

Revival of the Neocons

Hardline War Hawks Use Crisis in Southwest Asia To Take Back Republican Party

by Harley Schlanger

Oct. 27—The neoconservative war hawks responsible for the “endless wars” following the 9/11 terrorist acts against the United States, are back on the offensive. While never held to account for the violations of international law and the disastrous results from their strategic lunacy, despite turning the “War on Terror” into a murderous and costly permanent-war policy—which continues to this day—their failures did play a major factor in the takeover of the Republican Party by Donald Trump. A central theme of Trump’s “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) movement is “America First”: Concentrate on protecting and improving the homeland, rather than serving as the “policeman of the world.”

This stated belief of former President Trump, which he contrasts to the wasteful spending and lost American lives in the post-9/11 era of endless wars, has been key to his continuing popularity among anti-globalist Republicans, enabling him to build a 40% lead over his rivals for the Republican Party’s presidential nomination in 2024.

Given this reality, the growing danger of a wider war in Southwest Asia, as Israel presses ahead with its scorched earth policy against the civilian population in Gaza, is like manna from heaven for America’s neocons. The failed counter-offensive in Ukraine and the prospect of a long, expensive commitment to the proxy war against Russia there, contributed to a growing anti-war majority among American voters, according to numerous polls. This sentiment was fueled—or exploited—by Trump, who used “America First” rhetoric to build



White House/Tia Dufour

President Donald Trump’s administration: No more endless wars!

a huge lead against his neocon opponents in the party.

That the pro-war faction in the Republican Party found itself in a *de facto* alliance with Democrat Joe Biden and the war hawks in his party, in support of increased funding for Ukraine, was the impetus for some pro-Trump Congressmen to stage a coup, leading to the ouster of House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. The leading issues for the pro-Trump hard-liners were McCarthy’s commitment to continue funding of the Ukraine proxy war, despite a growing federal budget deficit, and increasing popular opposition to funding the losing war in Ukraine. McCarthy was accused of making a “secret side deal” with Democrats on Ukraine funding

during a brutal battle over a supplemental budget.

U.S. as the ‘Indispensable Nation’

The alliance between war hawks in both parties goes back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Republican Party (GOP) came increasingly under the domination of the neocons, through groups such as the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), which insisted that the fall of the USSR meant that the ideology of “democracy and free markets” had triumphed, and the U.S. must play the role of the sole superpower.

Initially, there was some resistance to this from Democrats, who spoke of cutting defense spending to use a “peace dividend” to fund domestic programs. However, the interventionist wing of the party, typified by Russophobe Zbigniew Brzezinski, accepted the basic premise of the GOP hardliners, that the U.S. needs to



EIRNS/Dan Sturman

Russophobe Zbigniew Brzezinski: U.S. must assert world hegemony.

assert its role as the hegemonic power in the world.

Brzezinski's protégé, Madeleine Albright, was the leading voice for this outlook in the Clinton administration, serving as his U.N. Ambassador, then as Secretary of State in Clinton's second term. Rather than using PNAC's in-your-face language of the U.S. as the sole superpower, Albright promoted the idea of the U.S. as the "indispensable nation," to justify an interventionist foreign policy. The global deployment of U.S. forces was necessary, she argued, "to defend our democracy." This included the eastward expansion of NATO, as well as the use of sanctions and military force against Iraq in 1998, and Serbia in 1999.

Current U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken described Albright as his mentor, and his calls for a

ing cartels, those of the mass media and big tech. They are threatened today by the collapse of their financial empire, and the emergence of an alternative system, led by Russia and China, with broad support from nations of the Global South, led by the BRICS alliance.

Build-Up for War with Iran

The Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel is being used by the old PNAC-neocon crowd to retake the Republican Party as a tool for the MIC. This has generated belligerent rhetoric against Iran, which they accuse of being behind the Hamas assault. Many of the MAGA Republicans, including Trump himself, have proclaimed absolute solidarity with Israel. Leading the pack for an escalation against Iran has been Sen. Lindsey Graham,



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Secretary of State Antony Blinken described Brzezinski's protégé, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, as his mentor; his calls for a militant defense of the "rules-based order" flow from her conception of the U.S. as the "indispensable nation."

militant defense of the "rules-based order" flow from her conception. That this idea is coherent with the geopolitical concepts which were the underpinning of the 19th- and 20th-century British empire is not surprising, given that UK Prime Minister Tony Blair played a leading role in shaping President Clinton's foreign policy, through his rejection of the principles of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, and his promotion of the concept of the "Responsibility to Protect," which provided an excuse for imperial intervention.

The hidden hand behind this approach in the U.S. is that of the corporate cartels, identified by President Dwight Eisenhower as the "Military-Industrial Complex" (MIC). The think tanks, academic institutions and politicians funded by the MIC have turned both parties into a war party, which is reinforced by the other lead-

ing with Trump's former Vice President Mike Pence, and his former National Security Adviser John Bolton. Graham has called for blowing up Iran's oil facilities.

Pence has used his candidacy for President to taunt Trump, saying Trump's unwillingness to support Ukraine is "signaling retreat from America's role as leader of the free world." In a Bloomberg News [interview](#) from Oct. 20, Bolton said, "the principal threat to peace and security in the Middle East today, and for some years back, is Iran," describing the attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria,

allegedly by Iranian "proxies," as Biden's "red line."

Joining the chorus is former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who has emerged as the neocon's rallying point against Trump, and possible nominee if Trump's campaign is derailed by criminal convictions in the four legal cases against him. Haley said of Iran, that U.S. policy should be "to finish them!"

The support for Israel along with the focus on Iran as the enemy image resonates with Christian fundamentalists, who make up a substantial percentile of GOP voters, and is a key segment of support for Trump.

Though the Biden administration and Israeli intelligence say they have no specific intelligence identifying Iran as responsible for the Hamas attack or the attacks on U.S. bases in the region, the GOP hawks have been using town meetings and candidate events to push their

agenda. One such event was the “America the Great Tour” stop in Nashua, New Hampshire on Oct. 17, where former State Department official Morgan Ortagus called the attack on Israel “an attack on the U.S.” Working with outfits such as the Polaris National Security group, the Bastion Institute and the Vandenberg Coalition—none of which publicly report their sources of funding—such events provide a platform to organize for expanding the war in the region.

Among those involved are Elliot Abrams, a former Deputy National Security Adviser and co-founder of PNAC, Doug Feith and Lewis “Scooter” Libby, both instrumental as aides to former Vice President Dick Cheney in launching the Iraq war. Other institutions include the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, and United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI), which includes former government officials and neocon hatchet men. Former Democratic Party nominee for Vice President and current U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman, a close ally of



CC/Gage Skidmore
Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley is now a Republican war hawk presidential candidate.

the late hawk John McCain, is the chairman of UANI.

Filling out this picture of GOP forces joining the Biden/Democratic side in expanding the Israeli-Hamas war, allegedly to defend Israel, is the newly-elected Republican Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson. Within hours of his election, Johnson, a close ally of Donald Trump, joined House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries in a meeting with Biden. Johnson said his priority is to push through a separate aid package of \$14.5 billion for Israel, saying “We must stand with our important ally in the Middle East and that’s Israel.” He added that he also supports aid to Ukraine, as he believes that Russian President Vladimir Putin must be stopped.

It remains to be seen if MAGA Republicans (who were won over by Trump initially for his opposition to neocon wars) and their corporate sponsors, will remain loyal. Trump has thrown his full support behind Israel, and has a record of opposition to any deals with Iran.

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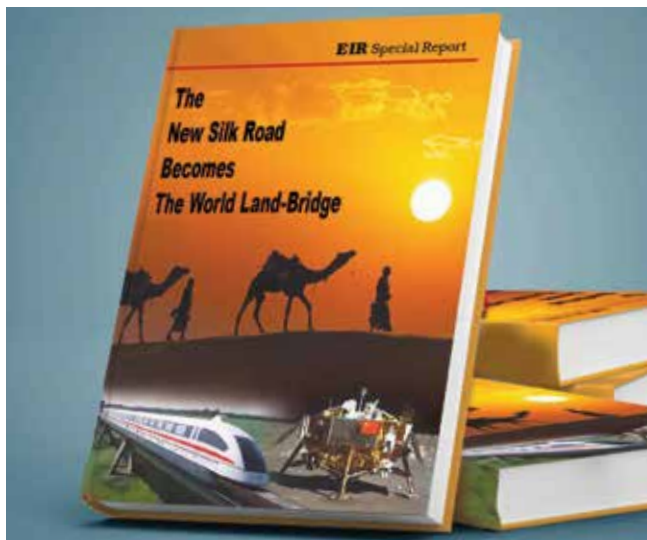
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