nuclear warheads capable of reaching the United States, a policy called "aggressively defensive" by the Asia-Pacific editor for the world's leading military weekly. In 2004, the United States accounted for 95 percent of total global military space expenditures, but others may join if compelled to do so, vastly increasing the risks to everyone.<sup>24</sup>

US analysts recognize that current Pentagon programs "can be interpreted as a significant move by the United States toward weaponization of space [and that] there seems little doubt that space-basing of weapons is an accepted aspect of the Air Force transformation planning," developments that "are in the long term very likely to have a negative effect on the national security of the United States." Their Chinese counterparts agree that while Washington proclaims defensive intentions, "to China and to many other countries the construction of such a system looks more like the development of the Death Star spaceship in the *Star Wars* film series, [which can be used] to attack military and civilian satellites and targets anywhere on earth. . . . Space weapons are seen as 'first-strike' weapons rather than defensive arms, because they are vulnerable to countermeasures. Their deployment, therefore, could be seen as a sign of US intent to use force in international affairs." China and others may develop low-cost space weapons in reaction, so that US policy "could trigger an arms race in space." Furthermore, "to protect against the potential loss of its deterrent capability, China could also resort to building up its nuclear forces, which could in turn encourage India and then Pakistan to follow suit." Russia has already "threatened to respond to any country's deployment of space weapons—an act that could undermine the already fragile nuclear non-proliferation regime."<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile the Pentagon is pondering a disturbing study by its leading academic consultant on the Chinese military, who has investigated Chinese-language military texts and interviewed their authors, drawing a conclusion that "has rattled many in Washington: China sees the US as a military rival." We must therefore abandon the idea that China is "an inherently gentle country" and recognize that the paranoid and devious Chinese may be quietly treading the path of evil.<sup>26</sup>

Former NATO planner Michael MccGwire reminds us that in 1986, recognizing the "dreadful logic" of nuclear weapons, Mikhail Gorbachev called for their total elimination, a proposal that foundered on Reagan's militarization of space programs ("Star Wars"). Western doctrine, he writes, "was explicitly premised on the credible threat of 'first use' of nuclear weapons, and that continues to be policy today." Russia had kept to the same doctrine until 1994, when it reversed its stand, adopting a "no first use" policy. But Russia reverted to NATO doctrine, and abandoned its call for abolition of nuclear weapons, in response to Clinton's expansion of NATO in violation of Washington's "categorical assurance" to Gorbachev that if he "would agree to a reunited Germany remaining in NATO, the alliance would *not* expand eastwards to absorb former members of the Warsaw Pact." In the light of earlier history, not to speak of strategic truisms, Clinton's violation of firm pledges posed a serious security threat to Russia, and "is the antithesis of the 'exclusion' principle underlying the concept of nuclear-weapons-free zones (NWFZ)." Clinton's violation of the assurances explains "why NATO resisted formalizing the de facto NWFZ encompassing central Europe from the Arctic to the Black Sea." MccGwire goes on to point out that such formalization "was proposed by Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in the mid-1990s, but would have interfered with plans to extend NATO. Reverse reasoning explains why Washington supports the formation of an NWFZ in Central Asia. Should these former Soviet republics decide to join Russia in a military alliance, an NWFZ would deny Moscow the option of deploying nuclear weapons on their territory."<sup>27</sup>

### **“Apocalypse Soon”**

The probability of "apocalypse soon" cannot be realistically estimated, but it is surely too high for any sane person to contemplate with equanimity. While speculation is pointless, reaction to the "stark and dreadful and inescapable" choice Einstein and Russell described definitely is not. On the contrary, reaction is urgent, particularly in the United States, because of Washington's primary role in accelerating the race to destruction by extending its historically unique military dominance. "The chances of an accidental, mistaken or unauthorized nuclear attack might be increasing," warns former senator Sam Nunn, who has played a leading role in efforts to reduce the threat of nuclear war. "We are running an unnecessary risk of an Armageddon of our own making," Nunn observes, as a result of policy choices that leave "America's survival" dependent on "the accuracy of Russia's warning systems and its command and control." Nunn is referring to the sharp expansion of US military programs, which tilt the strategic balance in ways that make "Russia more likely to launch upon warning of an attack, without waiting to see if the warning is accurate." The threat is enhanced by the fact that "the Russian early warning system is in serious disrepair and more likely to give a false warning of incoming missiles." US reliance on "the high-alert, hair-trigger nuclear posture . . . allows missiles to be launched within minutes," forcing "our leaders to decide almost instantly whether to launch nuclear weapons once they have warning of an attack, robbing them of the time they may need to gather data, exchange information, gain perspective, discover an error and avoid a catastrophic mistake." The risk extends beyond Russia—and also China if it pursues the same course. Strategic analyst Bruce Blair observes that "the early warning and control problems plaguing Pakistan, India and other nuclear proliferators are even more acute."<sup>28</sup>

Another serious concern, discussed in technical literature well before 9/11, is that nuclear weapons may sooner or later fall into the hands of terrorist groups, who might use these and other weapons of mass destruction with lethal effect. Those prospects are being advanced by Bush administration planners, who do not consider terrorism a high priority, as they regularly demonstrate. Their aggressive militarism has not only led Russia to expand significantly its offensive capacities, including more lethal nuclear weapons and delivery systems, but is also

inducing the Russian military to transfer nuclear weapons constantly across Russia's vast territory to counter mounting US threats. Washington planners are surely aware that Chechen rebels, who had already stolen radioactive materials from nuclear waste plants and power stations, have been casing "the railway system and special trains designed for shipping nuclear weapons across Russia."<sup>29</sup>

Blair warns that "this perpetual motion [within Russia] creates a serious vulnerability, because transportation is the Achilles' heel of nuclear weapons security," ranking in danger right alongside maintaining strategic nuclear forces on hair-trigger alert. He estimates that every day "many hundreds of Russian nuclear weapons are moving around the countryside." Theft of one nuclear bomb "could spell eventual disaster for an American city, [but this] is not the worst-case scenario stemming from this nuclear gamesmanship." More ominously, "the seizure of a ready-to-fire strategic long range nuclear missile or a group of missiles capable of delivering bombs to targets thousands of miles away could be apocalyptic for entire nations." Another major threat is that terrorist hackers might break into military communication networks and transmit launch orders for missiles armed with hundreds of nuclear warheads—no fantasy, as the Pentagon learned a few years ago when serious defects were discovered in its safeguards, requiring new instructions for Trident submarine launch crews. Systems in other countries are much less reliable. All of this constitutes "an accident waiting to happen," Blair writes; an accident that could be apocalyptic.<sup>30</sup>

The dangers of nuclear warfare are consciously being escalated by the threat and use of violence, which, as long predicted, is also stimulating jihadi terrorism. Such terrorism traces back to Reagan administration programs to organize, arm, and train radical Islamists—not for defense of Afghanistan, as proclaimed, but for the usual and ugly reasons of state, with grim consequences for the tormented people of Afghanistan. The Reagan administration also cheerfully tolerated Pakistan's slide toward radical Islamist extremism under the rule of Muhammad Zia ul-Huq, one of the many brutal dictators supported by the current incumbents in Washington and their mentors. Reagan and associates also looked away politely while their Pakistani ally was developing nuclear weapons, annually endorsing the pretense that Pakistan was not doing so. They and the Clinton administration paid little attention while Pakistan's leading proliferator, now tapped on the wrist, was carrying out the world's most extraordinary nuclear smuggling enterprise: Abdul Qadeer Khan, who "did more damage in 10 years than any country did in the first 50 years of the nuclear age," according to James Walsh, executive director of Harvard's Managing the Atom project.<sup>31</sup>

Washington's aggressive militarism is not the only factor driving the race to "apocalypse soon," but it is surely a significant one. The plans and policies fall within a much broader context, with roots going back to the Clinton years and beyond. All of this is at the fringe of public discourse, and does not enter even marginally into electoral choices, another illustration of the decline of functioning democracy and its portent.

The only threat remotely comparable to use of nuclear weapons is the serious danger of environmental catastrophe. In preparation for the July 2005 Group of Eight summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, the scientific academies of all G8 nations, including the US National Academy of Sciences, joined those of China, India, and Brazil to call on the leaders of the rich countries to take urgent action to head off this potential disaster. "The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify prompt action," their statement said: "It is vital that all nations identify cost-effective steps that they can take now, to contribute to substantial and long-term reduction in net global greenhouse gas emissions." In its lead editorial, the *Financial Times* endorsed this "clarion call," while deploring the fact that "there is, however, one hold-out, and unfortunately it is to be found in the White House where—in spite of the unprecedented statement by the G8 scientists ahead of next month's Gleneagles summit—George W. Bush, the US president, insists we still do not know enough about this literally world-changing phenomenon." Washington then "succeeded in removing language calling for prompt action to control global warming" and eliminating such inflammatory statements as "Our world is warming," because "Mr. Bush has said global warming is too uncertain a matter to justify anything more than voluntary measures." The end result, the *Financial Times* editors comment, is that little remained beyond "pious waffle."<sup>32</sup>

Dismissal of scientific evidence on matters of survival, in keeping with Bush's scientific

judgment, is routine. At the 2005 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, "leading US climate researchers . . . released 'the most compelling evidence yet' that human activities are responsible for global warming." The group predicted major climatic effects, including severe reduction in water supplies in regions that rely on rivers fed by melting snow and glaciers. Other prominent researchers at the same session reported evidence that the melting of Arctic and Greenland ice sheets is causing changes in the sea's salinity balance that threaten "to shut down the Ocean Conveyor Belt, which transfers heat from the tropics towards the polar regions through currents such as the Gulf Stream." One possible consequence is significant temperature reduction in Europe. Not long after, climate experts reported further shrinking of the polar ice cap, and warned that the long-predicted "feedbacks in the system are starting to take hold" as the enlarged expanses of open water absorb solar energy instead of reflecting it back to space, hence accelerating the severe threat of global warming. The release of "the most compelling evidence yet," like the G8 warnings, received scant notice in the United States, despite the attention given in the same days to the implementation of the Kyoto protocols regulating greenhouse emissions, with the most important government refusing to take part.<sup>33</sup>

It is important to stress *government*. The standard observation that the United States stood almost alone in rejecting the Kyoto protocols is correct only if the phrase "United States" excludes its population, which strongly favors the Kyoto pact. A majority of Bush backers not only support the protocol, but mistakenly believe that the president does so as well. In general, voters in the 2004 election were seriously deluded about the positions of the political parties, not because of lack of interest or mental capacity, but because elections are carefully designed to yield that result, a topic to which we will return.<sup>34</sup>

### **Iraq and the "War on Terror"**

US and UK planners were well aware that the invasion of Iraq was likely to increase terror and WMD proliferation, as many analysts and intelligence agencies warned. CIA director George Tenet informed Congress in October 2002 that invading Iraq might lead Saddam Hussein to assist "Islamist terrorists in conducting a WMD attack against the United States." The National Intelligence Council "predicted that an American-led invasion of Iraq would increase support for political Islam and would result in a deeply divided Iraqi society prone to violent internal conflict," hence engendering terror within Iraq and worldwide. The NIC confirmed these expectations in December 2004, reporting that "Iraq and other possible conflicts in the future could provide recruitment, training grounds, technical skills and language proficiency for a new class of terrorists who are 'professionalized' and for whom political violence becomes an end in itself." The NIC also predicted that, as a result of the invasion, this new globalized network of "diffuse Islamic extremist groups" would spread its operations elsewhere to defend Muslim lands from attack by "infidel invaders," with Iraq replacing Afghanistan as a training ground. A CIA report of May 2005 confirmed that "Iraq has become a magnet for Islamic militants similar to Soviet-occupied Afghanistan two decades ago and Bosnia in the 1990s." The CIA concluded that "Iraq may prove to be an even more effective training ground for Islamic extremists than Afghanistan was in Al Qaeda's early days, because it is serving as a real-world laboratory for urban combat." Two years after the invasion, a high-level government review of the "war on terror" affirmed the same conclusion. Focusing "on how to deal with the rise of a new generation of terrorists, schooled in Iraq over the past couple years," the review noted: "Top government officials are increasingly turning their attention to anticipate what one called 'the bleed out' of hundreds or thousands of Iraq-trained jihadists back to their home countries throughout the Middle East and Western Europe. 'It's a new piece of a new equation,' a former senior Bush administration official said. 'If you don't know who they are in Iraq, how are you going to locate them in Istanbul or London?'"<sup>35</sup>

There is little doubt that the invasion of Iraq had the effect of "greatly strengthening the popular appeal of anti-democratic radicals such as those of al-Qaeda and other *jihadi* salafis" throughout the Muslim world. A crucial illustration is Indonesia, the state with the world's largest Muslim population and a likely source of jihadi terror. In 2000, 75 percent of Indonesians viewed



Americans favorably. This number fell to 61 percent by 2002 and plummeted to 15 percent after the invasion of Iraq, with 80 percent of Indonesians saying they feared an attack by the United States. Scott Atran, a specialist on terror and Indonesia, reports that "these sentiments correlate with readiness by over 80 percent of Indonesians to have Islam play an increasing role in personal and national life, but are also associated with tolerance for a broader spectrum of co-religionists, including militant radicals, and readiness to amplify any slight against an Islamic leader or nation into a perceived attack upon the whole Muslim world."<sup>36</sup>

The threat is not abstract. Shortly after the deadly bomb attacks on London's public transportation system in July 2005, Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) released a study reiterating the standard conclusions of intelligence agencies and independent analysts: "There is 'no doubt' that the invasion of Iraq has 'given a boost to the al-Qaeda network' [in] propaganda, recruitment and fundraising,' while providing an ideal training area for terrorists." The study found that "the UK is at particular risk because it is the closest ally of the United States, has deployed armed forces in the military campaigns to topple the Taleban regime in Afghanistan and in Iraq . . . [and is] a pillion passenger" of American policy, the passenger who rides behind the driver of a motorcycle. In its review of the London bombings, Britain's MI5 internal security service concluded that "though they have a range of aspirations and 'causes,' Iraq is a dominant issue for a range of extremist groups and individuals in the UK and Europe," while some who have traveled to Iraq to fight "may later return to the UK and consider mounting attacks here."<sup>37</sup>

The Blair government angrily denied the obvious, though it was soon reaffirmed when one of the suspects in the follow-up failed bombing, captured in Rome, "claimed the bomb plot was directly inspired by Britain's involvement in the Iraq war" and described "how the suspects watched hours of TV footage showing grief-stricken Iraqi widows and children alongside images of civilians killed in the conflict. He is alleged to have told prosecutors that after watching the footage: 'There was a feeling of hatred and a conviction that it was necessary to give a signal—to do something.'"<sup>38</sup>

Reports by an Israeli think tank and Saudi intelligence concluded that "the vast majority" of foreign fighters in Iraq "are not former terrorists" but "became radicalized by the war itself," stimulated by the invasion to respond "to calls to defend their fellow Muslims from 'crusaders' and 'infidels'" who are mounting "an attack on the Muslim religion and Arab culture." A study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) found that "85 percent of Saudi militants who went to Iraq were not on any government watch list, al-Qaeda members, or terrorist sympathizers" but were "radicalized almost exclusively by the Coalition invasion." Since the invasion, the report confirms, Iraq has become one of the global centers for recruitment and training of extremist ("neo-Salafi") Islamist terrorists; large numbers are likely to return to their countries of origin, carrying terrorism skills and radicalized worldviews, gaining "publicity and credibility among the angry and alienated in the Islamic world," and spreading "terrorism and violence." French intelligence, which has unique experience over many years, concludes that "what the war in Iraq has done is radicalize these people and make some of them prepared to support terrorism. Iraq is a great recruiting sergeant," contributing a new and "enormous jihad zone to train people to fight in their country of origin," as intelligence had previously found "in Afghanistan, in Bosnia, in Kosovo." US officials report that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Al Qaeda's top operative in Iraq, "is bringing more and more Iraqi fighters into his fold," displacing foreign fighters, who account "for less than 10 percent of the insurgents in Iraq," perhaps as few as 4 percent, CSIS believes.<sup>39</sup>

According to terrorism specialist Peter Bergen, President Bush "is right that Iraq is a main front in the war on terrorism, but this is a front we created." As "the Iraq war has expanded the terrorists' ranks," he reports, "the year 2003 saw the highest incidence of significant terrorist attacks in two decades, and then, in 2004, astonishingly, that number tripled." In response to Donald Rumsfeld's search for "metrics to know if we are winning or losing the war on terror," Bergen suggests that "an exponentially rising number of terrorist attacks is one metric that seems relevant."<sup>40</sup>

Studies of suicide bombers also reveal that "Iraq appears to be playing a central role—in shifting views and as ground zero in a new wave of suicide attacks." Between 1980 and 2003, there were 315 suicide attacks worldwide, initially for the most part by the secular Tamil Tigers.

Since the US invasion, estimates of suicide bombings in Iraq (where such attacks were virtually unknown before) range as high as 400. Terrorism specialists report that "stories of the bravery and heroism of suicide bombers in Iraq" are stimulating imitators among Muslim youth who adopt the jihadi doctrine that the Muslim world is under attack and they must rise to its defense. Former NSC staffers and counterterrorism specialists Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon conclude that Bush has "created a new haven for terrorism in Iraq that escalates the potential for Islamic violence against Europe and the United States," a policy that is "disastrous": "We may be attacked by terrorists who received their training in Iraq, or attacked by terrorists who were inspired, organized and trained by people who were in Iraq. . . . [Bush] has given them an excellent American target in Iraq but in the process has energized the jihad and given militants the kind of urban warfare experience that will raise the future threat to the United States exponentially."<sup>41</sup>

Robert Pape, who has done the most extensive studies of suicide bombers, writes that "Al Qaeda is today less a product of Islamic fundamentalism than of a simple strategic goal: to compel the United States and its Western allies to withdraw combat forces from the Arabian Peninsula and other Muslim countries," as Osama bin Laden repeatedly declares. Serious analysts have pointed out that bin Laden's words and deeds correlate closely. The jihadis organized by the Reagan administration and its allies ended their Afghan-based terrorism inside Russia after the Russians withdrew from Afghanistan, though they continued it from occupied Muslim Chechnya, the scene of shocking Russian crimes dating back to the nineteenth century. Tolstoy's novella *Hadji Murad* is all too timely today. Bin Laden turned against the United States in 1991 because he took it to be occupying the holiest Arab land (a fact later cited by the Pentagon as a reason for shifting US bases from Saudi Arabia) and because Washington blocked his efforts to join the attack against the secular enemy Saddam Hussein. The jihadis also joined the Muslim side in the Balkan wars, with US tolerance and assistance, at the very same time that they were trying to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993. An Indian strategic analyst and former government official alleges further that the London bombers received training in Bosnia.<sup>42</sup>

In the most extensive scholarly inquiry into Islamic militancy, Fawaz Gerges concludes that after 9/11, "the dominant response to Al Qaeda in the Muslim world was very hostile," specifically among jihadis, who regarded it as a dangerous extremist fringe. Instead of recognizing that opposition to Al Qaeda offered Washington "the most effective way to drive a nail into its coffin" by finding "intelligent means to nourish and support the internal forces that were opposed to militant ideologies like the bin Laden network," the Bush administration did exactly what bin Laden hoped it would do: resort to violence. The invasion of Iraq created strong support for the fatwa issued by Al-Azhar in Cairo, "the oldest institution of religious higher learning in the world of Islam." The fatwa advised "all Muslims in the world to make jihad against invading American forces." Sheikh Tantawi of Al-Azhar, "one of the first Muslim scholars to condemn Al Qaeda [and] often criticized by ultraconservative clerics as a pro-Western reformer . . . ruled that efforts to stop the American invasion are a 'binding Islamic duty.'" The achievements of Bush administration planners in inspiring Islamic radicalism and terror are impressive.<sup>43</sup>

The senior CIA analyst responsible for tracking Osama bin Laden from 1996, Michael Scheuer, writes that "bin Laden has been precise in telling America the reasons he is waging war on us. None of the reasons have anything to do with our freedom, liberty, and democracy, but have everything to do with US policies and actions in the Muslim world." Scheuer notes that "US forces and policies are completing the radicalization of the Islamic world, something Osama bin Laden has been trying to do with substantial but incomplete success since the early 1990s. As a result... it is fair to conclude that the United States of America remains bin Laden's only indispensable ally." From his detailed study of Al Qaeda, Jason Burke draws a similar conclusion. "Every use of force is another small victory for bin Laden," he writes, creating "a whole new cadre of terrorists" for a "cosmic struggle between good and evil," the vision shared by bin Laden and Bush.<sup>44</sup>

The pattern is common. To mention another recent case, the US-Israeli assassination of the revered quadriplegic cleric Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (along with half a dozen bystanders) outside a Gaza mosque in March 2004 led to the brutal murder of four US security contractors in Falluja in immediate retaliation, which in turn provoked the marine invasion that killed hundreds of people

and set off conflagrations throughout Iraq. There is no mystery here. Unless enemies can be completely crushed, violence tends to engender violence in response. A violent and destructive response to terrorism helps the "terrorist vanguard" mobilize support among the far larger constituency that rejects their methods but shares much of their resentment and concern, a dynamic as familiar to Western policy makers in the post-World War II era as it was to their imperial predecessors.

Paying attention to the world leads to conclusions that some would prefer to ignore. Far better to strike heroic poses about "Islamofascism" and denounce the "excuse makers" who seek to understand the roots of terror and to act to reduce the threat, people who are—in the words of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman—"just one notch less despicable than the terrorists and also deserve to be exposed." The category of such despicable characters is rather large, including the most respected specialists on the topic and US and other intelligence agencies. The stance, not unfamiliar, is another gift to bin Laden.<sup>45</sup>

The logic that some prefer to ignore is straightforward, outlined even in the serious journals that tend to support Bush-style aggressive nationalism: if adversaries "fear the unbridled use of America's power, they may perceive overwhelming incentives to wield weapons of terror and mass destruction to deter America's offensive tactics of self-defense. Indeed, the history of the myths of empire suggests that a general strategy of preventive war is likely to bring about precisely the outcome that Bush and Rice wish to avert."<sup>46</sup> That is particularly likely when the strategy is joined with a radical "transformation of the military" and doctrines calling for first use of nuclear weapons and the right to "unilateral use of military power," sharply expanded since the Clinton years.

### **Iraq and Free World Democracy**

If we hope to understand the world, it is important that we not allow the recent past to be dispatched to oblivion. The United States and United Kingdom proclaimed the right to invade Iraq because it was developing weapons of mass destruction. That was the "single question" that justified invading Iraq, the president declared in a March 2003 press conference, a position stressed repeatedly by Blair, Bush, and their associates. Eliminating the threat of Iraq's WMDs was also the sole basis on which Bush received congressional authorization to resort to force. The answer to the "single question" was given shortly after the invasion, as Washington reluctantly conceded. Scarcely missing a beat, the doctrinal system concocted new pretexts and justifications, which quickly became virtual dogma: the war was inspired by President Bush's noble visions of democracy, shared by his British colleague.<sup>47</sup>

Long after the official concession that the original pretexts for invading Iraq were without merit, key politicians continued to reiterate them in high places. In January 2005, Senate majority leader Bill Frist justified the invasion of Iraq on the grounds that "dangerous weapons proliferation must be stopped. Terrorist organizations must be destroyed." It is apparently irrelevant that the pretexts have been officially abandoned and that the invasion has increased terrorist threats and accelerated the proliferation of dangerous weapons.<sup>48</sup>

Frist's performance followed an earlier script. In the most careful review of the documentary record, national security and intelligence analyst John Prados describes the Bush "scheme to convince America and the world that war with Iraq was necessary and urgent" as "a case study in government dishonesty . . . that required patently untrue public statements and egregious manipulation of intelligence." The planners knew that Iraqi WMD programs "were either nascent, moribund, or non-existent—exactly the opposite of the President's repeated message to Americans." To carry out the deception, "actual intelligence was consistently distorted, manipulated, and ignored . . . in service of a particular enterprise under false pretenses—a story with tremendous implications for America in the twenty-first century"—and for the world. "Americans have not only been hoodwinked" by "George Bush's game of three-card monte," Prados concludes, "they have been shamed. . . . Americans do not like to think of themselves as aggressors, but raw aggression is what took place in Iraq."<sup>49</sup>

Evidence of deceit continued to accumulate. In May 2005, a series of documents known as the

Downing Street Memos were leaked to the *Times* of London. One memo revealed that two weeks before the war was launched, Attorney General Lord Goldsmith, Blair's chief legal adviser, counseled that "regime change cannot be the objective of military action." Even if Britain were to limit itself to the announced objective of ending WMD programs, he wrote, "it is for the [UN Security] Council to assess whether any such breach of those obligations has occurred," not individual states. Lord Goldsmith then added that the United States had "a rather different view: they maintain that the fact of whether Iraq is in breach is a matter of objective fact which may therefore be assessed by individual member states [but] I am not aware of any other state which supports this view." He did not have to add that the phrase "individual member states" referred to Washington alone. The basic content of Lord Goldsmith's polite wording was that Britain should at least make some gesture toward recognizing international law, unlike the United States, which is a rogue state that exempts itself from such formalities. The reaction to the leaked memos in the two countries is instructive: the revelations provoked a substantial uproar in England, but received little notice in the United States.<sup>50</sup>

Shortly after Lord Goldsmith's comments were made public, the London *Sunday Times* published an official memo of a secret meeting between Blair and his top advisers in July 2002. The document showed that the Bush administration had already decided to attack Iraq, well before Congress was "hoodwinked" into authorizing force in October 2002 and also before the UN was invited either to endorse Washington's plan to use violence or to become "irrelevant." British Middle East scholar Toby Dodge observed that "the documents show . . . that the case of weapons of mass destruction was based on thin intelligence and was used to inflate the evidence to the level of mendacity." Again, there was considerable reaction in England to these revelations, but the story was "a dud" in the United States, the press observed. Weeks later, when popular pressures led to coverage, much commentary shifted to the opposite mode in a familiar pattern: Why this hysteria from conspiracy theorists about what we always knew and had told the public loud and clear?<sup>51</sup>

In his memo to Blair, Lord Goldsmith also advised that, given the patent criminality of "regime change" by invasion, it would be "necessary to create the conditions in which we could legally support military action." Seeking to provoke Iraq into some action that could be portrayed as a *casus belli*, London and Washington renewed their bombing of Iraqi targets in May 2002, with a sharp increase in September 2002. In the nine months leading up to the official start of the war in March 2003, US and UK planes flew almost 22,000 sorties, hitting 391 "carefully selected targets," noted Lieutenant General Michael Moseley, commander of the joint operations. These flights, he explained, "laid the foundations" for the military conquest by eliminating the need for protracted bombardment of Iraqi positions. Iraq vigorously protested the bombings to the UN, but did not react as London and Washington had hoped. When no *casus belli* could be concocted, the two countries invaded Iraq anyway, proclaiming the "single question."<sup>52</sup>

The most important raid of the prewar war against Iraq was apparently on September 5, 2002, when US and British planes "flattened Saddam's airbase, called H-3, in Iraq's western desert," British journalist Ed Harriman reports. "The raid had destroyed military communications and anti-aircraft defences as well as Iraqi planes," he notes, thus clearing the way for the planned invasion. Two days later, Tony Blair arrived in Washington to visit Bush. At their joint press conference, Blair described the "catalogue of attempts by Iraq to conceal its weapons of mass destruction, not to tell the truth about it over not just a period of months but over a period of years." Blair, while sincerely advising the driver of the motorcycle to follow the diplomatic route, knew full well that the war was already under way. All the while, the two leaders were making sure that state violence would be protected from scrutiny by Parliament, Congress, and the public in both countries.<sup>53</sup>

The plan for "spikes of activity" against Iraq to try to concoct a pretext for an invasion—described in a July 23, 2002, memo from foreign policy aide Matthew Rycroft to the British ambassador to the United States, David Manning—was the most important revelation of the Downing Street Memos. The tactic is a venerable one. Psychological warfare specialists in the Eisenhower administration advised that the United States should "covertly stimulate acts and attitudes of [defiance] short of mass rebellion aimed at... provoking open Soviet intervention in both the GDR [East Germany] and the other satellites," advice that was secretly accepted by the US

government immediately after Soviet tanks crushed mass worker protests in East Berlin. Another example of this tactic is Israel's attacks on Lebanon in early 1982, seeking to provoke a response by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that could be used as a pretext for a planned invasion. Despite failure to elicit a credible pretext, in June 1982 Israel launched the invasion, for the purpose of blocking PLO diplomatic efforts and ensuring Israeli control over the West Bank, while imposing a client regime in Lebanon. In yet another example, CIA-backed Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas attacked civilian targets in Kosovo in early 1999, openly announcing that they hoped the violence would provoke a harsh Serbian response that could then be used to arouse popular Western support for an attack on Serbia. It is possible that current US military actions across Syria's borders are likewise designed to provoke some pretext for attack on the one Arab state that is currently defying Washington's orders.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Ranking of Priorities: Terror and Real Interests**

The conventional task of doctrinal managers is to protect power and those who wield it from scrutiny and, most important, to deflect analysis from their rational planning in pursuit of the real interests they serve. Discussion must be diverted instead to noble intent and self-defense, perhaps misguided: in the Iraq case, liberation of the suffering people of Iraq and defense of the United States against terror. It is therefore necessary to protect the doctrine that Iraq would have been selected for invasion even if the world's energy resources happened to be in Central Africa. As if that challenge were not difficult enough, others awaited, among them, concealing the Western role in the dismal prewar fate of Iraq as well as the consequences of the US-UK invasion both in Iraq and worldwide, which are grim.

There are further problems. To begin with, though it was anticipated that the invasion would probably enhance the threat of terror and proliferation, it may have done so even in unanticipated ways. It is common to say that claims about WMDs in Iraq were quickly undermined when, after an exhaustive search, no traces were found. That is not quite accurate, however. There were stores of equipment for developing WMDs in Iraq after the invasion: those produced in the 1980s, thanks to aid provided by the United States and Britain, among others, aid that continued well after Saddam's worst atrocities and the end of the war with Iran. The aid included means for developing missiles and nuclear weapons as well as virulent strains of anthrax and other biotoxins, the latter in apparent violation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), a serious breach of international law. The threat posed by these installations had been put forth as one reason for invading Iraq.<sup>55</sup> These sites had been secured by UN inspectors, but the invaders dismissed them, leaving the sites unguarded. The immediate consequence was sophisticated and massive looting of these installations. The UN inspectors continued to carry out their work, relying on satellite imagery. By June 2005, they had discovered 109 sites that had been looted. Most looting was from production sites for solid- and liquid-propellant missiles, where about 85 percent of equipment had been removed, along with biotoxins and other materials usable for chemical and biological weapons, and high-precision equipment capable of making parts for nuclear and chemical weapons and missiles. A Jordanian journalist was informed by officials in charge of the Jordanian-Iraqi border after US and UK forces took over that radioactive materials were detected in one of every eight trucks crossing into Jordan, destination unknown.<sup>56</sup>

"Stuff happens," in Rumsfeld's words.

The ironies are almost inexpressible. The official justification for the invasion was to prevent the use of WMDs that did not exist. The invasion provided the terrorists who had been mobilized by the United States and its allies with the means to develop WMDs—namely, equipment that the United States and others had provided to Saddam Hussein, caring nothing about the terrible crimes they later invoked to whip up support for an invasion to overthrow him. It is as if Iran were now making nuclear weapons using fissionable materials provided by the United States to Iran under the shah—which may indeed be happening, as Graham Allison points out.<sup>57</sup>

The Pentagon civilians in charge did make sure that certain other sites were protected, however: the oil and security ministries. Elsewhere, looting and destruction, including of

irreplaceable treasures of civilization, proceeded unconstrained. Two years after the invasion, the president of the American Academic Research Institute in Iraq, Macguire Gibson, sadly confirmed that "Iraq is losing its culture and its wealth." By then, more than half the nation's archeological sites, including most major Sumerian ones, had been destroyed. "The Americans are not doing anything," Gibson added, though he acknowledged there was a little help from the Italian and Dutch contingents. The losses at these sites dwarfed even the massive looting of the National Museum shortly after US troops arrived, in which at least 15,000 of the 20,000 looted pieces disappeared, probably forever. Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Co. may even have succeeded in causing "irreversible damage" to Iraq's oil fields. To support the invasion, the fields "are being driven to pump more than they should," which might lead to "permanent decline in production." Recall the confident predictions that the liberation greeted with flowers would be self-financed by booming oil production.<sup>58</sup>

The invasion of Iraq is perhaps the most glaring example of the low priority assigned by Washington planners to the threat of terror, but there are numerous others. A case in point is Washington's imposition of new sanctions on Syria under the Syria Accountability Act, passed almost unanimously by Congress and signed into law by President Bush in late 2003. Syria is on the official list of states sponsoring terrorism, despite Washington's acknowledgment that Damascus has not been implicated in terrorist acts for many years. The true nature of Washington's concern over Syria's links to terror was revealed by President Clinton's offer to remove Syria from the list of states sponsoring terror if Damascus agreed to US-Israeli peace terms. When Syria insisted on recovering territory seized by Israel, the Clinton State Department kept the country on the terrorism list. Nonetheless, Syria had been highly cooperative in providing important intelligence to Washington on Al Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups. Implementation of the Syria Accountability Act deprived the United States of an important source of information about radical Islamist terrorism. Obtaining such information, however, is clearly subordinate to the goal of establishing a regime in Syria that would accept US-Israeli demands. Had Syria been removed from the list of states supporting terror, it would have been the first since 1982, when the Reagan administration removed Saddam so that they could provide him with substantial aid, joined by Britain and many others. That again tells us something about the attitude toward terror and state crimes.<sup>59</sup>

A core demand of the Syria Accountability Act refers to UN Security Council Resolution 520, which calls for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Syria had definitely violated the UN resolution by keeping its forces in Lebanon—forces that the United States and Israel had readily accepted in 1976, when their task was to massacre Palestinians, and again in 1990, when the United States was building a coalition to support the coming war in Iraq. This passed in silence, and Congress and the media also neglected to point out that the original Security Council resolution, passed in 1982, was directed against Israel, the only country named in the resolution. There was no call for sanctions against Israel, or for reduction in the huge unconditional military and economic aid it receives, when Israel violated this and other Security Council resolutions regarding Lebanon for twenty-two years. The principle is very clear, Middle East scholar Stephen Zunes writes: "Lebanese sovereignty must be defended only if the occupying army is from a country the United States opposes, but is dispensable if the country is a US ally." Another illustration of the single standard, not restricted to US policy makers, of course. A side observation: by a 2-1 margin, the US population favors an Israel Accountability Act, holding Israel accountable for development of WMDs and human rights abuses in the occupied territories. That is consistent with other studies of public opinion, scarcely reported though plainly of considerable importance in a democratic society.<sup>60</sup>

Outside the Middle East, too, there are numerous illustrations of the low priority assigned to the "war on terror." One is the Bush administration's attitude toward the 9/11 Commission Congress established to recommend means to prevent new terrorist atrocities. "Over its lifespan," Philip Shenon reported, "the Sept. 11 commission repeatedly clashed with the Bush administration, which had originally opposed its creation, especially over the panel's access to important White House documents and to witnesses." A year after its final report was presented, commission

members formed a bipartisan 9/11 Public Discourse Project to pressure the government to implement its recommendations to prevent terrorist attacks. The recommendations were largely ignored. Particularly worrisome, argued Thomas Kean, who chaired the official 9/11 Commission, was the failure to make any serious effort to secure nuclear materiel, the central element of a program to prevent the nuclear terror that intelligence analysts regard as otherwise inevitable. The project's report, issued four years after 9/11, "found that the Bush administration and Congress had made 'minimal' or 'unsatisfactory' progress" on eight of fourteen recommendations by the 9/11 Commission "for overhauling the government to deal with terrorist threats."<sup>61</sup>

Shortly before the London train and bus bombings of July 2005, the US Senate sharply cut funding for rail and mass transit security. The 9/11 Commission had called for a national transportation security strategy, but that remained "among the 50 percent of the 9/11 Commission's specific recommendations a year ago that Congress and Bush have yet to act upon," *Boston Globe* columnist Thomas Oliphant wrote, part of "the unholy alliances between industry and government to avoid taking measures to protect against potentially catastrophic terrorism that is not difficult to imagine." Tax cuts for the rich rank far higher as a priority than protection of the population from terror. A still more ominous example of the negligence in security matters, Oliphant continues, is the success of the chemical industry and its "White House contacts to block stiff rules requiring security upgrades at some 100 [chemical] plants around the country." Congressional efforts "have encountered nothing but industry and administration obstacles in their attempts to force a sensible approach to guarding against disasters that might make 9/11 pale by comparison." Senator Joseph Biden "cited a study by the Naval Research Laboratory that estimated that as many as 100,000 people in a densely populated area could die within 30 minutes if a single, 90-ton freight car carrying chlorine were punctured," Oliphant reported, concluding that "conniving between the Bush administration and its corporate buddies" has blocked any action. The administration is even trying to overturn a court decision supporting a local ban on "shipments of the most dangerous chemicals from certain zones around the nation's capital." All of this illustrates how low the priority of preventing terror is in comparison with corporate welfare.<sup>62</sup>

To select an illustration from another domain, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is tasked with investigating suspicious financial transfers, a central component of the "war on terror." In April 2004, OFAC informed Congress that of its 120 employees, four were tracking the finances of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, while almost two dozen were enforcing the illegal embargo against Cuba. From 1990 to 2003, OFAC conducted ninety-three terrorism-related investigations that led to \$9,000 in fines, and 11,000 Cuba-related investigations that led to \$8 million in fines. The revelations received the silent treatment in the United States, though there was a mention in the national press that "at a time when the United States faces very real terrorist threats in the Middle East and elsewhere, the administration's absurd and increasingly bizarre obsession with Cuba is more than just a shame, it's a dangerous diversion from reality." (Senator Max Baucus, deploring the "misuse of taxpayer money" to punish Cuba.)<sup>63</sup>

The Bush administration's real priorities are further illustrated by its handling of the leak of the name of CIA agent Valerie Plame after her husband, Joseph Wilson, published an unwelcome report undermining administration charges about Iraq's alleged purchases of "yellowcake" from Niger for its WMD program. Retired CIA agents informed Congress that US intelligence gathering was damaged not only by the leak but even more by the administration cover-up, which caused "irreversible damage [to] the credibility of our case officers when they try to convince an overseas contact that their safety is of primary importance to us," said Jim Marcinkowski, a former CIA case officer. "Each time the political machine made up of prime-time patriots and partisan ninnyes display their ignorance by deriding Valerie Plame as a mere paper-pusher, or belittling the varying degrees of cover used to protect our officers, or continuing to play partisan politics with our national security, it's a disservice to this country," he added, harming efforts to prevent terrorist attacks.<sup>64</sup>

As the example illustrates, protecting the country is also a far lower priority than maintaining tight top-down control, as in tyrannical corporate structures. The Cheney-Rumsfeld team for which Bush is the front man has shown repeatedly that it is obsessed with authority and discipline. The

ruling clique appears to have been infuriated with the CIA's competence and unwillingness to provide the "information" they required to implement their plans, particularly in Iraq. One study based on extensive interviews with senior intelligence and ex-intelligence officials describes the undistinguished Porter Goss as a "wrecking ball" who was appointed as director of the CIA to bring the agency in line with executive demands, whatever the facts. Goss's primary qualification seems to have been his unswerving loyalty to Bush. Dozens of senior officials are reported to have quit the CIA in disgust, leaving the demoralized agency with severely diminished competence, particularly with respect to the Middle East. This peculiar mixture of supreme arrogance, utter incompetence, and passion for obedience has had catastrophic consequences, quite possibly laying the groundwork for much worse to come.<sup>65</sup>

Bush and Co. are even willing to sacrifice the "war on terror" to their obsession with torture. In order to kidnap a terror suspect in Italy and send him to Egypt for probable torture, the Bush administration disrupted a major inquiry into the suspect's role in "trying to build a terror recruitment network" and "build a jihadist recruitment network with tentacles spreading throughout Europe." Italian courts indicted thirteen CIA operatives, and Italians are furious. Other European countries have similar complaints about the Bush administration undermining antiterror operations. The sole conviction of a person connected to 9/11, Mounir el-Motassadeq, was overturned because Bush administration officials refused to provide German officials with crucial evidence. Similarly, the Bush administration "has refused to allow the Spanish authorities to interview Ramzi bin al-Shibh, a central Qaeda suspect, to bolster their case against two men on trial in Madrid on charges of helping to plan the 2001 attack" on 9/11.<sup>66</sup>

Though the support of its allies is indispensable in the war on terror, Washington "triggered tensions with allies" once again, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, when a Spanish court issued international arrest warrants and extradition orders for American soldiers accused of killing a Spanish reporter in Iraq, along with a Ukrainian cameraman. The Spanish court acted "after two requests to US authorities for permission to question the soldiers went unanswered, court officials said." The Pentagon had no comment.<sup>67</sup>

The CIA kidnapping and rendition to Egypt led to commentary in the press about the "cultural difference" between the United States and Europe in the "war on terror," adopting Robert Kagan's dismissive reference to Europeans as being "from Venus," while "Americans are from Mars." The soft Europeans believe in old-fashioned notions like criminal justice and law. The tough Americans just go ahead and get the job done, as in cowboy movies. As commentators knew, but skillfully evaded, it is true that the tough Americans pay little attention to criminal justice and law when dealing with terrorists. Rather, leading terrorists are given presidential pardons over the strong objections of the Justice Department, which wants them deported on grounds of national security (Orlando Bosch), or dispatched to more extreme terrorist activities (Luis Posada Carriles), or protected from repeated extradition requests that are simply ignored (Haitian mass murderer Emmanuel Constant), or dismissed by the courts (Posada), to mention just a few of those engaged in "worthy terrorism."<sup>68</sup>

There is, to be sure, another conceivable category: US terrorists, a possibility excluded by doctrinal fiat. The significance of Western state terrorism in Western culture is illustrated by the appointment of John Negroponte to the new position of director of intelligence, in charge of counterterrorism. In the Reagan-Bush administration, he was ambassador to Honduras, running the world's largest CIA station, not because of the grand role of Honduras in world affairs, but because Honduras was the primary US base for the international terrorist war for which Washington was condemned by the International Court of Justice and UN Security Council (absent the US veto). There was virtually no reaction to the appointment of a leading international terrorist to the top counterterrorism position in the world. Nor to the fact that at the very same time, Dora Maria Tellez, the heroine of the popular struggle that overthrew the vicious Somoza regime in Nicaragua, was denied a visa to teach at the Harvard Divinity School. She was deemed a terrorist because she had helped overthrow a US-backed tyrant and mass murderer.<sup>69</sup>

Orwell would not have known whether to laugh or weep.

By 2005, Michael Lind grandly proclaimed, "The debate about the legitimacy of terrorism is



over." The formal end to the debate was UN secretary-general Kofi Annan's declaration in March that "any action constitutes terrorism if it is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act." With this declaration, Lind concluded, "Terrorism against civilians, whether committed by stateless groups or states, should be treated unambiguously as a war crime by every country in the world." Fortunately, Western commentators are saved from the unambiguous conclusion, thanks to our self-exemption from the most elementary of moral principles, the principle of universality.<sup>70</sup>

The willingness of top planners to risk an increase in terrorism, possibly with awesome consequences, does not of course indicate that they welcome such outcomes. Preventing terrorist attacks is simply not a high priority in comparison with serious geopolitical and strategic objectives—specifically, controlling the world's major energy resources, recognized since the 1940s to be "a stupendous source of strategic power" and "one of the greatest material prizes in world history." The British understood that well in their day in the sun. At the dawn of the oil age in 1921, the first lord of the Admiralty informed petroleum technologists that "if we secure the supplies of oil now available in the world we can do what we like." Understanding the point, the United States moved to expel the British from Venezuela, which by 1928 had become the world's leading oil exporter, and put US companies in charge. To achieve that goal, Washington "actively supported the vicious and venal regime of Juan Vicente Gomez," pressuring the government to bar British concessions (while continuing to demand—and secure—US oil rights in the Middle East, where the British and French were in the lead).<sup>71</sup>

Shortly after the invasion of Iraq, one of the more astute of the senior planners and analysts, Zbigniew Brzezinski, pointed out that America's control over Middle East oil producers "gives it indirect but politically critical leverage on the European and Asian economies that are also dependent on energy exports from the region." He was reiterating the conclusions of leading post-World War II planners, George Kennan in this case, who recognized that control of the resources of the Gulf region would give the United States "veto power" over its industrial rivals. It is a rational calculation, on the assumption that human survival is not particularly significant in comparison with short-term power and wealth. And that is nothing new. These themes resonate through history. The difference today is only that the stakes are enormously higher.<sup>72</sup>

If the United States can maintain its control over Iraq—which has the world's second largest known oil reserves and is located at the heart of the world's major energy supplies—it will enhance significantly Washington's "strategic power" and "critical leverage" over its major rivals in the bipolar world that has been taking shape for the past thirty years (with US-dominated North America serving as one pole and Europe and northeast Asia, which is linked to south and southeast Asia economies, as the other two). These concerns have always been central to post-World War II planning, considerably more so today than before as substantial alliances are taking shape to counter American dominance, accelerated, as was predicted, by Bush's aggressive militarism.<sup>73</sup>

Examples abound of shortsightedness in the interest of power and profit. To turn to another area, in April 2005 Congress enacted the Energy Policy of 2005, which, if implemented, will permit drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, thus depleting domestic supplies and increasing long-term dependence on oil imports. Echoing Washington rhetoric that its lobbyists probably wrote in the first place, the industry hailed the congressional decision as a step to "Create Jobs and Reduce Dependence on Foreign Oil." In fact, long-term dependence is increased, and "jobs" is the familiar technical term used to avoid the vulgar seven-letter word "profits." Emptying the stores of oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would appear to be a more reasonable way to deplete domestic oil supplies: unlike ANWR drilling, it would not have harmful effects on the environment and indigenous people. But that would not yield industry profit, and the plan could never be sold to the public in those terms.<sup>74</sup>

The bill passed shortly after ExxonMobil released its report *The Outlook for Energy: A 2030 View*, forecasting that non-OPEC world oil production would peak by 2010. Previously, the corporation had taken a conservative stance on peak oil speculations. Looking ahead, the report

dismissed alternatives such as Canadian oil sands as unviable, and could foresee no alternative to vastly increased OPEC production, primarily in the Middle East. If the predictions are accurate, depleting domestic oil supplies entails even greater reliance on Middle East oil than had been anticipated, hence further military intervention, instigation of terror, and continued undermining of the initiatives toward democracy and sovereignty that the United States has been blocking for decades, and will have to continue to block in the future.<sup>75</sup>

Middle East oil production means primarily Saudi Arabia and (potentially) Iraq, the latter a particularly valuable prize not only because of its enormous resources, but because it is the only remaining place on earth with huge untapped reserves that are, furthermore, very cheap to extract, hence promising a *bonanza* to the energy corporations that will have privileged access: primarily American and British, if the invasion succeeds in imposing Washington's effective rule. The crucial issue throughout the post-World War II period, however, has been control, more so than access or profit. And that concern for "critical leverage" in world affairs will presumably remain true for the foreseeable future.

Among the most salient properties of failed states is that they do not protect their citizens from violence—and perhaps even destruction—or that decision makers regard such concerns as lower in priority than the short-term power and wealth of the state's dominant sectors. Another characteristic of failed states is that they are "outlaw states," whose leaderships dismiss international law and treaties with contempt. Such instruments may be binding on others but not on the outlaw state. We turn in the next chapter to this principle of self-exemption from the laws of war and other international norms.

## Chapter 4

### Democracy Promotion Abroad

"The promotion of democracy is central to the George W. Bush administration's prosecution of both the war on terrorism and its overall grand strategy." So begins the most extensive scholarly article on "the roots of the Bush doctrine." The statement is unsurprising. By 2005, it had reached the level of ritual. In scholarship we routinely read that the conviction that democracy can be imposed from the outside "is the assumption driving America's intervention in Iraq" and has been "posited as a potential new pillar of ambition for US foreign policy elsewhere." The pronouncement is sometimes amplified: "promoting democracy abroad" has been a primary goal of US foreign policy ever since Woodrow Wilson endowed it with a "powerful idealist element"; it gained "particular salience" under Ronald Reagan, and then was taken up with "unprecedented forcefulness" under Bush II. In journalism and commentary, the assumption is taken to be the merest truism.<sup>1</sup> When an assertion of such obvious importance is adopted with near unanimity, a sensible reaction is to investigate the evidence produced both for and against the thesis. The character of that evidence gives a certain measure of functioning democracy. To go to the extreme, if similar declarations are produced in North Korea, no one troubles to ask about the evidence: it suffices that the Dear Leader has spoken. In a democratic culture, substantial evidence should be required along with serious argument refuting apparent counterevidence. We will return to these questions in the case of the Bush doctrine. But first some reflections on relevant background.

It is no easy task to gain some understanding of human affairs. In some respects, the task is harder than in the natural sciences. Mother Nature doesn't provide the answers on a silver platter, but at least she does not go out of her way to set up barriers to understanding. In human affairs, such barriers are the norm. It is necessary to dismantle the structures of deception erected by doctrinal systems, which adopt a range of devices that flow very naturally from the ways in which power is concentrated.

Sometimes eminent figures are kind enough to provide us with some assistance in the task. In 1981, Samuel Huntington, professor of the science of government at Harvard University, explained the function of the Soviet threat: "you may have to sell" intervention or other military action "in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has done ever since the Truman Doctrine." On the same grounds, he warned a few years later, Mikhail Gorbachev's "public relations can be as much a threat to American interests in Europe as were [Leonid] Brezhnev's tanks."<sup>2</sup>

To facilitate the marketing effort, doctrinal systems commonly portray the current enemy as diabolical by its very nature. The characterization is sometimes accurate, but crimes are rarely the reason for demanding forceful measures against a selected target. One of many sources of evidence for this is the easy transition a state may make from favored friend and ally (who, irrelevantly, commits monstrous crimes) to ultimate evil that has to be destroyed (because of those very same crimes).

A recent illustration is Saddam Hussein. The impassioned denunciations of the awful crimes of Saddam that impelled the United States to punish the people of Iraq managed to avoid the words "committed with our help, because we do not care about atrocities that contribute to our ends." As already noted, discipline remained in force as Saddam was brought to trial for his crimes. The first trial dealt with atrocities he had committed in 1982—the year when the Reagan administration dropped Iraq from the list of states supporting terrorism so that military and other aid could flow to the murderous tyrant, aid that continued until he committed the first crime that mattered: disobeying (or possibly misunderstanding) US orders in August 1990. The facts are hardly obscure, but fall under the "general tacit agreement that 'it wouldn't do' to mention that particular fact," in Orwell's phrase.<sup>3</sup>

## “Exceptionalism”

Huntington's observation generalizes broadly, but is only part of the story. It is necessary to create misimpressions not only about the current "Great Satans," but also about one's own unique nobility. In particular, aggression and terror must be portrayed as self-defense and dedication to inspiring visions. Japanese emperor Hirohito was merely repeating a broken record when he said in his surrender speech of August 1945, "We declared war on America and Britain out of Our sincere desire to ensure Japan's self-preservation and the stabilization of East Asia, it being far from Our thought either to infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations or to embark upon territorial aggrandizement." There is little reason to doubt the emperor's sincerity; still more uplifting rhetoric accompanied the Japanese invasions of Manchuria and northern China, even in internal state records. The history of international crimes overflows with similar sentiments. Writing in 1935, with the dark clouds of Nazism settling, Martin Heidegger declared that Germany must now forestall "the peril of world darkening" *outside* the borders of Germany, which was defending the "supreme possibility of human being, as fashioned by the Greeks" from the "active onslaught that destroys all rank and every world-creating impulse of the spirit." With its "new spiritual energies" revived under Nazi rule, Germany was at last able "to take on its historic mission" of saving the world from "annihilation" at the hands of the "indifferent mass" elsewhere, primarily in the United States and Russia.<sup>4</sup>

Even individuals of the highest intelligence and moral integrity succumb to the pathology. At the peak of Britain's crimes in India and China, of which he had an intimate knowledge, John Stuart Mill wrote his classic essay on humanitarian intervention, in which he urged Britain to undertake the enterprise vigorously—specifically, to conquer even more of India, thus gaining greater control over the opium production that was needed to force open Chinese markets and pay the costs of empire. Britain should pursue this course, he argued, even though it would be "held up to obloquy" by backward Europeans, unable to comprehend that England was "a novelty in the world," an angelic nation that acted only "in the service of others," desired "no benefit to itself," and was "blameless and laudable" in everything it did. England, Mill explained, selflessly bore the costs of bringing peace and justice to the world, while "the fruits it shares in fraternal equality with the whole human race," including the "barbarians" it conquered and destroyed for their own benefit. There is no need to tarry on France's "civilizing mission" and its many counterparts.<sup>5</sup>

The famed "American exceptionalism" merits some skepticism; the image of righteous exceptionalism appears to be close to universal. Also close to universal is the responsibility of the educated classes to endorse with due solemnity the sincerity of the high-minded principles proclaimed by leaders, on the basis of no evidence apart from their declarations, though it is often conceded that their actions systematically refute their noble visions. We then face a puzzling paradox, which is miraculously resolved in the United States by proclaiming a sudden "change of course"—an event that takes place every few years, effacing inappropriate history as we march on to a glorious future. One of its constant themes is the dedication to bring justice and freedom to a suffering world, recently resurrected as the driving passion for "democracy promotion."

There are always recalcitrants who raise questions about official pronouncements. Some even go as far as Adam Smith, who had little use for England's posture of noble intent. Smith held that "the principal architects" of global policy, "our merchants and manufacturers," have sought to ensure that their own interests have "been most peculiarly attended to," however "grievous" the impact on others, particularly the victims of their "savage injustice" in India and elsewhere, but even the domestic population. Smith therefore falls into the category of "conspiracy theorists," people who attend to the historical and documentary record, and to domestic structures of power and the interests served by state planners. They do not reflexively admire professions of benign intent, such as the dedication to promote democracy, justice, and freedom. Their pernicious influence must be stemmed—in more violent states, by force; in more free societies by other means.<sup>6</sup>

## Creating Misimpressions

Throughout the Cold War years, the framework of "defense against Communist aggression" was available to mobilize domestic support for subversion, terror, and mass slaughter. In the 1980s, however, the device was beginning to wear thin. By 1979, according to one careful estimate, "the Soviets were influencing only 6% of the world population and 5% of the world GNP" outside its borders.<sup>7</sup> But details aside, the basic picture was becoming harder to evade. There were also domestic problems, notably the civilizing effects of the activism of the 1960s, which had many consequences, among them less willingness to tolerate the resort to violence, well understood by the political leadership as leaked documents and other sources reveal. The task of "creating the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting" was facing obstacles.

The Reagan administration's public relations system sought to deal with the problem by fevered pronouncements about the "evil empire" and its tentacles everywhere about to strangle us—a simplified version of Kennedy's "monolithic and ruthless conspiracy" to conquer the world. But new devices were needed. The Reaganites declared a worldwide campaign to destroy "the evil scourge of terrorism" (Reagan), particularly state-backed international terrorism, a "plague spread by depraved opponents of civilization itself [in a] return to barbarism in the modern age" (George Shultz). The official list of states sponsoring terrorism, initiated by Congress in 1979, was elevated to a prominent place in policy and propaganda, with delicate choices of the kind already illustrated.

When Gorbachev's public relations became a more serious threat to American interests, as Huntington warned, and the conventional pretexts eroded, "the 'war on drugs' quickly filled the vacuum" in Latin America, the traditional domain of US direct or indirect violence—later transmuted to "narcoterrorism," exploiting opportunities offered by 9/11. By the end of the millennium, "total [US] military and police assistance in the hemisphere exceeded economic and social aid." This is a "new phenomenon," the analysts point out: "even at the height of the Cold War, economic aid far exceeded military aid."<sup>8</sup>

Predictably, the policies "strengthened military forces at the expense of civilian authorities, . . . exacerbated human rights problems and generated significant social conflict and even political instability." From 2002 to 2003, the number of Latin American troops trained by US programs increased by more than 50 percent. The U.S. military's Southern Command (Southcom) now has more people working in Latin America than most key civilian federal agencies combined, focusing now on "radical populism" and street gangs as major threats. The police are being trained in light infantry tactics. Foreign military training is being shifted from the State Department to the Pentagon, freeing it from human rights and democracy conditionality under congressional supervision.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1989, just as the Berlin Wall was about to crumble, Bush I redeclared the "war on drugs" with a huge government-media propaganda campaign. It went into effect right in time to justify the invasion of Panama to kidnap a thug who was convicted in Florida for crimes committed mostly when he was on the CIA payroll—and, incidentally, killing unknown numbers of poor people in the bombarded slums, thousands according to the victims. The "war on drugs" also had an important domestic component: much like the "war on crime," it served to frighten the domestic population into obedience as domestic policies were being implemented to benefit extreme wealth at the expense of the large majority.

In 1994, Clinton expanded the category of "terrorist states" to include "rogue states."<sup>10</sup> A few years later another concept was added to the repertoire: "failed states," from which we must protect ourselves, and which we must help, sometimes by devastating them. Later came the "axis of evil," which we must destroy in self-defense, following the will of the Lord as transmitted to his humble servant—meanwhile escalating the threat of terror, nuclear proliferation, and perhaps "apocalypse soon."

The rhetoric has always raised difficulties, however. The basic problem is that under any reasonable interpretation of the terms— even official definitions—the categories are unacceptably broad, implicating the United States rather than justifying its actions, as faithfulness to doctrine requires. It takes discipline not to recognize the element of truth in historian Arno Mayer's

immediate post-9/11 observation that since 1947, "America has been the chief perpetrator of 'preemptive' state terror" and innumerable other " 'rogue' actions," causing immense harm, "always in the name of democracy, liberty, and justice."<sup>11</sup>

The concept of "rogue states" is no less problematic. By the late Clinton years, it was evident that for much of the world the United States was "becoming the rogue superpower," considered "the single greatest external threat to their societies," and that "in the eyes of much of the world, in fact, the prime rogue state today is the United States." After Bush took over, mainstream scholarship no longer just reported world opinion, but began to assert as fact that the United States "has assumed many of the very features of the 'rogue nations' against which it has ... done battle." Though kept at bay by the doctrinal institutions, the difficulties are always lurking in the background.<sup>12</sup>

Problems are also raised by invoking the "war on drugs" to "fill the vacuum" left by the erosion of traditional pretexts. One is that the most cost-effective and humane approaches—prevention and treatment—are consistently neglected in favor of radical increase of incarceration at home and violence abroad, with little if any effect on drug prices, hence use. Another is the causal relation between US violence abroad and the drug trade, well established by scholarship, and even evident from the daily press, recently again in Afghanistan. It is useful to recall, however, that no narco-trafficking enterprise begins to approach that of nineteenth-century Britain, a mainstay of the empire.<sup>13</sup>

Similar problems beset the category "failed state." Like "terrorist state" and "rogue state," the concept is "frustratingly imprecise," susceptible to too many interpretations. Again, careful shaping of evidence is required to exclude the United States while including the intended examples. Take Haiti, a prototypical "failed state." The standard version in much scholarship—and, almost invariably, in the media—is that Clinton's intervention in 1994 "to restore democracy" has, regrettably, "not led to democracy but instead to political chaos, renewed repression, and dismal US-Haiti relations." Also standard, as in this case, is avoidance of the relevant facts, specifically those revealing that Clinton's invasion was just another step in Washington's efforts to undermine Haitian democracy, leading to chaos and repression, as was predicted at once.<sup>14</sup>

The category "failed state" was invoked repeatedly in the course of the "normative revolution" proclaimed in the self-designated "enlightened states" in the 1990s, entitling them to resort to force with the alleged goal of protecting the populations of (carefully selected) states in a manner that may be "illegal but legitimate." As the leading themes of political discourse shifted from "humanitarian intervention" to the redeclared "war on terror" after 9/11, the concept "failed state" was given a broader scope to include states like Iraq that allegedly threaten the United States with weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism. In scholarship that (approvingly) traces the historical roots of the Bush doctrine, the concept "failed state" has been extended to include the "power vacuums" that the United States has been forced to fill for its own security, as Americans "concentrated on the task of felling trees and Indians and of rounding out their natural boundaries."<sup>15</sup>

Under this broader usage, "failed states" need not be weak. Iraq was not considered a failed state that threatened US security because it was weak. One legal authority writes that "the aggressive, arbitrary, tyrannical or totalitarian State would equally be regarded as having 'failed'—at least according to the norms and standards of modern-day international law." And that makes good sense. Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia were hardly weak, but they merit the designation "failed state" as fully as any in history. Even in the narrowest interpretation, "failed states" are identified by the failure to provide security for the population, to guarantee rights at home or abroad, or to maintain functioning (not merely formal) democratic institutions. The concept must surely also cover "outlaw states" that dismiss with contempt the rules of international order and its institutions, carefully constructed over many years, overwhelmingly under US initiative. The familiar difficulties again arise: the category covers too broad a range to be doctrinally acceptable.<sup>16</sup>

The world dominant power is consciously choosing policies that typify outlaw states, that severely endanger the domestic population and that undermine substantive democracy. In crucial respects, Washington's adoption of the characteristics of failed and outlaw states is proudly

proclaimed. There is scarcely any effort to conceal "the tension between a world that still wants a fair and sustainable international legal system, and a single superpower that hardly seems to care [that it] ranks with Burma, China, Iraq and North Korea ... in terms of its adherence to a seventeenth-century, absolutist conception of sovereignty" for itself, while dismissing as old-fashioned tommyrot the sovereignty of others.<sup>17</sup>

The rich documentary and historical record amply supports Huntington's judgment about creating misimpressions, though it is convenient to plead Cold War paranoia, ignorance, and error. Case by case, we discover from the internal record and other standard sources that there has been rational planning to promote dominant domestic interests. As historian Charles Bergquist concludes in his review of justifications for intervention in Latin America, "to conserve . . . faith in liberal democracy" analysts must "distort. . . evidence, and transform the rational consistency in US policy (the defense of capitalist interests) into irrationality (unfounded fear of Communism)." The same has regularly been true elsewhere as well.<sup>18</sup>

### **Rational Consistency**

Quite generally, inquiry reveals that the real enemy of the United States has long been independent nationalism, particularly when it threatens to become a "contagious example," to borrow Henry Kissinger's characterization of democratic socialism in Chile, a virus that, he feared, might infect other countries as far away as southern Europe—a concern he shared with Leonid Brezhnev. The source of contagion therefore had to be extirpated, as it was, on Tuesday, September 11, 1973, a date often called the first 9/11 in Latin America. We can learn a lot about the most important topic—ourselves—by examining the effects of the two 9/11s on the targeted societies and beyond, as well as the reactions to them.<sup>19</sup>

On 9/11 in 1973, after years of US subversion of Chilean democracy, support for terror, and "making the economy scream," General Augusto Pinochet's forces attacked the Chilean presidential palace. Salvador Allende, the elected president, died in the palace, apparently committing suicide because he was unwilling to surrender to the assault that demolished Latin America's oldest and most vibrant democracy and established a regime of torture and repression. Its primary instrument was the secret police organization DINA, which US military intelligence compared to the KGB and the Gestapo. Meanwhile, Washington firmly supported Pinochet's regime of violence and terror and had no slight role in its initial triumph.<sup>20</sup>

The official death toll of the first 9/11 is 3,200. The actual toll is commonly estimated at about double that figure. As a proportion of the population, the corresponding figure for the United States would be between 50,000 and 100,000 killed. An official inquiry thirty years after the coup found evidence of 30,000 cases of torture—some 700,000 in the US equivalent. Pinochet soon moved to integrate other US-backed Latin American military dictatorships into an international state terrorist program called Operation Condor. The program killed and tortured mercilessly within the region and branched out to terrorist operations in Europe and the United States. Throughout these hideous crimes, and long after, Pinochet was greatly honored—by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in particular, but far more widely as well. The assassination of the respected Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C., in 1976, however, was going too far. Operation Condor had to be called off. But the venom continued to spread. The worst atrocities in Argentina were yet to come, along with the expansion of state terror to Central America by the current incumbents in Washington and their immediate mentors.<sup>21</sup>

After 9/11 in 2001, it is commonly agreed, the world irrevocably changed. But not after the first 9/11. Those who enjoy wealth, freedom, and privilege might ask how the world would have changed if the oldest democracy in the hemisphere had been destroyed by a military coup, its president killed, more than 50,000 killed and 700,000 tortured, instigating a plague of terror throughout the continent and beyond. We might also ask how one should respond to those who participated in and laud such actions, or to those who dismiss them as eminently forgettable.

The fear of independent nationalism can go to impressive lengths. An illustration is what Senator Baucus called "the administration's absurd and increasingly bizarre obsession with Cuba,"

which has taken precedence over the threat of terror in the Clinton and Bush II administrations, as we have seen. The obsession may be bizarre, but it is not absurd from the perspective of policy makers. The basic reasons were explained in internal documents from the Kennedy-Johnson years. State Department planners warned that the "very existence" of the Castro regime is "successful defiance" of US policies going back 150 years; the threat is not Russians, but intolerable defiance of the master of the hemisphere, much like Iran's crime of successful defiance in 1979, or Syria's rejection of Clinton's demands. By June 1960, longtime presidential adviser Adolf Berle, a former member of FDR's brain trust, warned that "this is the end of the Monroe Doctrine." The savagery and fanaticism of the assault on Cuba has been, indeed, remarkable, so much so that the US Army War College in 1993 cautioned against the "innate emotional appeal" driving US policy makers who saw Castro as "the embodiment of evil who must be punished for his defiance of the United States as well as for other reprehensible deeds."

The punishment of the people of Cuba intensified when Cuba was in dire straits after the collapse of the Soviet Union, at the initiative of liberal Democrats. The author of the 1992 measures to tighten the blockade proclaimed that "my objective is to wreak havoc in Cuba" (Representative Robert Torricelli of New Jersey, later senator). That punishment of the population was legitimate had been determined as far back as the Eisenhower administration. "The Cuban people explained in March 1960, so the United States has the right to cause them to suffer by economic strangulation. Eisenhower approved economic sanctions in the expectation that "if [the Cuban people] are hungry, they will throw Castro out." Kennedy agreed that the embargo would hasten Fidel Castro's departure as a result of the "rising discomfort among hungry Cubans." Along with expanding the embargo, Kennedy initiated a major terrorist campaign designed to bring the "terrors of the earth" to Cuba, the goal of Robert Kennedy, who was put in charge of the operation, according to his biographer Arthur Schlesinger. The basic thinking was expressed by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lester Mallory in April 1960: Castro would be removed "through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship [so] every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba [in order to] bring about hunger, desperation and [the] overthrow of the government."<sup>22</sup>

US leaders could not tolerate "Cuban refusal to submit to the United States," the reaction of "a people still convinced that they have a right of self-determination and national sovereignty," Latin American scholar Louis Perez writes, summarizing forty years of terror and economic warfare. The record illustrates principles that are well established, internally rational, and clear enough to the victims, but scarcely perceptible in the intellectual world of the agents.

It was not only Cuba's "successful defiance" that led the Kennedy administration to punish the population of the criminal state. There was also fear that Cuba might be another of those "contagious examples," like Chile and innumerable other targets of subversion, aggression, and international terrorism. Cuban independence would encourage others, who might be infected by the "Castro idea of taking matters into their own hands," Latin American adviser Arthur Schlesinger warned incoming President Kennedy. President Eisenhower had already expressed his concern that Castro had "gained great prestige in Latin America," which meant that "governments elsewhere cannot oppose him too strongly since they are shaky with respect to the potentials of action by the mobs within their own countries to whom Castro's brand of demagoguery appeals." The dangers are particularly grave, Schlesinger elaborated, when "the distribution of land and other forms of national wealth greatly favors the propertied classes . . . and the poor and underprivileged, stimulated by the example of the Cuban revolution, are now demanding opportunities for a decent living." The whole system of domination might unravel if the idea of taking matters into one's own hands spread beyond Cuba's shores.

British intelligence concurred, benefiting from its rich experience with insubordination. In June 1961, the Joint Intelligence Committee warned that "Castroism still retains much of its popular appeal. If, in the longer term, the Cuban revolution succeeds in achieving a stable regime, which appears to meet the aspirations of the depressed classes, there will be a serious risk that it will inspire similar revolutions elsewhere in Latin America." The threats are dire and persistent, a constant frustration to planners dedicated to "democracy promotion," revived again today in



Venezuela, in fact much of South America.<sup>23</sup>

Concern over viruses and the infections they may spread has been a persistent theme among great powers. Sober European statesmen feared that the virus of the American revolution might poison the civilized world order. The reaction was far more furious when Haiti became the first free country in the hemisphere in 1804, after a brutal struggle against the combined forces of civilization: England, France, and the United States. Its liberation was particularly frightening for the slave state to its north, which refused even to recognize Haiti until 1862—the year it also recognized Liberia, both considered to be possible places to dispatch freed slaves. In later years, the United States took over from France the primary role of tormenting Haiti, continuing to the present.<sup>24</sup>

Similar concerns were aroused by the most awesome virus of all, when Russia broke free of the West in October 1917. President Wilson and British prime minister David Lloyd George feared that the Bolshevik virus might infect other countries, even the United States and England. These concerns persisted into the 1960s, when the Soviet economy began to stagnate, largely because of the huge military programs undertaken in reaction to Kennedy's military buildup and his refusal to consider the offers of sharp mutual reduction in offensive weapons by Russian premier Nikita Khrushchev, who was hoping to avoid an arms race that would devastate the far weaker Soviet economy. That the Soviet Union was weaker militarily (and of course economically) had been understood on both sides.

The issue at the heart of the Cold War was described accurately by one of the most respected figures of Cold War scholarship, John Lewis Gaddis, who plausibly dates its origins to 1917-18. The immediate Allied intervention in 1918 was virtuous in intent, Gaddis explains: Woodrow Wilson was inspired "above all else" by his fervent desire "to secure self-determination in Russia"—that is, by forceful installation of the rulers we select. In accord with the same righteous vision, the United States was devoted to self-determination for Vietnam and Central America, the Kremlin was dedicated to self-determination in Afghanistan and Eastern Europe, and so on throughout history, as commonly proclaimed by the visionaries in charge.<sup>25</sup>

The 1918 Western invasion was really in self-defense, Gaddis explains, much as in the case of the Jackson-Adams liberation of Florida in self-defense against runaway Negroes and lawless Indians. The West's assault was undertaken "in response to a profound and potentially far-reaching intervention by the new Soviet government in the internal affairs, not just of the West, but of virtually every country in the world," namely, "the Revolution's challenge—which could hardly have been more categorical—to the very survival of the capitalist order." Accordingly, "the security of the United States [was] in danger" already in 1918. Gaddis criticizes Soviet historians who see the Western intervention as "shocking, unnatural, and even a violation of the legal norms that should exist between nations." This is plainly absurd, he responds. "One cannot have it both ways," complaining about a Western invasion while "the most profound revolutionary challenge of the century was mounted against the West"—by changing the social order in Russia and proclaiming revolutionary intentions.

After World War II, Gaddis continues, Russian aggression took a more virulent form, as "the increasing success of communist parties in Western Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and China" justifiably aroused renewed "suspicion about the Soviet Union's behavior," even though the parties' popularity "grew primarily out of their effectiveness as resistance fighters against the Axis." The appeal of the antifascist resistance required the United States and United Kingdom to move quickly, and often brutally, to dismantle the resistance and its accomplishments, particularly in northern Italy, where workers had taken over plants and the germs of a free self-governing society were beginning to flourish. The first National Security Council memorandum, in 1947, considered military intervention in Italy if Communists gained power by legal means, a position reiterated in NSC 5411/2 in 1954. Subversion of Italian democracy continued actively at least into the 1970s. A more general task in liberated areas was to undermine the labor movement and the left, while restoring much of the traditional political and economic structure, often returning fascist collaborators to positions of authority. Initiatives to subvert democracy continued for many years, in southern Europe particularly. Substantial efforts were also devoted to deterring the threat of

genuine democracy in Japan.<sup>26</sup>

In the postwar years, Washington's fears of infection extended far more broadly, as the United States became the world dominant power, supplanting Britain. The domino-virus theory was immediately invoked, under the Truman Doctrine, to justify massacres in Greece and reinstatement of the traditional order, including Nazi collaborators. For similar reasons, Washington backed the installation of Europe's first postwar fascist government in Greece in 1967, continuing its support until the dictatorship was overthrown in 1974. The concept was repeatedly deployed to justify destruction of parliamentary regimes and imposition of murderous dictatorships throughout much of the world in order to guarantee "stability" and control of vital resources (Middle East petroleum, in the case of Greece in the 1940s).

In 1948, George Kennan, head of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, warned that if Indonesia fell under "Communism," it could be an "infection [that] would sweep westward" through all of South Asia. For such reasons, Kennan held, "the problem of Indonesia [is] the most crucial issue of the moment in our struggle with the Kremlin"—which had little to do with Indonesia, apart from serving to create misimpressions. The threat of a "Communist Indonesia" was sufficiently severe for the Eisenhower administration to support a military rebellion, primarily out of fear of democracy: what scholarship calls a "party of the poor" was gaining too much political support for comfort. The threat of democracy was not overcome until the 1965 Suharto coup and the huge slaughter that immediately followed, establishing one of the most brutal regimes of the late twentieth century. There was no further concern about democracy, or about awesome human rights violations and war crimes. Suharto remained "our kind of guy," as the Clinton administration described him, until he committed his first real crime, in 1998: dragging his feet on IMF orders and losing control over the population. At that point he was instructed by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that the time had come for "democratic transition," though some, like Suharto's longtime advocate Paul Wolfowitz, continued to find him meritorious.<sup>27</sup>

The Indochina wars fall into the same pattern. The justifications put forth were the usual ones, though "defense against Communist aggression" had to be construed rather broadly. It was necessary to portray France as defending Vietnam from Vietnamese aggression while it sought to reconquer its former colony. Thus Canada's Nobel Peace Prize laureate Lester Pearson identified the outside threat to Vietnam as "Russian colonial authority," although there were no Russians in sight but tens of thousands of US-armed French forces in plain view. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff defined "aggression" in Southeast Asia to include "aggression other than armed, i.e., political warfare, or subversion." Adlai Stevenson and John F. Kennedy railed about "internal aggression" and an "assault from the inside . . . manipulated from the North." By the North, they meant the northern half of Vietnam, divided by the United States after it undermined the 1954 international agreement on unification and elections (which, it recognized, would have come out the wrong way).<sup>28</sup>

In January 1963, after reports of military success, Kennedy informed the country that "the spearpoint of aggression has been blunted in South Vietnam." His close adviser historian Arthur Schlesinger described 1962 as "not a bad year," with "aggression checked in Vietnam"; 1962 was the year when Kennedy sent the US Air Force to bomb South Vietnam, authorized the use of napalm and chemical warfare to destroy food crops and ground cover for the indigenous resistance, and began the programs to send millions of South Vietnamese to virtual concentration camps where they could be "protected" from the guerrillas who, admittedly, they were supporting. The administration's own primary sources reveal that the major provinces in the South were being taken over by indigenous forces roused to resistance by the brutal repression of the US client state in southern Vietnam, with only reluctant support from the northern part of the divided country. The public and internal record until Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 reveals no hint of departure from his insistence that the United States must stay the course until victory was achieved over "the assault from the inside." After the war became highly unpopular in the late 1960s, particularly after the 1968 Vietnamese Tet offensive turned elite sectors against the war, memoirists radically revised their accounts, while they and others produced "recollections" to support the doctrinally more acceptable view that Kennedy and others were secret doves. Very

secret. There is no credible trace of it in the record.<sup>29</sup>

Recent efforts to sustain the image of Kennedy as a secret dove have come up with a few scraps of evidence, which are interesting in their assumptions: they implicitly define a "dove" as someone who insists on assurance of victory before withdrawal, Kennedy's position throughout. One of the rare examples of nontrivial new evidence adduced in these efforts is a White House communication instructing John Kenneth Galbraith, the ambassador to India, to tell Indian foreign secretary M.J. Desai "that if Hanoi takes steps to reduce guerrilla activity, we would correspond [*sic*] accordingly," and if Hanoi were to "stop the activity entirely, we would withdraw to a normal basis."<sup>30</sup> In short, if Hanoi will somehow find a way to terminate the indigenous rebellion against the US-imposed terror state, then the United States will leave its client in place and be satisfied with victory. The Kremlin would have been happy to convey a similar offer with regard to Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The real reasons for the US assault on Indochina are conventional. Washington feared that an independent Vietnam might be a virus infecting others, perhaps even resource-rich Indonesia, and eventually leading Japan—the "superdomino," as Asia historian John Dower termed it—to accommodate to an independent Asian mainland, becoming its industrial center. That would in effect have established the New Order that Japan sought to create by conquest in the 1930s. The United States was not prepared to lose the Pacific phase of World War II shortly after its military victory. The pre-World War II diplomatic record indicates that there was no fundamental objection to Japan's New Order as long as the United States maintained free access to it. And with its much broader postwar ambitions, Washington intended to provide Japan with "some sort of empire toward the south," in George Kennan's phrase, something like the New Order but within the US-dominated global system, and therefore acceptable. Other "functions" of the region, as outlined by Kennan's staff, were to ensure that Britain have access to the resources of its former Asian colonies, and to facilitate the "triangular trade" patterns that were to be the basis of the postwar reconstruction of Europe and the creation of markets and investment opportunities for US corporations, then moving to the multinational stage. These plans might have been disrupted by a Vietnamese virus, if it were not contained.<sup>31</sup>

The proper way to deal with a virus is to destroy it, and to inoculate those who might be infected. In this case, the virus was destroyed by demolishing Indochina. The broader region was then inoculated by the establishment of harsh military dictatorships in the countries susceptible to infection. Indonesia was protected by the "staggering mass slaughter" of 1965, a "gleam of light in Asia," the *New York Times* exulted. The reaction captured the undisguised Western euphoria over the outcome of the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people, mostly landless peasants, and the destruction of the only mass-based political party, the Indonesian Communist Party, as the country was opened up to free Western exploitation by crimes that the CIA compared to those of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao.<sup>32</sup>

The essential logic of the Indochina wars was articulated by Kennedy-Johnson national security adviser McGeorge Bundy. He observed in retrospect that "our effort" in Vietnam was "excessive" after 1965, when Indonesia was safely inoculated.<sup>33</sup> The basic war aims had been achieved. By the late 1960s the US business community had come to realize that it was pointless to extend the war, which by then was harming the US economy, largely because the antiwar movement compelled Washington to follow a costly "guns and butter" policy instead of calling a national mobilization that could have been beneficial for the economy, as during World War II, a popular war. Elite opinion and government policy shifted accordingly.

Across the political spectrum, the outcome is described as an "American defeat," which is true if we keep to maximal aims: the United States did not manage to impose client states in Indochina, and the "credibility" of US power was perhaps marginally harmed. But in terms of its basic war aims, the United States prevailed, as one would expect given the enormous disparity of means of violence.

The public version of the domino theory maintained that Ho Chi Minh would conquer Southeast Asia, Nicaragua would take over Central America and soon after the hordes would be sweeping over Texas, with the Russians only a footstep behind, and so on. The public version is commonly

derided as a "naive error" after it has served its function of creating misimpressions at home. The internal version of the domino theory, however, is never abandoned, because it is plausible: successful independent development and steps toward democracy, out of US control, might well have a domino effect, inspiring others who face similar problems to pursue the same course, thus eroding the global system of domination. That is why it was constantly necessary to sell intervention by creating the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting—or China, or the Sino-Soviet axis, or the Huns (Woodrow Wilson's pretext for invading Haiti and the Dominican Republic), or narco-traffickers—or whatever can be conjured up. On these matters, the documentary record is rich, and remarkably consistent.

Such misimpressions commonly provide the framework not only for public discourse but also for the intelligence services. Perhaps the most striking example, considerably more significant than the much-discussed case of Iraq, is revealed in the Pentagon Papers. When Washington decided to support France's reconquest of Vietnam, intelligence was instructed to demonstrate that the Viet Minh resistance was a mere tool of Russia or China (or both). With great effort, intelligence was able to discover only that Hanoi appeared to be the one place in the region lacking such contacts. That was taken to be proof that Ho Chi Minh was such a loyal puppet he had "a special dispensation," with no need for instructions. US intelligence was so deeply indoctrinated that for the two-decade period recorded in the Pentagon Papers, up to 1968, it was scarcely able even to entertain the possibility that North Vietnam might be pursuing national interests rather than serving as a loyal puppet of its masters—hardly in question, whatever one thinks of Hanoi. The South Vietnamese resistance (NLF) was simply dismissed, except on the ground, where it was the commanding presence.<sup>34</sup>

### **“Unquestioned Power”**

Prior to World War II, the United States, though by far the world's richest economy, had not been a major global actor. Its reach extended to its own region with forays into the Pacific and, by the 1920s, initiatives began to gain a share of the vast energy resources of the Middle East. But even before the United States entered the war, high-level planners and foreign policy advisers recognized that it should be able "to hold unquestioned power" in the new global system, ensuring the "limitation of any exercise of sovereignty" by states that might interfere with its designs. They also developed "an integrated policy to achieve military and economic supremacy for the United States" in the "Grand Area," which was to include at least the Western Hemisphere, the former British empire, and the Far East. As the war progressed, and it became clear that "Soviet military power . . . had crushed Hitler's Reich," Grand Area planning was extended to include as much of Eurasia as possible.<sup>35</sup> Since that time the world has undergone many dramatic changes, but no less striking—and of far-reaching significance for the future—are the fundamental continuities in these policies, with tactical modifications and shifting of justifications adapted to circumstances.

During World War II, Joseph Stalin became an ally, the beloved "Uncle Joe," as Russia first endured and then beat back the Nazi wave. "It cannot be overemphasized," historian Omer Bartov writes, "that however criminal and odious Stalin's regime surely was, without the Red Army and its horrendous blood sacrifice, the Wehrmacht would not have been defeated and Nazism would have remained a fact in Europe for many generations."<sup>36</sup> Roosevelt scholar Warren Kimball concludes that "when military assessments pointed out that only the Red Army could achieve victory over Hitler in a land war, aid to the Soviet Union became a presidential priority" on the assumption that the Russian army would grind Germany down and keep US soldiers out of a land war. Roosevelt's strategy was for the United States to be the reserves, he confided privately. Nevertheless, "Roosevelt treated the aid-to-Russia program more as a matter of 'good faith' than for its value to the Soviet war effort," Kimball adds, estimating its value at about 10 percent of Russian production, making it critical but secondary to Roosevelt's broader plans. His design, unchanged to the end, Gaddis observes, was that US allies should "do most of the fighting" in Europe, so as "to keep [US] casualties to a minimum." "Allies" meant mostly Russians: for every US soldier who died fighting the war, "some 60 Russians were doing so." A corresponding intention, largely achieved, was that

in the Pacific the United States would have total domination, with no interference from allies or even participation from "the major victims of Japanese aggression."<sup>37</sup>

In the early stages of the war, Harry Truman's view was simple: "if we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible," what political scientist Timothy Crawford calls a "pivotal strategy [to] prolong war." Truman's generally pragmatic view was tempered, however, by his genuine affection and admiration for "old Joe," whom he regarded as "a decent fellow [who] can't do what he wants to" because, as Truman put it in 1948, he is "a prisoner of the Politburo." Truman stopped expressing such views publicly when his advisers convinced him that doing so was "a damaging blunder." But in private he continued to describe old Joe as "honest" and "straightforward," "as near like Tom Pendergast as any man I know," referring to the Missouri boss who launched his political career. As president, Truman felt that he could get along with the tyrant as long as the United States got its way 85 percent of the time.<sup>38</sup>

War planners took a much dimmer view. The British in particular regarded the Western-Soviet wartime alliance as an "aberration" from the start. From early 1944 Western military intelligence was "marking the Soviets as the next enemy" and withholding crucial information about German forces from the Russians while obtaining "superbly detailed and accurate" information about Russian military forces. Almost all Western-Russian intelligence cooperation ceased by the end of 1944, and British and US intelligence began gathering information for air attacks against Russia. Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, the British wartime chief of the Imperial General Staff, had always loathed what he called "this semi-Asiatic race," who were perhaps almost as degraded as the "little yellow dwarf slaves" in Japan who disgusted Sir Alexander Cadogan, the senior official at the Foreign Office. Brooke concluded in 1943 that the USSR "cannot fail to become the main threat" after the war, so that it would be necessary to "foster Germany, gradually build her up and bring her into the Federation of Western Europe," though it was a difficult policy to carry out "under the cloak of a holy alliance between England, Russia and America." Richard Aldrich observes that "like Harry S. Truman in Washington," Brooke and his deputy General Henry Pownall "rejoiced to see [Germany and Russia] going for each other with vigor." By late 1944, the British military was producing war plans, including rearming of Germany, for the planned attack against Russia. British intelligence had also found " 'super-secret' appreciations of the Soviet Union as the next enemy that were circulating in Washington."<sup>39</sup>

In May 1945, as the war against Germany ended, Churchill ordered war plans to be drawn up for "Operation Unthinkable." His "stated objective was 'the elimination of Russia,'" Aldrich writes. The plans, only declassified in 1999, "called for a surprise attack by hundreds of thousands of British and American troops, joined by 100,000 rearmed German soldiers," while the Royal Air Force "would attack Soviet cities from bases in Northern Europe." Nuclear weapons were soon added to the mix. Earlier Cadogan had raged about how the Russians are "dominated by an almost insane suspicion," requiring "infinite patience" as we try to deal with them "as though we thought they were reasonable human beings."<sup>40</sup>

The dilemma is a persistent one in attempts to deal with the *unpeople* of the world. Thirty years after the criminal atrocities he directed, Robert McNamara was still puzzling over the unwillingness of the South Vietnamese resistance to lay down their arms and become part of an "independent, non-Communist South Vietnam," following the path of Indonesia, which had "reversed course" after the killing of "300,000 or more PKI members . . . and now lay in the hands of independent nationalists led by Suharto."<sup>41</sup>

How could the Vietnamese not appreciate the merits of the bright future McNamara was recommending to them? Perhaps the answer is the one Henry Kissinger offered in his musings at the same time about "the deepest problem of the contemporary international order," nothing like starvation or war, but rather the "difference of philosophical perspective" that separates the West, which "is deeply committed to the notion that the real world is external to the observer," from the rest of the world, which still believes "that the real world is almost completely *internal* to the observer." Perhaps that is why the Vietnamese did not react rationally to our efforts to bomb them to the negotiating table where we offered them the fate of the PKI in independent Indonesia. The

Russians, Kissinger continued, are poised uneasily astride the great divide of philosophical perspective. And they are particularly difficult to deal with because of their delusion "that 'objective' factors such as the social structure, the economic process, and above all the class struggle are more important than the personal convictions of statesmen." Hence they do not "accept protestations of good will at face value," as we do.<sup>42</sup>

A few years after the end of World War II, British assessments began to change. By 1951, the retiring director of naval intelligence, Vice Admiral Eric Longley-Cook, informed the "innermost circle [that] the stolid Russians were a force for stability in the world system," seeking to further their objectives by "psychological or economic means but 'not a general military offensive.'" He suggested that "the main threat to strategic stability and indeed to the survival of the United Kingdom came from America," which is preparing for "a shooting war with the Soviet Union" from which the United States would be secure, while Britain might be destroyed.<sup>43</sup>

These fears would only have been exacerbated by the rhetoric of NSC 68, had it been known. Formulated in 1950, shortly before the Korean War, NSC 68 is recognized to be a founding document of the contemporary world order, widely cited in scholarship, though much of the contents is generally ignored, including the scattered data revealing Soviet military weakness relative to the West and the remarkable rhetorical framework of the document.<sup>44</sup> NSC 68 was drafted by Paul Nitze under the direction of Dean Acheson, two of the "wise men" who are honored for their sobriety and thoughtfulness in creating the new world order of the day. They contrast the "fundamental design [of the] slave state" with the "fundamental purpose" of the United States. The "implacable purpose" and inherent "compulsion" of the slave state is to gain "absolute authority over the rest of the world," destroying all governments and the "structure of society" everywhere. Its ultimate evil contrasts with our sheer perfection. The "fundamental purpose" of the United States is to assure "the dignity and worth of the individual" everywhere. Its leaders are animated by "generous and constructive impulses, and the absence of covetousness in our international relations," qualities particularly evident in the traditional domains of US influence, which have enjoyed the privilege of "our long continuing endeavors to create and now develop the Inter-American system." Hence the admiration for US power south of the border.

By comparison with the Truman administration wise men who were "present at the creation," the rhetoric about Good and Evil that Bush's speech writers plagiarize from ancient epics and children's fairy tales seems rather subdued.

The basic continuity of policy was illustrated again when the Soviet Union collapsed, offering new opportunities along with the need for new misimpressions. The assault on Cuba was intensified, but re-framed: it was no longer defense against the Russians, but rather Washington's sincere dedication to democracy that required strangulation of Cuba and US-based terror. The sudden shift of pretexts elicited little reflection, in fact no detectable notice. (As we see directly, the model was followed closely in 2003 after the collapse of the pretexts for invading Iraq.) Bush's invasion of Panama immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was in itself hardly more than a footnote to the history of the region. But it, too, revealed changes. One was pointed out by Reaganite State Department official Elliott Abrams, who observed that "Bush probably is going to be increasingly willing to use force" now that there was little fear of its leading to a Russian reaction. In Panama, too, new pretexts were needed: not the Russian menace, but narco-trafficking by Noriega, a longtime CIA asset who was becoming uncooperative (embellished with a few tales about threats to Americans). In August 1990, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the United States and United Kingdom felt free to place a huge expeditionary force in the Saudi Arabian desert in their buildup to the January 1991 invasion, no longer deterred by the superpower rival.<sup>45</sup>

With the Cold War no longer available, it was necessary to reframe pretexts not only for intervention but also for militarized state capitalism at home. The Pentagon budget presented to Congress a few months after the fall of the Berlin Wall remained largely unchanged, but was packaged in a new rhetorical framework, presented in the National Security Strategy of March 1990. One priority was to support advanced industry in traditional ways, in sharp violation of the free market doctrines proclaimed and imposed on others. The National Security Strategy called for

strengthening "the defense industrial base" (essentially, high-tech industry) with incentives "to invest in new facilities and equipment as well as in research and development." As in the past, the costs and risks of the coming phases of the industrial economy were to be socialized, with eventual profits privatized, a form of state socialism for the rich on which much of the advanced US economy relies, particularly since World War II, but with precedents in the advanced economies back to the early days of the industrial revolution.<sup>46</sup> In the past several decades, Pentagon funding for research and development has declined, while support through the National Institutes of Health and other "health-related" components of the state sector has increased, as the cutting edge of the economy of the future shifts from electronics- to biology-based industry. The longtime chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan and other ideologues may hail the wonders of "entrepreneurial initiative," "consumer choice," and "free trade," but those who channel public funds to development of the economy and those who profit from these decisions know better.<sup>47</sup>

It is sometimes argued that concealing development of high-tech industry under the cover of "defense" has been a valuable contribution to society. Those who do not share that contempt for democracy might ask what decisions the population would have made if they had been informed of the real options and allowed to choose among them. Perhaps they might have preferred more social spending for health, education, decent housing, a sustainable environment for future generations, and support for the United Nations, international law, and diplomacy, as polls regularly show. We can only guess, since fear of democracy barred the option of allowing the public into the political arena, or even informing them about what was being done in their name.

The justification for sustaining the dynamic state sector of the economy had to be revised in the light of new contingencies after the end of the Cold War. Since the reason could no longer be the threat of Russian aggression, it became "the growing technological sophistication of Third World conflicts," which "will place serious demands on our forces" and "continue to threaten US interests," even without "the backdrop of superpower competition." The same revision was needed for the second function of the Pentagon: ensuring global "stability," the code word for obedience. In the "new era" after the Cold War, the administration explained, "we foresee that our military power will remain an essential underpinning of the global balance, but less prominently and in different ways. We see that the more likely demands for the use of our military forces may not involve the Soviet Union and may be in the Third World, where new capabilities and approaches may be required"—in fact, very much the old approaches but with new pretexts accompanying the new capabilities. "In the future, we expect that non-Soviet threats to [US] interests will command even greater attention"—in reality, comparable attention but adjusted to circumstances, both in deed and in word. As before, we must have the means "to reinforce our units forward deployed or to project power into areas where we have no permanent presence." This is necessary, particularly in the Middle East, because of "the free world's reliance on energy supplies from this pivotal region," where the "threats to our interests" that require direct military engagement cannot "be laid at the Kremlin's door"—contrary to decades of pretense, now shelved as useless. The sudden revisions elicited no comment. At the time, Saddam Hussein was not among the non-Soviet threats. Rather, he was still a favored friend and ally and recipient of ample aid and support.<sup>48</sup>

Military commanders echoed the political echelon, emphasizing that the end of the Cold War would not change security policies significantly: "In fact, the majority of the crises we have responded to since the end of World War II have not directly involved the Soviet Union," marine general A.M. Gray observed, quite accurately, in May 1990. The problems remain, as before, insurgencies resulting from "the underdeveloped world's growing dissatisfaction over the gap between rich and poor nations," which may "jeopardize regional stability and our access to vital economic and military resources," on which the United States and its allies will become "more and more dependent." We must therefore "maintain within our active force structure a credible military power projection capability with the flexibility to respond to conflict across the spectrum of violence throughout the globe," to ensure "unimpeded access" both to "developing economic markets throughout the world" and "to the resources needed to support our manufacturing requirements."<sup>49</sup>

This basic thinking remained in force a decade later. New millennium intelligence projections expect "globalization" (in the standard doctrinal sense) to continue on course. "Its evolution will be

rocky, marked by chronic financial volatility and a widening economic divide." It will bring "deepening economic stagnation, political instability, and cultural alienation," which will "foster ethnic, ideological and religious extremism, along with the violence that often accompanies it," much of that violence directed against the United States. A 2004 intelligence update expects "the perceptions of the contradictions and uncertainties of a globalized world [to] come even more to the fore than is the case today," as "gaps will widen between those countries benefiting from globalization . . . and those underdeveloped nations or pockets within nations that are left behind." The "pockets" happen to be immense, dramatically so in the poster children of "globalization."<sup>50</sup>

The 2004 intelligence assessment also warns that "over the next 15 years the increasing centrality of ethical issues, old and new" has "the potential to divide worldwide publics and challenge US leadership" on such matters as "the environment and climate change, privacy, cloning and biotechnology, human rights, international law regulating conflict, and the role of multilateral institutions." The United States "increasingly will have to battle world public opinion, which has dramatically shifted since the end of the Cold War," a subdued allusion to the fact that the Bush II administration significantly increased fear and often hatred of the United States.<sup>51</sup>

Huntington's observations about the need to create misimpressions to control the domestic population illustrate what should be the merest truism: professions of benign intent by leaders should be dismissed by any rational observer. They are near universal and predictable, and hence carry virtually no information. The worst monsters—Hitler, Stalin, Japanese fascists, Suharto, Saddam Hussein, and many others—have produced moving flights of rhetoric about their nobility of purpose. The same holds for "Peace Institutes" and "Endowments for Democracy." If we are serious, we will ask about their actions, paying little attention to their words, an elementary observation that has inspired a rich literature from Pascal to Zamyatin to Orwell.

### **"The Democratization Bandwagon"**

With all of this in mind, let us turn to Iraq and the revived passion for "democracy promotion" that is held to be central to Bush's "grand strategy."

Welcoming the Iraqi elections in January 2005, the foreign minister of Iran declared that Iran "supports the wishes of Iraqi citizens for a democratic government, living prosperously in a unified nation and expecting peaceful relationships with their neighbors," a fully sovereign Iraq in a stable and peaceful region of democratic states. Rational observers will view Iran's dedication to democracy promotion with due skepticism. And the same should be true when Bush, Blair, Rice, and their associates issue similar pronouncements. Far more so, in fact, for reasons that it takes some effort to ignore. The most glaring is occasionally—though very rarely—articulated. Thus Middle East specialist Augustus Richard Norton writes that "as fantasies about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction were unmasked, the Bush administration increasingly stressed the democratic transformation of Iraq, and scholars jumped on the democratization bandwagon." Before the fantasies were unmasked, there was, of course, occasional invocation of the standard pieties about democratic transformation, but not beyond the usual meaningless norm. In the documents reviewed in the most extensive study of the justifications for the Iraq invasion, by John Prados, such terms as "democracy" are not even indexed.<sup>52</sup>

To put it plainly, while asking us to appreciate the sincerity of their eloquent orations about their sudden conversion to "democratic transformation," US and UK leaders were also informing us that they are brazen liars, since they had driven their countries to war because of a "single question": will Saddam abandon his WMD programs? By August 2003, when the tale was falling to pieces, the press reported that "as the search for illegal weapons in Iraq continues without success, the Bush administration has moved to emphasize a different rationale for the war against Saddam Hussein: using Iraq as the 'linchpin' to transform the Middle East and thereby reduce the terrorist threat to the United States"—more accurately risk *enhancing* the terrorist threat, which happened, as even their own intelligence agencies confirm.<sup>53</sup>

The timing alone suffices to undermine the credibility of the "different rationale," and that is only the bare beginning. Nonetheless, the new rationale quickly became holy writ. The sincerity of our



leader passed beyond challenge after the president's address on "Freedom in Iraq and Middle East" at the twentieth anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington on November 6, 2003. The "single question" was dispatched to the memory hole, replaced by Bush's "messianic mission" to bring democracy to the Middle East in what "may be the most idealistic war fought in modern times," inspired by "idealist in chief" Paul Wolfowitz.<sup>54</sup>

With considerable effort, I have found only the rarest exceptions to this stance in media and intellectual commentary, though there are indeed critics, who warn that the "noble" and "generous" vision may be beyond our reach. It may be too costly, or the beneficiaries may be too backward to benefit from our solicitude. Some skeptics agree with New York University law professor Noah Feldman, who was assigned the task of teaching Iraqis about democracy and preparing their constitution (against their will), but warned that "if you move too fast"—that is, as fast as Iraqis wanted to—"the wrong people could get elected." More generally, David Brooks explained, as "Noah Feldman . . . observes, people in the Middle East don't always act rationally," despite our patient tutelage and Britain's before us.<sup>55</sup>

Evidence for the Brooks-Feldman assessment of people in the Middle East was provided just as President Bush formally revealed his messianic mission at the National Endowment for Democracy anniversary celebration. A Gallup poll in Baghdad provided the opportunity for respondents to join Western intellectuals in leaping on the "democratization bandwagon," but some failed to do so: 99 percent. Asked why they thought the United States invaded Iraq, 1 percent felt that the goal was to bring democracy and 5 percent that the goal was "to assist the Iraqi people." Most of the rest assumed that the goal was to take control of Iraq's resources and to reorganize the Middle East in US and Israeli interests—the "conspiracy theory" derided by rational Westerners, who understand that Washington and London would have been just as dedicated to the "liberation of Iraq" if its chief exports happened to be lettuce and pickles rather than petroleum.<sup>56</sup>

The irrationality and backwardness of the people of the Middle East has repeatedly been demonstrated, once again in September 2005, when the White House sent public relations specialist Karen Hughes to explain to them that they fail to understand Washington's dedication to their welfare and freedom. But her "I'm a mom" exercise in public diplomacy did not work too well. The problem, the press explained, was that she kept to "concise sound bites rather than sustained arguments. In American campaigns, such messages repeated over and over can have an effect because a presidential candidate dominates the news with every statement he makes, and if that fails to work, money can be poured into saturation advertising. By contrast, in the lively and percussive environment of this region, Ms. Hughes came nowhere near the commanding heights of the media." In brief, sound bites, media amplification, and saturation advertising are not effective among primitive people who think that sustained argument and lively discussion are components of democracy. The lesson is apparently not easy to learn. At a debate at the American University in Beirut a few weeks later, Juliet Wurr, the public affairs officer at the US embassy in Lebanon, explained to the audience that the United States seeks to "reach out to people in order to achieve US policy objectives" by promoting the "4Es": exchange, engagement, education, and empowerment. Apparently, that fell flat in Beirut, where the environment has long been particularly "lively and percussive." The task of "democracy promotion" is plainly a difficult one.<sup>57</sup>

Still, Richard Norton is a bit unfair to scholarship. Some scholars did recognize that it was only *after* the "single question" had been definitively answered the wrong way that "President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair began speaking passionately about the importance of bringing 'democracy and freedom' to Iraq and the Middle East" in an "after-the-fact justification of the war," which evidently cannot be taken seriously. But outside of scholarship, and almost invariably within, Norton's observation is depressingly accurate.<sup>58</sup>

Quite apart from the timing, faith in the conversion is a little difficult to sustain in light of the behavior of the missionaries barely moments before. The Bush and Blair exploits in evading the perils of democracy as they proceeded with the invasion of Iraq in 2002 have already been reviewed. This rather significant illustration aside, it is hard to recall any display of contempt for democracy as clear as the distinction between Old Europe and New Europe announced by Donald Rumsfeld during the buildup to the invasion, and eagerly taken up by commentators and the

political class. The criteria distinguishing the categories were sharp, clear, and highly instructive. One distinguishing criterion illuminates the operative concept of democracy: Old Europe consists of the countries in which the government took the same stand on the war as the large majority of the population, whereas in New Europe governments overruled even larger majorities and took orders from Crawford, Texas. Therefore Old Europe is to be disparaged and New Europe lauded as the hope for democracy and enlightenment.<sup>59</sup>

The most honored representatives of New Europe were the renowned democratic figures Silvio Berlusconi and Jose Maria Aznar. Berlusconi was rewarded by a visit to the White House, in recognition of the fact that 80 percent of the Italian population opposed the war that he endorsed (or perhaps in honor of his reconstruction of the Italian judiciary so as to escape conviction on charges of corruption). Aznar received an even greater reward. He was invited to join Bush and Blair at the Azores summit announcing the invasion of Iraq, shortly after polls in Spain revealed that he was backed in his support for war by 2 percent of the population.<sup>60</sup>

The display of hatred for democracy reached its peak when the government of Turkey, to general surprise, actually followed the will of 95 percent of the population and rejected Washington's commands to allow the US military to open a front from Turkey into Iraq. Turkey was bitterly condemned in the national press for lacking "democratic credentials." Colin Powell announced harsh punishment for this defection from good order. Paul Wolfowitz took the most extreme position. He berated the Turkish military for not compelling the government to follow Washington's orders, and demanded that military leaders apologize and say, "We made a mistake" by overruling virtually unanimous public opinion. "Let's figure out how we can be as helpful as possible to the Americans," they should say, thus demonstrating their understanding of democracy. No wonder he was declared "idealist in chief," whose sole flaw might be that he is "too idealistic—that his passion for the noble goals of the Iraq war might overwhelm the prudence and pragmatism that normally guide war planners."<sup>61</sup>

The evaluation of Wolfowitz in the elite press is instructive. His "passion is the advance of democracy," Sebastian Mallaby declares in the *Washington Post*. In another admiring account, Andrew Balls writes in the *Financial Times* that "promotion of democracy has been one of the most consistent themes of his career." No evidence is cited apart from Wolfowitz's self-image. Praising Wolfowitz's qualifications to take over as the new head of the World Bank in 2005, Mallaby writes that his "main exposure to development comes from his time as ambassador in Indonesia, which combined miraculous poverty reduction with state intervention." And his experience in Indonesia will be particularly significant because of the "new consensus" in Washington that "holds that the chief challenge in poor countries is ... to fight the corruption that deters private investment and to create the rule of law."<sup>62</sup>

A look at the actual record is revealing. Jeffrey Winters, an academic specialist on Indonesia, writes that Wolfowitz's main achievement in the economic sphere as ambassador to Indonesia was to help "set the stage" for the 1997 "collapse of the Indonesian economy under Suharto, a tragedy that plunged tens of millions into abject poverty." Wolfowitz's most important initiative was to sponsor "one of the most reckless deregulations of a banking sector ever undertaken," which led to economic collapse and widespread misery. Suharto, Wolfowitz's favorite, meanwhile earned "the dubious title of being the most corrupt world leader in recent history," a "clear winner, according to British-based Transparency International," having amassed a family fortune "estimated at anything between fifteen billion and thirty-five billion US dollars," far outstripping second-place Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and third-place Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo, also members in good standing in the rogues' gallery of the administrations in which Wolfowitz served. Wolfowitz has further credentials in development, having been the architect of postwar reconstruction in Iraq, which, Transparency International warned, "could become the biggest corruption scandal in history if strict anti-bribery measures are not adopted rapidly."<sup>63</sup> They were not, and the prediction is well on its way to verification, as we have seen. Clearly "Wolfie," as GWB affectionately calls him, has impressive qualifications to carry forward the new consensus on fighting corruption and promoting economic development.

The idealist in chief's "record from his Indonesia days on human rights and democracy is even

worse," Winters continues. "In a Lexis-Nexis search of every mention of Wolfowitz in the press during his years as ambassador, there is not one instance where he is quoted as speaking up on human rights or democracy in Indonesia. Instead, he is consistently apologetic for the Suharto regime, always turning the focus toward matters of business, investment, and the local and regional stability the iron-fisted Suharto helped promote." Wolfowitz not only intervened to "undercut the Australian journalists who focused attention on a murderous and torturing American ally in Southeast Asia, but he lectured the Australians on how to handle an embarrassing flap . . . —play it down, ignore it." His "cowardly behavior prompted a rare rebuke from the head of the Australian government." Wolfowitz was "specifically singled out for criticism by Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke for his comments."<sup>64</sup>

Wolfowitz's candidacy for World Bank president immediately "triggered criticism from rights activists in Indonesia." The head of Indonesia's state-sponsored National Human Rights Commission reported that "of all former US ambassadors, he was considered closest to and most influential with Suharto and his family. But he never showed interest in issues regarding democratization or respect of human rights," and never even visited the commission's office. "I also never heard him publicly mention corruption, not once," the commission's head added. Other human rights and anticorruption activists also said that "they do not remember his speaking out against the abuses" of the regime and "never felt Mr Wolfowitz was on their side." They pointed out further that Wolfowitz "remained a defender of the Suharto regime through the 1990s," well past the time when this world-class mass murderer, torturer, and robber had been overthrown from within.<sup>65</sup>

The record of Wolfowitz's "passion" for human rights and democracy goes back to his early days in Reagan's State Department and continues to the present, without notable change. Regional academic specialist Joseph Nevins writes that, throughout his tenure as ambassador and since, Wolfowitz consistently "championed policies that undermine democracy and human rights in the sprawling archipelago," and supported the appalling atrocities carried out by the Indonesian army (TNI) in occupied East Timor. In early 1999, Nevins writes, "when it looked as if Indonesia might consider leaving East Timor, Wolfowitz argued against US policies promoting such a scenario. Employing language long utilized by Jakarta, he predicted that if Indonesia were to withdraw, East Timor, due to tribal and clan-based tensions, would descend into civil war. Only the TNI had prevented such an outcome, according to Wolfowitz." At that time, the TNI was escalating its atrocities, and soon practically destroyed what little remained of the tortured country in a final paroxysm of violence. "Human rights groups report continuing widespread military atrocities," Nevins continues, "especially in Aceh and West Papua." Indonesian political and military leaders were absolved from responsibility in East Timor in fraudulent trials condemned by human rights organizations, but easily tolerated by Western participants in their crimes. Visiting Jakarta in January 2005, Wolfowitz called for increasing the US military aid and training that have plagued Indonesians and others within the reach of the TNI for the past forty years. The "humanitarian guise" of his mission was tsunami relief, Nevins writes, but its "real significance lies in his effort to strengthen US ties with Indonesia's brutal military, TNI, a role that he has long played."<sup>66</sup>

Bush and associates continued to pursue the president's democratizing mission in the traditional domains of US power as well. In 2002, they supported a military coup to overthrow the elected government of Venezuela, headed by Hugo Chavez, but had to slink away in the face of overwhelming condemnation in Latin America, where democracy is not considered as "quaint" and "obsolete" as it is in Washington. After a popular uprising restored the government, Washington turned to subversion, under the guise of "supporting democracy"—a familiar pattern. Thus, after decertifying Venezuela for alleged noncooperation with US drug operations in the region, Washington "waived the cuts in US foreign aid usually attached to 'decertification' so that it can continue to support Venezuelan pro-democracy groups that oppose the leftist Chavez."<sup>67</sup>

The concept is interesting. While Washington's right to support anti-Chavez groups in Venezuela cannot be questioned, there might perhaps be some eyebrows raised if Iran were funding anti-Bush groups in the United States, particularly if it did so right after having supported a military coup to overthrow the government. It is also apparently taken to be a logical impossibility

that some groups supporting Chavez might be "pro-democracy." That is proven by Washington's opposition to the government. Accordingly, it can have no relevance that Chavez has repeatedly won monitored elections and referenda despite overwhelming and bitter media hostility, that his popularity ratings are at 80 percent, or that Latin America's major polling organization, Latinobarometro, found in 2004 that while satisfaction with democracy continues its ominous decline throughout Latin America (in striking parallel to the march of neoliberal programs that undermine functioning democracy), there were three exceptions: leading the list was Venezuela, where support for democracy climbed from 64 percent to 74 percent between 1997 and 2004. The country now leads all countries in Latin America in support for its elected government.<sup>68</sup>

In contrast, most US citizens believe that the public has little influence on government decisions and few believe that Congress will conform to "the decisions the majority of Americans would make." US citizens rank their own government below Britain, Sweden, Canada, and others on the scale ranging from not democratic at all to completely democratic.<sup>69</sup>

Further proof of the antidemocratic character of Chavez supporters in Venezuela was his performance at the September 2005 UN Summit, where he "generated the loudest burst of applause for a world leader at the summit with his unbridled attack on what he characterized as US militarism and capitalism." This outlandish characterization of the United States as capitalist and militaristic reveals that he has "taken on the mantle of the bad boy of UN summitry." Off the radar screen is what Americans can read in Ireland's leading journal by the veteran Latin American correspondent Hugh O'Shaughnessy, which helps explain the basis for the applause without resort to Bush-style wailing about how the world hates us because we are so good:

In Venezuela, where an oil economy has over the decades produced a sparkling elite of super-rich, a quarter of under-15s go hungry, for instance, and 60 per cent of people over 59 have no income at all. Less than a fifth of the population enjoys social security. Only now under President Chavez, the former parachute colonel elected to office in 1998, has medicine started to become something of a reality for the poverty-stricken majority in the rich but deeply divided—virtually non-functioning—society. Since he won power in democratic elections and began to transform the health and welfare sector which catered so badly to the mass of the population progress has been slow. But it has been perceptible—not least because Venezuela has joined with Cuba in a joint health strategy which has brought perhaps 20,000 Cuban doctors and other health professionals here and spread them around the country from Caracas to remote spots where Venezuelan doctors refuse to serve.

"Operation Miracle" is spreading the model to the Caribbean, with significant impact among the poor majority, it appears.<sup>70</sup>

In March 2004, concerned that elections in El Salvador might come out the wrong way, the democracy promotion missionaries warned that if Salvadorans made the wrong choice, the country's lifeline—remittances from the United States, a crucial pillar of the "economic miracle"—might be cut, among other consequences. They also clarified their mission by offering their achievements in El Salvador as a model for Iraq. In reaction to the favorable coverage of this audacious stand, one of the leading academic specialists on Central America, Thomas Walker, distributed an op-ed to newspapers around the country describing the "free elections" under US domination hailed by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and others. These elections, he reminds us, "were held against a backdrop of state-sponsored terror which had taken the lives of tens of thousands of innocent civilians, crippled civil society, and completely silenced the opposition media." The candidates, moreover, were limited to "a narrow spectrum from center to far right"; voter abstention was threatened with murder, and votes were cast using sequentially numbered, identifiable ballots "deposited in clear plastic boxes in front of armed soldiers—so translucent that [the ballots] could be read even when duly folded."<sup>71</sup>

This was clearly the wrong story; the op-ed was rejected. That came as no surprise to Walker. He is also the author of the major scholarly studies of Nicaragua, and through the 1980s, when Nicaragua was the top story of the day, he sent several op-eds a year to the *New York Times*. None appeared. Again, the wrong story. A review of op-eds and editorials in the liberal national

press at the peak moments of coverage of Nicaragua revealed the familiar split between hawks and doves, about fifty-fifty, demonstrating the balance and openness in the free press. The hawks called for escalating the international terrorist assault. The doves countered that violence was not succeeding, so the United States should find other means to compel Nicaraguans to adhere to the "Central American mode" and adopt the "regional standards" of Washington's preferred states, El Salvador and Guatemala, then engaged in gruesome state terror. Walker and Latin American specialists generally fell outside of this spectrum and thus were virtually ignored, sometimes in startling ways. One example, again bearing on "democracy promotion," was the 1984 Nicaragua elections, which had doctrinally unacceptable results—the Sandinistas won—and therefore *did not take place*, though they were closely observed and generally approved, including by hostile observers and a delegation of specialists on Nicaragua sent by the professional association of Latin America scholars, all suppressed. One of those observers was Jose Figueres of Costa Rica, who joined in pronouncing the 1984 elections fair by Latin American standards and was also ignored. More generally, though passionately anti-Communist and anti-Sandinista, and a strong supporter of Washington and US corporate investors, he felt that Nicaraguans should be left to deal with their own problems in their own way. Consequently, the leading figure of Central American democracy was barred from the press throughout the years of Reagan's terrorist wars in the region, or in the preferred version, the years of dedication to "democracy promotion." A familiar practice, as we have seen.<sup>72</sup>

In praising the Salvadoran model, Bush administration democracy-promoters failed to mention one of the important contributions of Reagan's "war on terror." In Iraq, the private security firms that are the second-largest component of the "coalition of the willing are dipping into experienced pools of trained fighters," almost 70 percent from El Salvador, it is estimated. The trained killers from the Reagan-run state terrorist apparatus can earn better pay pursuing their craft in Iraq than in what remains of their societies at home.<sup>73</sup>

The familiar patterns have been followed from the traditional domains of US power in the Western Hemisphere to the newer ones in Central Asia. After the May 2005 massacres in Uzbekistan, "US officials have walked a fine line, saying they were 'deeply disturbed' over [the] killings but also expressing] alarm over anti-government violence. Taking a more assertive stand, British, French and European Union officials have denounced the deadly crackdown and called for international observers to be let in to investigate." Washington distanced itself even from Europe's light tap on the wrist, preferring more open support for the tyrant Islam Karimov, who enjoys such pleasures as murdering dissidents by boiling them to death, according to former British ambassador Craig Murray. Murray was recalled to London for such indiscretions, not to speak of his description of Karimov as "George Bush's man in central Asia," praised by senior members of the Bush administration and backed "to the hilt" because of Uzbekistan's significant reserves of oil and gas. In his cables to London in 2002 and 2003, Murray had written: "US plays down human rights situation in Uzbekistan. A dangerous policy: increasing repression combined with poverty will promote Islamic terrorism." And: "As seen from Tashkent, US policy is not much focused on democracy or freedom. It is about oil, gas and hegemony. In Uzbekistan the US pursues those ends through supporting a ruthless dictatorship." The State Department gave Uzbekistan a favorable human rights assessment, Murray said, in order to free up hundreds of millions of dollars in aid. In a secret letter on March 18, 2003, as Bush and Blair were launching the Iraq war, Murray wrote: "Last year the US gave half a billion dollars in aid to Uzbekistan, about a quarter of it military aid. Bush and Powell repeatedly hail Karimov as a friend and ally. Yet this regime has at least seven thousand prisoners of conscience; it is a one-party state without freedom of speech, without freedom of media, without freedom of movement, without freedom of assembly, without freedom of religion. It practices, systematically, the most hideous tortures on thousands. Most of the population live in conditions precisely analogous with medieval serfdom."<sup>74</sup>

Karimov was not backed enthusiastically enough for his taste, however. Dissatisfied, he compelled Washington to shift its air bases to neighboring tyrannies. "The US is trying to cover its retreat behind a smokescreen of belated concern for human-rights abuses in Uzbekistan," Murray wrote. "Suddenly one of their most intensively courted allies has been discovered—shock horror—

to be an evil dictator. (Remember Saddam?)" The dictator, it turned out, preferred the style of Russian president Vladimir Putin to that of his Western suitors, though not all are withdrawing: "Of all western ministers, the most frequent guest in Uzbekistan, who most uncritically praises the regime, is Joschka Fischer, the trendy German foreign minister" and former 1960s radical.<sup>75</sup>

Prior to Karimov's slap in Washington's face, it was widely expected that the United States might be "the saviour of this dying autocratic regime," writes David Wall of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, noting Washington's "increase in funding for the Uzbek government" and the fact that "independent observers inside Uzbekistan say that US presence in the country is up to twice as large as Washington is willing to admit." At the same time, "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice exercised a waiver to allow continued military aid to nearby Kazakhstan on national security grounds despite what the State Department acknowledged were 'numerous steps backward' on human rights." Washington "will stay 'fully engaged' despite what [Rice] outlined as Kazakhstan's many recent regressions"—from a starting point that was not exactly elevated. US military aid "enhances democracy," Rice said, intoning rhetoric that is as familiar as its grim meaning.<sup>76</sup>

In neighboring Azerbaijan, at the opening of a pipeline that will carry Caspian oil to the West on a route that avoids Russia and Iran, the US energy secretary delivered a ringing message from President Bush: "As Azerbaijan deepens its democratic and market economic reforms, this pipeline can help generate balanced economic growth, and provide a foundation for a prosperous and just society that advances the cause of freedom." A few days earlier, the *New York Times* reported, "the Azerbaijani police beat pro-democracy demonstrators with truncheons when opposition parties, yelling 'free elections,' defied the government's ban on protests against President Ilham Aliyev," a US ally who had just "won a highly suspect election to succeed his father, a former Soviet strongman." Much the same is true in Turkmenistan, which Human Rights Watch describes as "one of the most repressive countries in the world,"<sup>77</sup>

"In a region of bases, energy and big-power rivalries, ideals require patience," the *New York Times* explains. Therefore Washington has to temper its passion for democracy and human rights.<sup>78</sup>

There are good reasons for the imperial powers and their acolytes to insist that we should forget about the past and move forward: the familiar refrain of "change of course" that is invoked every few years. But those who prefer to understand the world, the victims included, will recognize that history teaches many important lessons. "All of this matters," two scholars write in *Foreign Affairs*, "because national historical memory—or amnesia—can have concrete political consequences. How states and societies engage their pasts affects how they develop." We understand that very well, and rightly find it deeply disturbing, when the charge of amnesia is directed against antagonists, as in this case: they are discussing how "national historical memory" in Russia has failed to come to terms with Bolshevik crimes. Deep concern has also been expressed, repeatedly, about Japan's limited recognition of its past atrocities, among other cases selected according to the same very clear criterion.<sup>79</sup>

Preserving "historical memory" unsullied by apologetics is no less important for the permanent victors, who can be called to account only by their own citizens. That is particularly true when the institutional roots of past practices persist. Those who want to understand today's world will take note of Britain's actions from the days when it created modern Iraq for its own convenience, ensuring Iraq's dependency. And they will not overlook Britain's practices until the regime it imposed and supported was overthrown in 1958. Nor will they overlook the conclusion of the Foreign Office in July of that year that in British-dominated Iraq, "Wealth and power have remained concentrated in the hands of a few rich landowners and tribal sheikhs centered round the Court in a brutally repressive society."<sup>80</sup>

The overthrow of the British-backed Iraqi regime by Abdul Karim Qasim in 1958 was the first break in the Anglo-American condominium over the world's major energy resources. The United States and United Kingdom reacted at once, both with military action in Lebanon and Jordan and with secret joint plans to resort to violence if necessary to ensure that the virus of independent nationalism did not infect others—"ruthlessly to intervene," in their words, whatever the source of

the threat to dominance. This planning was highly relevant to the 1991 war.<sup>81</sup>

Concerns over the Qasim regime were enhanced by the evaluations of close imperial observers. An official of the British corporation that controlled Iraq's oil informed the Foreign Office that Qasim's goals went well beyond "political independence, dignity and unity, in brotherly cooperation with other Arabs." He also wanted "to increase and distribute the national wealth, ... to found a new society and a new democracy, [and] to use this strong, democratic, Arabist Iraq as an instrument to free and elevate other Arabs and Afro-Asians and to assist the destruction of 'imperialism,' by which he largely meant British influence in the underdeveloped countries."<sup>82</sup>

As if that were not ominous enough, there was concern that Qasim might adopt Gamal Abdel Nasser's "plans to use Saudi petrodollars to improve the living standards of poor Arabs everywhere." One Nasser was bad enough: "an expansionist dictator somewhat of the Hitler type," Secretary of State Dulles railed, a power-hungry monster whose *Philosophy of the Revolution* was barely distinguishable from *Mein Kampf*. He was capturing "Arab loyalty and enthusiasm throughout the region," President Eisenhower observed with dismay, warning that he was trying "to get control of [Middle East oil]—to get the income and the power to destroy the Western world." Eisenhower assured Congress that the coup in Iraq and disturbances in Lebanon and Jordan were "being fomented by Nasser under Kremlin guidance." Intelligence reported that "popular feeling in the Arab world, even in such states as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, is generally favorable to the Iraqi coup and hostile to US and UK intervention [so] there is a strong possibility that the revolutionary infection will spread" even to the US-backed tyrannies that controlled the world's main oil resources, possibly even to Libya, another important oil producer then firmly under a US-backed dictator. Washington toyed with the idea that Qasim might be a counter to "Communism," but it is unlikely that any such thoughts survived his 1961 decision that "took away over 99.5 percent of the concession area" of the multinational that controlled Iraq's oil, including both proven reserves and possible fields that were still unexplored but assumed to be huge.<sup>83</sup>

The virus was evidently dangerous and had to be destroyed. And it was, in 1963. According to former National Security Council staffer Roger Morris, confirmed by other sources, "The Central Intelligence Agency, under President John F. Kennedy, conducted its own regime change in Baghdad, carried out in collaboration with Saddam Hussein" and the Baath Party. It was "almost certainly a gain for our side," National Security Council aide Robert Komer informed Kennedy the day of the takeover." The usual hideous atrocities followed, including a slaughter of "suspected Communists and other leftists," using lists provided by the CIA, much as in Guatemala in 1954 and in Indonesia two years after the overthrow of Qasim. "The Baathists systematically murdered untold numbers of Iraq's educated elite," Morris continues, including "hundreds of doctors, teachers, technicians, lawyers and other professionals as well as military and political figures." There followed further crimes that we need not recount, with ample support when considered useful by London, Washington, and other willing participants. Reviewing the story on the eve of the US and UK invasion of Iraq in 2003, Morris commented perceptively: "If a new war in Iraq seems fraught with danger and uncertainty, just wait for the peace." There appear to have been many such warnings from knowledgeable analysts, disregarded by Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and associates.<sup>84</sup>

It is notable that fear of Iraqi democracy persisted without change even when Saddam became an enemy in 1990. In the following months and through the war, the democratic opposition within Iraq was not only barred from Washington but by the media as well.<sup>85</sup>

Suppose, however, that we adopt the convention of dispatching the inconvenient past to the memory hole and dismissing its rather clear lessons as old-fashioned irrelevancy, adopting the comforting posture of "historical amnesia" that we deplore among enemies. Let us then assume that a miraculous conversion has taken place in Washington and London, as often proclaimed before, but this time in reality: the United States will promote (or at least tolerate) a moderately independent and sovereign Iraq, departing from its consistent record there and elsewhere. A rational observer might nevertheless conclude that the declarations of the foreign minister of Iran are more credible than those emanating from Washington and London. Iran could live with a more or less democratic and sovereign Iraq. It is hard to imagine how Washington and London could do

so.

Consider the policies that Iraq would be likely to adopt. Iraqis may have no love for Iran, but they would prefer friendly relations with their powerful neighbor to antagonism and conflict, and would be likely to join in the efforts to integrate Iran into the region, which were under way long before the US and UK invasion. Furthermore, the Shiite religious and political leadership in Iraq has very close links with Iran. Shiite success in Iraq is already invigorating the pressures for freedom and democracy among the bitterly oppressed Shiite population of Saudi Arabia just across the border, tendencies that would only increase if Iraq were to be granted a measure of sovereignty. The efforts of the Saudi Shiites go back many years, and elicited a harsh crackdown when they sought to overthrow the brutal US-backed monarchy in the early 1980s. "They believe that Osama bin Laden and his ilk created an important opening," the *New York Times* reports, "with the royal family now casting about for ways to limit the Wahhabi extremism that it has encouraged but which now seeks to overthrow Saudi rule." For the first time, "the Shiites of eastern Saudi Arabia, the only part of the kingdom where they are a majority, are preparing to win a small measure of political power." That is also the region where most Saudi oil happens to be.<sup>86</sup>

The outcome could be a loose Shiite-dominated alliance comprising Iraq, Iran, and the oil regions of Saudi Arabia, independent of Washington and controlling the bulk of the world's energy resources. Washington's ultimate nightmare—almost. It could get worse. It's not unlikely that an independent bloc of this kind might follow Iran's lead in developing major energy projects jointly with China and India, perhaps even allying with the Asian Energy Security Grid and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This bloc might also move toward a basket of currencies for denomination of oil, rather than relying primarily on the US dollar, a step that could have a major impact on the US and global economy. A side issue is that if the United States cannot control Iraq, there is no guarantee that Iraqis in charge of the country's immense oil resources will give preferential treatment to favored energy corporations.<sup>87</sup>

Even the very limited degree of sovereignty that the Iraqi government enjoyed after the January 2005 elections gives a foretaste of what might lie ahead. On an official visit to Tehran, the Iraqi minister of defense and his Iranian counterpart announced "a new chapter" in their relations, including cross-border military cooperation and Iranian help with training and upgrading Iraq's armed forces, displacing US-Coalition advisers, a move that apparently took Washington by surprise. The Iraqi minister dismissed US concerns about Iranian meddling in the region, saying, "Nobody can dictate to Iraq its relations with other countries." Meanwhile, "the once libertine oil port of Basra," deep in the south near the Iranian border, "is steadily being transformed into a mini-theocracy under Shiite rule," Edward Wong reports. "The growing ties with Iran are evident. Posters of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Iranian revolution, are plastered along streets and even at the provincial government center. The Iranian government opened a polling station downtown for Iranian expatriates during elections in their home country in June. The governor also talks eagerly of buying electricity from Iran, given that the American-led effort has failed to provide enough of it." The provincial council is dominated by clerics close to the anti-occupation Sadr movement and to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution (SCIRI), the major Shiite faction, formed by Shiite exiles in Iran. SCIRI also controls the Badr militia, which runs much of the southern region and has traditionally close relations with Iran, where it was organized and trained. Returning from a visit to Iran, the head of SCIRI, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, praised the proposal to buy electricity from Iran, and called for closer ties to "the great Islamic Republic, [which] has a very honorable attitude toward Iraq."<sup>88</sup>

Peter Galbraith writes that "it may be the ultimate irony that the United States, which, among other reasons, invaded Iraq to help bring liberal democracy to the Middle East, will play a decisive role in establishing its second Shiite Islamic state."<sup>89</sup> It would indeed be the ultimate irony, in fact almost incomprehensible stupidity, if a goal of the invasion had been "to help bring liberal democracy to the Middle East" in any meaningful sense—yet another reason for skepticism about the claim, which remains free from any taint of supporting evidence, apart from the well-timed declarations of leaders, and has to face mountains of counterevidence, some already sampled. Additional reasons for skepticism are that an independent Iraq, or an Arab Iraq if Iraq fractures,



might seek to recover its leadership role in the Arab world, therefore rearming to confront the regional enemy, Israel, and quite possibly developing a nuclear deterrent.

We are therefore being asked to believe that the United States will stand by quietly watching a serious challenge to Israel, its primary regional client, as well as the takeover of the world's major energy reserves by a Muslim bloc free from US control, and the displacement of the Saudi royal family, long allied with the United States in opposing secular Arab nationalism. Those who have jumped enthusiastically on the "democratization bandwagon" are suggesting that Washington would politely observe such not unlikely developments. Perhaps, but the prospects appear rather remote.<sup>90</sup>

These are among the many reasons why a rational observer might be inclined to share Iraqi skepticism about the sudden and timely conversion to the messianic mission, and why such an observer might give considerable weight to the conclusion that, among the difficulties that have stood in the way of democratic transformation for many years in the Middle East, today too the "final barrier [is that] the world's sole superpower does not really want it to happen, pious neoconservative rhetoric notwithstanding."<sup>91</sup>

These are also among the many reasons why comparisons between Vietnam and Iraq are so misleading. In Vietnam, Washington planners could fulfill their primary war aims by destroying the virus and inoculating the region, then withdrawing, leaving the wreckage to enjoy its sovereignty. The situation in Iraq is radically different. Iraq cannot be destroyed and abandoned. It is too valuable, and authentic sovereignty and even limited democracy would be too dangerous to be easily accepted. If at all possible, Iraq must be kept under control, if not in the manner anticipated by Bush planners, at least somehow. For the same reasons, the many proposals for an "exit strategy" are quite odd.<sup>92</sup> Planners surely do not need the advice. They can figure out these simple exit strategies for themselves. And no doubt they want to withdraw—but only once an obedient client state is firmly in place, the general preference of conquerors, leaving just military bases for future contingencies.

In discussing these matters, it is important to bear in mind some fundamental principles. Crucially, occupying armies have no rights, only responsibilities. Their primary responsibility is to withdraw as quickly and expeditiously as possible, in a manner to be determined primarily by the occupied population. Unless there is strong popular support for their presence, they have no right to remain. If these principles are not observed, proposals for an "exit strategy" are more a reflection of imperial will than an expression of concern for the victims. As we shall see, Iraqi opinion, insofar as information is available, overwhelmingly calls for withdrawal. Furthermore, since shortly after the invasion, a large majority of people in the United States have held that the UN, not Washington, should take the lead in working with Iraqis to transfer authentic sovereignty, as well as in economic reconstruction and the maintenance of civic order. That could be a sensible stand if Iraqis agree, though the General Assembly, less directly controlled by the invaders, is preferable to the Security Council as the responsible transitional authority. The disgraceful economic regime imposed by the occupying authorities should be rescinded, along with the harsh anti-labor laws and practices of the occupation. Reconstruction should be in the hands of Iraqis, not designed as a means of controlling them in accord with Washington's announced plans.<sup>93</sup> Reparations—not just aid—should be provided by those responsible for devastating Iraqi civilian society by cruel sanctions and military actions, as well as for supporting Saddam Hussein through his worst atrocities and well beyond. That is the minimum that decency requires. One way to evaluate the entire discussion of democracy promotion is to ask how these issues are dealt with, or if they are even raised—questions that regrettably do not require much inquiry.

### **The “Strong Line of Continuity”**

The strongest witnesses for the defense of the authenticity of President Bush's messianic mission should be the leading scholars and most enthusiastic advocates of "democracy promotion." None is as prominent as the director of the Democracy and Rule of Law Project at the Carnegie Endowment, Thomas Carothers, who identifies his stand as neo-Reaganite. A year after

the invasion of Iraq, and after the messianic mission had replaced the "single question," he published a book reviewing the record of democracy promotion since the end of the Cold War, now "much in the news [with the] strenuous effort by the United States and its coalition partners to carry off a democratic transformation of Iraq." Carothers found a "strong line of continuity" running through all administrations in the post-Cold War era, Bush II included: "Where democracy appears to fit in well with US security and economic interests, the United States promotes democracy. Where democracy clashes with other significant interests, it is downplayed or even ignored." All administrations are "schizophrenic" in this regard, Carothers observes, with puzzling consistency—commonly called "inconsistency."<sup>94</sup>

Carothers also wrote the standard scholarly work on democracy promotion in Latin America in the 1980s. The topic is of particular contemporary significance because of the widely held thesis that Washington's traditional idealistic dedication to promoting democracy gained "particular salience" during the Reagan years, and has since been taken up with even greater force by the present administration, with its Reaganite roots. Carothers writes in part from an insider's perspective, having served in Reagan's State Department in the programs of "democracy enhancement." He regards these programs as having been sincere, though a failure, and a systematic one. Where US influence was least, in South America, progress toward democracy was greatest, particularly in the early 1980s when "the Reagan administration was trying to support the military governments that were on the way out [and] if anything, the US policy of that period worked against the democratic trend." Where US influence was strongest, in the regions nearby, progress was least. The reason, Carothers explains, is that Washington sought to maintain "the basic order of what, historically at least, are quite undemocratic societies" and to avoid "populist-based change in Latin America—with all its implications for upsetting economic and political orders and heading off in a leftist direction." The Reagan administration "came to adopt pro-democracy policies as a means of relieving pressure for more radical change, but inevitably sought only limited, top-down forms of democratic change that did not risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied." The proudest achievement was El Salvador, now offered by Washington as a model for Iraq. Here, the Reagan administration sought two goals: "ensuring that technically credible elections were held and that the Christian Democratic candidate . . . won." The administration "could not conceive of an El Salvador in which the military was not the dominant actor, the economic elite no longer held the national economy in its hands, the left was incorporated into the political system, and all Salvadorans actually had both the formal and substantial possibility of political participation. In short, the US government had no real conception of democracy in El Salvador."<sup>95</sup>

While "democracy enhancement" was proceeding in this manner, the state terrorists supported by Washington were slaughtering the opposition by the tens of thousands, carrying out hideous torture and other atrocities, destroying the independent press, and leaving behind a "culture of terror [that] domesticates the expectations of the majority" and undermines aspirations toward "alternatives that differ from those of the powerful," in the words of the Salvadoran Jesuits; those who survived, that is.

The Reaganite conception of democracy is illustrated as well by their favorite figures in Central America. Among them was the worst of Guatemala's gang of extraordinary murderers, Rios Montt, who was getting a "bum rap" and was "totally dedicated to democracy," Reagan explained. Another was Brigadier General Gustavo Alvarez Martmez of Honduras, chief of the Honduran armed forces. His career is of particularly pertinence today because he operated under the protection of John Negroponte, who is now in charge of counterterrorism, and was then ambassador to Honduras, running the world's largest CIA station. Known as the "pro-consul," Negroponte "was essentially managerially in charge of the Contra war in an extraordinary way for a diplomat," Peter Kornbluh observes, relying in part on secret documentation obtained by the National Security Archives, where he is a senior analyst. Negroponte's responsibilities took a new turn after official funding for Reagan's international terrorist operations was barred in 1983, and he had to implement White House orders to bribe and pressure senior Honduran generals to step up their support for these operations with funds from other sources, later also using funds illegally

transferred from US arms sales to Iran.

Chief of the Honduran armed forces, General Alvarez was the most important and also the most vicious of the Honduran killers and torturers protected by Negroponte. Alvarez received strong American support, a *Baltimore Sun* investigation discovered, even after he told Carter administration ambassador Jack Binns that "he intended to use the Argentine method of eliminating suspected subversives." Negroponte, Binns's successor, regularly denied gruesome state crimes in Honduras to ensure that military aid would continue to flow for the international terrorist operations he was managing. The *Sun* reported that "by 1983, when Alvarez's oppressive methods were well known to the US Embassy, the Reagan administration awarded him the Legion of Merit medal for 'encouraging the success of democratic processes in Honduras.' " Negroponte praised Alvarez's "dedication to democracy," following the same script as Reagan. The elite unit responsible for the worst crimes in Honduras was Battalion 3-16, organized and trained by the United States and Argentine neo-Nazis, the most barbaric of the Latin American killers that Washington had been supporting. Honduran military officers in charge of the battalion were on the CIA payroll. When the government of Honduras finally tried to deal with these crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice, the Reagan-Bush administration refused to allow Negroponte to testify, as the courts requested.<sup>96</sup>

All worth remembering, along with a treasure trove of other examples, when we read about the Reaganite passion for "democracy promotion."

In short, the "strong line of continuity" goes back a decade earlier, to the Reagan years. In fact, far beyond. Democracy promotion has always been proclaimed as a guiding vision. But it is not even controversial that the United States often overthrew democratic governments, often installing or supporting brutal tyrannies: Iran, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, and a long list of others. The Cold War pretexts regularly collapse under investigation. What we do find, however, is the operative principle that Carothers describes: democracy is a good thing *if and only if* it is consistent with strategic and economic interests.

Putting aside doctrinal blinders, it is hard to disagree with Latin American scholar Charles Bergquist that "rather than promoting democracy" in Latin America, consistent and often brutal US opposition to struggles for reform of deeply unjust and undemocratic societies "has historically subverted [democracy], both at home and abroad" while serving "the 'security interests' of privileged elites in the hemisphere, who have benefited most from the social status quo." Serious mainstream scholarship has long recognized that "while paying lip-service to the encouragement of representative democracy in Latin America, the United States has a strong interest in just the reverse," apart from "procedural democracy, especially the holding of elections—which only too often have proved farcical." Functioning democracy may respond to popular concerns, while "the United States has been concerned with fostering the most favourable conditions for her private overseas investment." Accordingly there is "no serious question of [US] intervention in the case of the many right-wing military coups"—except, one may add, intervention to support or initiate them—but matters are different "when her own concept of democracy, closely identified with private, capitalistic enterprise, is threatened by communism," commonly a cover term for the threat of independent development. The record is not fundamentally different outside of Latin America, as one would expect from the nature of the institutions that set the basic framework for policy choices. Nor is it surprising that policies continue today, reflecting the same "schizophrenia."<sup>97</sup>

Carothers hopes that democracy promotion will mature into a "proto-science," though the process is slow: "Democracy promotion is not a young field when one considers the efforts by the United States in the early twentieth century to construct democratic governments in Central America and the Caribbean after its various military interventions there."<sup>98</sup> A competent scholar, Carothers is well aware of the nature of these efforts, well illustrated by the three leading targets of US military intervention: Haiti, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. In these cases, as in others, we find that policies did not materially change with the onset of the Cold War, and that during the Cold War years the conflict was rarely relevant beyond providing misimpressions. What we find throughout is the operative principle that Carothers describes.

Woodrow Wilson invaded Haiti, the prototypical "failed state," in 1915, sending his troops to

dissolve the National Assembly "by genuinely Marine Corps methods," in the words of the marine commander, Major Smedley Butler. The reason was the assembly's refusal to ratify a US-designed constitution that gave US corporations the right to buy up Haiti's lands—regarded by the invaders as a "progressive" measure that Haitians could not comprehend. A marine-run plebiscite remedied the problem: the constitution was ratified by a 99.9 percent majority, with 5 percent of the population participating. Thousands of Haitians were killed resisting Wilson's invaders, who also reinstated virtual slavery, leaving the country in the hands of a vicious National Guard after nineteen years of Wilsonian idealism. Horrors continued unabated, along with US support, until Haiti's first democratic election in 1990.

The outcome set off alarm bells in Washington. Grassroots organizing in the slums and hills, to which few had paid attention, permitted an authentic election. Against enormous odds, the population chose their own candidate, the populist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, while the US-approved candidate, former World Bank official Marc Bazin, received 14 percent of the vote. Washington moved immediately to reverse the scandal. Aid for "democracy promotion" sharply increased, directed to antigovernment, probusiness groups, mainly through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), also the National Endowment for Democracy and AIFLD (the AFL-CIO affiliate with a notorious antilabor record throughout the Third World). One of the closest observers of Haiti, Amy Wilentz, wrote that USAID's huge "Democracy Enhancement" project was "specifically designed to fund those sectors of the Haitian political spectrum where opposition to the Aristide government could be encouraged." Other US policy choices were also directed to containing the threat of democracy that had made the wrong decisions. When a military coup took place a few months later, the Organization of American States imposed an embargo. Bush I announced that he would violate it, exempting US firms. Under Clinton, trade increased still further. Bush and particularly Clinton also authorized the Texaco oil company to supply the military junta and its wealthy supporters with oil in violation of presidential directives, thus rendering the OAS blockade almost entirely meaningless."

After three years of horrendous state terror, Clinton allowed the elected president to return, but on a crucial condition: that he adopt the program of the defeated US candidate in the 1990 election. As predicted at once, the harsh neoliberal programs dismantled what was left of economic sovereignty and drove the country into chaos and violence, accelerated by Bush's banning of international aid on cynical grounds. In February 2004, with French support, the United States spirited Aristide out of the country, which fell back into the hands of the traditional predators, including elements of the army that Aristide had disbanded. Nine months later, investigations by the University of Miami School of Law found that "many Haitians, especially those living in poor neighborhoods, now struggle against inhuman horror. Nightmarish fear now accompanies Haiti's poorest in their struggle to survive in destitution [in] a cycle of violence [fueled by] Haiti's security and justice institutions."<sup>100</sup>

Meanwhile the main Haitian architect of the terror, who bears major responsibility for thousands of deaths, lives peacefully in New York (Emmanuel Constant, who headed the terrorist force FRAPH). Repeated requests by the elected government of Haiti for his extradition were rejected by Washington, or simply ignored—in one striking case, right in the midst of the furor over the unwillingness of the Taliban to follow Washington's orders to turn over 9/11 suspects without evidence. The reason, it is widely assumed, is concern that, if tried, Constant might reveal CIA connections during the terror.<sup>101</sup>

The virus of popular democracy once again was destroyed, along with hopes for some measure of social justice in a country that has been crushed under the boots of the great powers for centuries. There is no further interest in Washington, which has been in charge of the operation for the past century. What survives in the doctrinal system is that Haiti has been "battered by storms of [its] own making," and that the despair of Haitians over their wrecked country is "a sorry comment on the failed governments" since Aristide assumed office in 1991.<sup>102</sup> Washington's dedication to democracy promotion could not overcome the deficiencies of the society it so fervently sought to help.

In Guatemala, Washington's destruction of the elected government "triggered a ghastly, four-

decade-long cycle of terror and repression that led to the death of perhaps two hundred thousand Guatemalans," facts well enough known despite Reagan administration efforts to protect state power from US citizens by blocking the regular declassification procedure covering atrocities there, "an appalling incident in the history" of the State Department's Office of the Historian.<sup>103</sup>

Guatemala's hopeful decade of democracy was crushed with resort to Cold War pretexts that would be disgraceful even if they had been valid. The real reasons, as extensively documented in the internal record, were fear of Guatemalan democracy and the risk that the "infection" of highly popular social and economic reforms there would spread in the region. When there finally was an independent accounting by Truth Commissions in El Salvador and Guatemala, the scenes of the worst terrorist crimes of the Reagan years, the atrocities were almost entirely attributed to state terrorists, as had been evident all along.

In Nicaragua, the US military occupation created the National Guard that brutalized the population for decades under the rule of the murderous Somoza family dictatorship, which Washington supported until the latest tyrant was overthrown by an internal revolt in 1979. When Somoza could no longer be sustained, Washington tried to preserve its National Guard, then turned to a terrorist war, which raged until 1990, when voters chose a candidate of Washington's choice with "a gun to their heads," as Thomas Walker writes in his standard history. The death toll was equivalent in per capita terms to 2.25 million in the United States, greater than all wars in American history combined, including the Civil War.<sup>104</sup>

After the United States regained control in 1990, Nicaragua declined to become the second poorest country in the hemisphere, after Haiti—which also holds the prize as the prime target of US intervention in the past century; Nicaragua is second. Within a decade, a large part of the working population had emigrated to carry out the dirty work elsewhere to provide the remittances on which families survive. Most went to Costa Rica, the one functioning country in Central America (and the only one not to have experienced direct US intervention). Health officials reported in 2003 that 60 percent of children under two suffer from anemia due to malnutrition, with likely mental retardation. In 2004, malnourishment increased, mainly among children, while life expectancy declined. Close to 70 percent of rural inhabitants live in a state of chronic or extreme hunger, with more than 25 percent unable to eat more than one meal a day, and 43 percent unable to eat more than two meals. The public health system is in a state of collapse, and environmental catastrophes resulting largely from desperate poverty (deforestation, and so on) made Nicaragua "worthy of the title the ultimate laboratory of social vulnerability" in 2004, the year-end summary in *La Prensa* observed. Sixty percent of children and adolescents are not in school. The average number of years of formal education is 4.6, dropping to only 2 years in the countryside, and the quality is extremely poor because of lack of resources. International relief goes largely to paying debt, mostly to the mafia-style financial system that developed after the victory of Washington's terrorist war and economic strangulation in the 1980s.<sup>105</sup>

The victory of US terror was so complete that the "democracy" that emerged from the wreckage—a "Victory for US Fair Play," as a *New York Times* headline enthusiastically proclaimed after the 1990 election—has been considerably more willing to follow IMF-World Bank directives than its neighbors. The results show, for example, in the energy sector, where the privatization demanded by the international financial institutions tends to correlate with disaster for the population. Nicaragua was the most obedient, and the disaster is worst. Access to electricity is far lower in Nicaragua than its neighbors, and prices (which generally correlate with privatization) are far higher, as is dependence on imported oil instead of internal resources. (Costa Rica has been able to shift almost completely to hydroelectric power.) In 1996, before the neoliberal dictates were followed in Nicaragua, its electrification rate was the same as Guatemala's; now it is just over half as high. Nicaragua has plenty of reserve capacity, but there is no profit incentive to supply it to rural regions or the great mass of poor people. The familiar and quite natural outcome of neoliberal programs.<sup>106</sup>

At the liberal extreme of US journalism, commentators puzzle about the "anti-American screeds" in Nicaragua "as the country tries to recover from 25 years [*sic*] of failed revolution and economic stagnation." Perhaps Nicaraguans suffer from the irrationality that has always caused

such frustration in the civilized West, much like the Iraqis who today find it "entirely incomprehensible that foreigners have been unselfishly expending their own blood and treasure to help them."<sup>107</sup>

The substantial progress of the early years in Nicaragua after the overthrow of the US-backed dictatorship, which greatly impressed development agencies and international institutions, has been sharply reversed. The miserable conditions in Nicaragua could be significantly alleviated in very conservative ways. A start would be for the United States to pay the reparations ordered by the highest international authorities, the World Court and Security Council. That would more than overcome the debt strangling the country since the years of the US terrorist attack, though much more would have to be done to restore a viable society from the wreckage of the Reaganite assault.

In 2003, Colin Powell visited Nicaragua to make sure that it was cooperating properly with the US "war on terror" that was redeclared after 9/11. Powell was speaking from experience, having helped direct the first phase of the "war on terror" in the 1980s, which specifically targeted Nicaragua. No eyebrows were raised. As Powell arrived to deliver his injunction, the US embassy in Managua released a briefing memo to journalists reporting that "Nicaragua crawls along as the second-poorest country in the hemisphere after Haiti, battered by storms of nature and *their own making*, with little hope of changing things in the future" (my emphasis). Nicaraguans appeared unreceptive to Powell's message. Perhaps the explanation is provided by the memo, "written in a disdainful tone," which "said most Nicaraguans had little interest in the world beyond their shores."<sup>108</sup> For some strange reason.

Powell faced problems in delivering his message elsewhere in Latin America as well. At the annual meeting of the Organization of American States in June 2003, "Mr. Powell was nearly alone in focusing on the triple scourge he described as 'tyrants, traffickers and terrorists.' For the most part, representatives of the 33 other nations taking part emphasized the need for social justice, warning that democracy itself could be threatened by mounting economic difficulties and inequality," in no small measure a consequence of US military intervention, terror, and economic doctrines and policies.<sup>109</sup>

Washington's redeclared "war on terror" also has limited resonance in other regions; in Iraq, for example. "The Iraqi people need no lessons on the topic of terrorism," the Bush administration's former special envoy for Afghanistan explains: "they have lost more compatriots to the scourge over the past year than Americans have in all the terrorist incidents of their history combined." Relative to population, "Iraq suffers every month—sometimes every week—losses comparable to those of the September 11, 2001, attacks inflicted on the United States. Unfortunately, Iraqis are as likely to attribute those losses to the US-sponsored war on terrorism as to the terrorists themselves." Some possible reasons come to mind. One, perhaps, is that they are aware—as is, surely, the director of international security and defense policy at the Rand Corporation—that increases in terror and chaos were widely anticipated consequences of the invasion of Iraq.<sup>110</sup>

Apparently, there will be some barriers to the maturation of the protoscience of democracy promotion.

Some of the more careful scholarship that jumps on the bandwagon does intimate that something may be amiss. That includes the scholarly articles cited at the outset of this chapter. Jonathan Monten's study of "the roots of the Bush doctrine," after invoking the conventional mantra, observes that it is not entirely an innovation. Throughout American history, democracy promotion has been "central to US political identity and sense of national purpose" and to the way "the United States defines its political interests." It has been the heart of "American exceptionalism." Monten's lengthy and careful review of this defining property of American exceptionalism skirts any evidence that the policy was ever pursued, keeping to numerous declarations. A footnote explains that at issue are not the historical facts, "but the extent to which the United States' historical perception of itself as exceptional has influenced foreign policy"—more accurately, influenced its rhetorical framework. So understood, "promotion of democracy is central" to Bush strategy in a kind of postmodern interpretation, in which we restrict attention to narrative and text, recoiling from "Truth," perhaps a social construction.

Of the articles cited, only Katarina Delacoura's makes an effort to provide some reasons to believe that democracy promotion has actually guided policy, restricting herself to the Bush II years and the Middle East. Apart from rhetoric, she gives several examples: the Bush administration's encouragement of "economic liberalization" (which for the region means effective takeover of the economies by Western corporate power); new radio stations aimed at "initiating [younger audiences] into American culture and winning them over to American values" (comment unnecessary); the invasion of Iraq, to which we will turn directly; and several specific measures that she criticizes because, though "introduced with much fanfare," they were much like earlier ones and were scarcely funded. She also criticizes the "inconsistency" in US efforts at democracy promotion, which leads to a "problem of *credibility*" (her emphasis): namely, the same "strong line of continuity" that Carothers found, which, in reality, is highly consistent. Somehow, the persistence of these policies through the Bush years leads to skepticism in the Middle East about Washington's motives, and to a search for a "hidden agenda, for example to help Israel control the Palestinians, to control Iraqi oilfields, or generally to extend American hegemony." But, Delacoura argues (conventionally), "this is an inaccurate description of the US position and that the Bush administration is serious about democracy." All that is missing is evidence.

Carothers predicted, with regret, that Washington's Iraq policies would extend the strong line of continuity: they will "likely exhibit similar contradictions between stated principles and political reality." His predictions were being fulfilled as his book went to press. The occupation authorities worked assiduously to avert the threat of democracy, but were compelled, with great reluctance, to abandon their plans to impose a constitution and to prevent elections. Few competent observers would disagree with the editors of the *Financial Times* that "the reason [the elections of January 2005] took place was the insistence of the Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who vetoed three schemes by the US-led occupation authorities to shelve or dilute them." Middle East scholar Alan Richards observes that "although the United States initially opposed early elections in Iraq, after Ayatollah Sistani turned huge numbers of his followers out in the streets to demand such elections, Washington had little choice but to agree." The *Wall Street Journal* explained that Sistani "gave his marching orders: Spread the word that Ayatollah Sistani insists that the new government be chosen through a direct election, not by the US or US-appointed Iraqi leaders," as Washington had sought. Veteran correspondent Patrick Cockburn adds that "it was only when it became clear that the US could not withstand a Shia uprising that elections turned out to have been an immediate American goal all along."<sup>111</sup>

Once it became clear that US and UK efforts to bar elections could not be sustained, the invaders of course took credit for them. The elections and the background soon settled comfortably into "the American-sponsored electoral process," much as the Israel-Palestine "peace process" that the United States has impeded for thirty years has been transmuted into the "halting American-led process to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians."<sup>112</sup>

In Iraq, though compelled to tolerate elections, the occupying forces sought to subvert them. The US candidate, Iyad Allawi, was given every possible advantage: state resources and access to TV, as well as the support of the military occupation. He ran a distant third, with about 12 percent of the vote. To ensure that elections would be free, the most important independent media were expelled from the country, notably the Qatar-based channel Al-Jazeera, which is despised by the ruling tyrants in the region because it has been a leading force for democratization in the Arab world. That alone makes its presence before elections in Iraq inappropriate, and the background tells us more about the nature of the messianic mission.

For years, high officials—Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, Powell—had pressured Qatar to curtail the channel's reporting. The United States bombed its facilities in Kabul and Baghdad (killing a Jordanian correspondent there). US pressure was "so intense," according to a senior Qatari official, that "the government is accelerating plans to put Al Jazeera on the market, though Bush administration officials counter that a privately owned station in the region may be no better from their point of view."<sup>113</sup>

We thus have another demonstration of the Bush vision of democracy in the Middle East: no media can be tolerated that are not under US control, whether public or private. Also very familiar

practice, and entirely understandable.

Washington complains that Al-Jazeera inflamed opinion by direct reporting that "emphasized civilian casualties" during the US destruction of Falluja, and that it "reports passionately about the Palestinian conflict." Another departure from journalistic standards is that the channel showed "taped messages by Osama bin Laden," which are apparently considered newsworthy in the Muslim world, as they are among people everywhere concerned with the threat of terror.<sup>114</sup>

There was much derision, along with sober expressions of concern over Moscow's moves "to tighten state control over the news media," when Russia barred ABC News after it recorded an interview with the Chechen leader "who has ordered or carried out some of the worst terrorist acts in the country's history," including the school siege in Beslan that left 330 people dead. Such selective reactions are standard practice, sometimes reaching extraordinary levels. Thus Nicaragua, under intense US attack, was bitterly condemned for censorship, with scrupulous care to suppress the fact that its major newspaper was openly supporting overthrow of the government by terrorist forces of the superpower that was also funding the journal. The condemnation kept under wraps the incomparably worse record of Washington's Israeli client at the same time and under nothing like comparable threat, and of course the shameful record of the United States under little direct threat at all, all easily demonstrated. In Washington's regional client regimes, independent media were blown up by state terrorists, who also murdered editors and journalists or forced them to flee, arousing scarcely any notice in the country that bears primary responsibility for the crimes.<sup>115</sup>

Returning to the January 2005 Iraq election, it was, "in effect," an "ethnic census," with Shiites mostly voting for Sistani's Shiite list, Kurds for the Kurdish list, and Sunnis boycotting. Nevertheless, the election was a major triumph of mass nonviolent resistance to the US occupation, celebrated on election day with great enthusiasm and courage by Shiites and Kurds, who saw themselves as coming to the polls "to claim their rightful power in the land."<sup>116</sup>

The fundamental problem facing Washington was reported regularly as the United States sought to block Iraqi democracy. On the eve of the election, two experienced correspondents wrote that "the one thing every Iraqi agrees upon is that occupation should end soon," which would be in direct conflict with the US objective of constructing "a US-friendly democracy that would allow America to replace its military presence in Saudi Arabia . . . with one in Iraq that would allow America to keep shaping the regional balance of power." As in the traditional domains of US control, "democracy" will be welcomed as long as it is of the conventional "top-down" form that leaves elites supportive of US goals in power. Washington's problem was summarized by *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Yochi Dreazen: "the men likely to lead Iraq's next government promise to demand withdrawal as soon as they take power after Sunday's national elections." Even the US-backed candidate, Iyad Allawi, was compelled to indicate support for withdrawal. But that is unacceptable. There would have been no point to the invasion if the United States could not maintain a dependable client state and military basing rights. Accordingly, Dreazen reports, Washington hopes, and expects, that the dominant Shiite alliance "would accept vague promises to withdraw rather than a firm time line." Not an easy task, because whatever the Iraqi leadership may want, "they could find publicly defending any US troop presence difficult."<sup>117</sup>

The major task in the subversion of Iraqi democracy is to pressure political elites to accept "vague promises" and to retain as much as possible of the illegal economic regime imposed by the invaders, based on the standard principle of opening the country and its resources to foreign control (primarily US and UK), under the guise of "economic liberalism." The struggle is far from over—either in Iraq or in the home countries of the invaders.

The occupiers did not waste a moment in declaring their intentions to subvert the elections they had worked so hard to prevent. A long interview with Prime Minister Blair opens with the statement that "Tony Blair says there is no way that the US and UK will set out a timetable for the withdrawal of their troops from Iraq," whatever Iraqis may think about it—which is nowhere mentioned. "Mr Blair is still angered by the suggestion that the US and UK are occupying Iraq"—the opinion of the overwhelming majority of Iraqis, as he surely knows: 81 percent of Iraqi Arabs a year after the invasion. Blair insists that the "coalition is in Iraq [by] permission" of the interim Iraqi government



that it installed, and that the "enhanced legitimacy" of the elected government "will make the coalition's presence more defensible." Washington's statements were hardly different; apart from a few ritual phrases about dedication to democracy.<sup>118</sup>

What Iraqis think about such matters we cannot know with great confidence. A Zogby International poll released on the day of the election found that 82 percent of Sunnis and 69 percent of Shiites "favor US forces withdrawing either immediately or after an elected government is in place." Similar results have been found in Western-run polls since shortly after the invasion. In one of the most in-depth polls, Oxford Research International found in fall 2003 that "less than 1% worry about occupation forces actually leaving." It found further that "people have no confidence in US/UK forces (79%) and the Coalition Provisional Authority—CPA (73%) [while] 8% say they have a 'great deal' of faith in US/UK troops." Military and Middle East specialist Andrew Cordesman reports that more than 70 percent of all Iraqis wanted US forces out by fall 2003, a figure that rose to more than 80 percent by mid-2004. The newly elected parliament's National Sovereignty Committee issued a report that "called for setting a timetable for the troops to go home," referring to them as "occupation forces." A spokesman for SCIRI, the largest Shiite Muslim party, said, "British troops should withdraw to their barracks, and come out only at the request of Iraqi forces." At a meeting in Cairo of all Iraqi factions, a prominent member of the Central Council of SCIRI, Dr. Ali al-Adad, stated that "all Iraqi forces, Shiite, Sunni and Kurds, want a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops," and agreed that it should be the "first demand" on their political program. The closing statement of Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish leaders attending "demands a withdrawal of foreign troops on a specified timetable, dependent on an immediate national program for rebuilding the security forces." It also added that "national resistance is a legitimate right of all nations," though not terror.<sup>119</sup>

Polling on these crucial matters virtually ended after the elections, or at least was not reported. Two knowledgeable commentators write that "American polling agencies in Iraq basically stopped asking Iraqis what they thought of the US and its troops when unpopularity approached 90 percent in Iraq in the spring of 2004—" According to Steven Kull, a leading authority on public opinion studies, the International Republican Institute began to withhold polling data from Iraq, which was showing that "the findings were getting pretty negative toward the US presence there." One poll, a very important one, did reach the public—in England: a poll undertaken for the British Ministry of Defence in August 2005, carried out by Iraqi university researchers and leaked to the British press. It found that 82 percent are "strongly opposed" to the presence of coalition troops, less than 1 percent believe they are responsible for any improvement in security, over 70 percent do not have confidence in them, and 67 percent feel less secure because of the occupation. "For Iraq as a whole, 45 per cent of people feel attacks [against occupying forces] are justified"; the proportion rises to 65 percent in one British-controlled province and is 25 percent even in Basra, which is mostly run by Shiite militias. If the poll really covered "Iraq as a whole," then the percentages must be considerably higher where the occupying forces are actually operating, in Arab Iraq. The reconstruction effort "appears to have failed, with the poll showing that 71 per cent of people rarely get safe clean water, 47 per cent never have enough electricity, 70 per cent say their sewerage system rarely works and 40 per cent of southern Iraqis are unemployed." The regular Brookings Institute review of "The State of Iraq" reported that 80 percent of Iraqis favored "Near Term US Troop Withdrawal" in November 2005, confirming the British Defence Ministry poll.<sup>120</sup>

Independent polling may have become virtually impossible. The catastrophe created by the occupying army is so extreme that reporters are far more restricted than in other conflict zones in the past. We can only guess the impact on Iraqi opinion of the brutality of the occupation and what it evoked, and of the stimulation of ethnic-religious conflict as the occupying armies sought to impose their will. We can, however, be reasonably confident that the occupiers will seek to bar the threat of a sovereign Iraq that is "democratic" in more than the traditional sense of US and UK practice in their domains.

The Iraqi calamity again illustrates "the strong line of continuity," much as Carothers feared. That should come as little surprise given the unusual significance of Iraq in geopolitical and economic terms, though the scale of the catastrophe could hardly have been anticipated.

## Chapter 1: Stark, Dreadful, Inescapable

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2. On the shameful record, see Howard Friel and Richard Falk, *The Record of the Paper* (Verso, 2004).
3. For a brief sample, see my "Simple Truths, Hard Problems," *Philosophy*, January 2005. I know of only one case of explicit rejection, a highly regarded work by international law professor Michael Glennon, *Limits of Law, Prerogatives of Power* (Palgrave, 2001), pp. 171ff. His rejection of the principle, perhaps unwitting, is based on the tacit assumption that responsibility cannot be shared. The remainder of his argument against "objectivist philosophies" fares similarly. For further comment, see my "Moral Truisms, Empirical Evidence, and Foreign Policy," *Review of International Studies*, October 2003.
4. Philip Zelikow, *National Interest*, Spring 2003. On the realities, see ActionAid, *Real Aid: An Agenda for Making Aid Work*, May 2005. They estimate real aid by the rich at 0.1 percent of national income, with the United States and France the lowest in real aid (close to 90 percent "phantom aid," returning to the donor country), while the United States ranks near the bottom even in official aid.
5. Michael Phillips, *Wall Street Journal*, 27 January 2005. Jeffrey Sachs, *New York Times*, 25 June 2005. Warren Hoge, *New York Times*, 3 September 2005. With the "I'm the boss" image established, Bolton later agreed to some compromises.
6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Everyman's Library, 1994), volume I, p. 355.
7. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Modern Library, 1994), book 3, p. 444.
8. Probably close to universal practice, usually tacit, but sometimes honesty prevails: for example, the determination by Israel's Defense Ministry that "the law only recognises terrorism as committed by 'organisations hostile to Israel.'" Chris McGreal, *Guardian*, 1 September 2005. Michael Kinsley, *Wall Street Journal*, 26 March 1987.
9. Indira A. R. Lakshmanan, *Boston Globe*, 13 June 2005.
10. Reuters, *New York Times*, 20 July 2005.
11. Reuters, *New York Times*, 28 September 2005. Jimmy Burns, *Financial Times*, 29 September 2005. Ciaran Giles (AP), *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 13 October 2005. *El Pais*, 15 and 16 October 2005. The Ibero-American Summit refused to yield on the call for an end to the economic warfare against Cuba, and again condemned the "blockade" by the United States. On 8 November 2005, the UN General Assembly again called for ending the US embargo against Cuba, 182 to 4 (United States, Israel, Marshall Islands, and Palau; Micronesia abstained). There was scarcely a word in the press. See also Jim Lobe, Inter Press Service, 12 May 2005.
12. Graham Allison, *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2004. For Mueller, see *Hegemony or Survival*, p. 200.
13. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2005 Year Book. Reuven Pedatzur, *Ha'aretz*, 26 May 2005.
14. Max Boot quoted by Roger Cohen, *New York Times*, 12 June 2005. Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), news release, 6 April 2005. Max Boot, *New York Times*, 13 February 2003.
15. Pedatzur, *Ha'aretz*, 26 May 2005.
16. James Blight and Philip Bremer, *Sad and Luminous Days* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). On the facts of the matter, see *Hegemony or Survival*, p. 74.
17. Robert McNamara, *Foreign Policy*, May-June 2005.
18. Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism* (Times Books, 2004). He also cites very close calls.
19. John Steinbruner and Nancy Gallagher, *Daedalus*, Summer 2004.
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21. STRATCOM, "Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence," 1995. For extensive quotes from this important study, and sources, see my *New Military Humanism* (Common Courage, 1999). Harold Brown, Report of Secretary of Defense to Congress on FY 1981 Budget, 29 January 1980. On recognition of the need to delude the public about the "Soviet threat," see p. 103 in the present work.
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23. William Arkin, *Washington Post*, 15 May 2005. Walter Pincus, *Washington Post*, 16 March 2005.
24. Tim Weiner, *New York Times*, 18 May 2005. Demetri Sevastopulo, *Financial Times*, 19 and 20 May 2005. Jehangir Pocha, *Boston Globe*, 1 August 2004, citing *Jane's Defence Weekly* editor. Edward Cody, *Washington Post*, 12 April 2005. See also *Hegemony or Survival*, Afterword. On spending, see Simon Collard-Wexler et al., *Space Security 2004* (Northview Press, 2005).

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26. Neil King, *Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 2005.
27. Michael MccGwire, *International Affairs*, January 2005 (his emphasis).
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29. Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism*. See also Graham Allison, *Russia in Global Affairs* online, September-October 2004.
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72. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *National Interest*, Winter 2003-4.
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## Chapter 4: Democracy Promotion Abroad

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45. Stephen Kurkjian and Adam Pertman, *Boston Globe*, 5 January 1990. For further discussion, see my *Deterring Democracy*, chapter 5.
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