
Dr. Clifford A. Kiracofe, Jr.

The U.S., Politics, And the Iraq War

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I am delighted to be in Berlin again at this fine venue for our third conference this year. The rapidly unfolding political crisis in the United States is a result of the Bush Administration's imperial foreign policy, including the "preventive war"

against Iraq, as well as its economic policies that have led to unprecedented and unsustainable budget and current account deficits and further deterioration of national infrastructure. My comments today will focus on United States foreign policy.

The White House lied systematically to the American people, and to the world, in order to implement its premeditated Iraq war policy; premeditated, that is, while George W. Bush was a Presidential candidate back in 1999 and 2000. Now the U.S. and the world tragically reap the whirlwind.

The Iraq War has proven the greatest strategic mistake in the history of the United States. At the moment, we have over 150,000 U.S. troops operating in Iraq, not to mention a like number of private "security" forces, mercenaries, U.S. and foreign, operated by a number of international contractors. But Washington is caught in a disintegrating situation militarily and politically.

As a rough estimate, we can estimate that the active hardcore Sunni insurgency the United States faces in Iraq is perhaps 300,000 strong: 296,000 Iraqi Sunnis and about 4,000 foreign "al-Qaeda"-linked jihadis. About half of the Iraqis would be from the old structures such as the Ba'ath Party apparatus, the Fedayeen Saddam Movement, the intelligence and security services, and the Army and Republican Guard. The other half would be recruited from the Iraqi Sunni civilian population of 5 million.

To complete this estimate, we should multiply by a factor of 10 to take into consideration the "passive" supporters in the civilian Sunni population. This brings us to a number of

about 3 million Sunni Iraqis, active and passive, supporting the insurgency in central Iraq, where the Sunni population is concentrated.

As Iraq is about 62% Shi'a, we can draw the appropriate conclusion, should the Shi'a Iraqis launch their own insurgency against the United States.

It is obvious to serious observers that the United States is in an untenable position in Iraq from a military standpoint and from a political standpoint. Of course, it has been since the outset of the war, which is why military, intelligence, and diplomatic professionals argued against a decision for war. By now, the U.S. "preventive war" and occupation have created conditions for the rise of a theocratic Shi'a-dominated Iraq in the orbit of Iran. This process is under construction in the shadows.

U.S. Politics in Confusion

At home, the Republican Party is deeply divided and is in deep consternation, if not confusion, owing to the collapse of public support for the Bush Administration and its unnecessary and reckless imperial policy. Republicans fear massive losses in the 2006 and 2008 elections owing to public dissatisfaction with the Iraq War. This presents the specter of a looming, drawn-out impeachment process against President Bush should Democrats make sufficient electoral gains in 2006.

The Democratic Party is slowly moving toward coherent opposition, although it has yet to adopt an overall program.

But progress is being made.

In the past few weeks, for example, the issue of the Iraq War has finally shaken the nation out of its lethargy. All polling data show that the American public now believes the Iraq War was a mistake and that we should withdraw from Iraq. Politicians are looking toward the 2006 and 2008 elections and many are calculating that they can now publicly endorse withdrawal from Iraq. Additionally, former President Jimmy Carter has just published an important book that exposes the political power of the extremist Christian fundamentalists and castigates the neo-conservatives for a disastrous foreign policy. Because extremist Christian fundamentalists comprise 35% of President George W. Bush's political base, former President Carter's earnest critique is timely.

For his part, former President Bill Clinton has said recently that the Iraq War was a mistake. U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) opposed the war from the outset, while U.S. Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) has recently changed his view from supporting the war and he now calls the war a mistake. U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) is moving her position from initial support for the war to a more qualified position, with a view to a 2008 Presidential run.

U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.), a leading war critic, blasted Bush's Nov. 30 speech on Iraq at the U.S. Naval Academy. U.S. Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Senate Minority Leader, also blasted the Naval Academy speech.

On the Republican side, key moderates such as U.S. Sen.

Chuck Hagel, himself a candidate for the 2008 Presidential elections, are stepping forward in public to oppose the war and to call for timely withdrawal of American armed forces.

As a Republican myself, I have been deeply concerned for two decades about the takeover of the Republican Party's foreign policy—which I have observed from the inside—by a small network of alien-minded neo-conservative intellectuals backed up by Dispensationalist "Christian" fundamentalists such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson.

Failed Bush Foreign Policy

It is certainly clear today that the Bush Administration increased the threat from international terrorism at the same time that it degraded the internal national emergency management capabilities of the United States. The unnecessary preventive war against Iraq increased international tensions, impaired United States alliances, lowered the United States' international reputation and prestige, and provoked a marked rise in the threat from international terrorism, particularly "jihadi" terrorism. The recent Hurricane Katrina event laid bare before the world the vulnerability of the United States to natural, technological, and human-induced disaster, despite its so-called "superpower" status.

The Bush Administration's foreign policy has been a failure in all regions of the world. His 2005 trips to Europe, Latin America, and Asia resulted in no positive gains for the United States and, indeed, left negative impressions. In all regions, public opinion has shifted markedly against the United States.

The White House is not credible in Europe and the new scandal involving alleged prison-torture centers being established on European soil not only raises profound constitutional questions at home but also further exacerbates strained U.S.-European relations. Russia, despite grave provocations from the United States, has acted in a restrained manner.

The Bush Administration's Middle East policy is a strategic disaster, as the entire world can observe on a daily basis. The operational concept behind Bush's regional policy in the Middle East and North Africa is political, economic, social, and cultural "transformation." Regime change in Iraq, rather than continued containment, went to the top of the Middle East agenda in 2001. In line with this emphasis, significant pressure on "rogue states" such as Syria and Iran followed.

The strategic approach to "shape" the future of the region has little to do with ensuring stability and preserving a salutary regional balance of power. The approach, in fact, parallels the "permanent revolution" concept at the core of the neo-Trotskyite ideology from which Bush Administration neo-conservatives operate.

Stated another way, the Bush Middle East and North Africa policy is an imperial policy cloaked as one promoting "modernization" and "democratization," via the imposition of new regimes and a neo-liberal economic model. That this imperial policy has a "Wilsonian" dimension is also evident.

The sequencing established at the outset of the Bush Administration in 2001 has been carried out: first Iraq, then Syria and Iran.

Despite the opposition from our uniformed military, intelligence services, and diplomatic service, our Republic launched an illegal preventive war against Iraq similar to Hitler's attack on Poland. The preventive war against Iraq was planned to set in motion the destabilization and Balkanization of the region, in line with the intended "transformation" process advocated by the neo-Trotskyite neo-conservatives and their Administration followers, including the present Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The United States went to war against Iraq owing to the real "axis of evil" which operates in Washington, D.C. And by the real axis of evil in Washington, I mean the insidious combination I just pointed out: the alliance of neo-conservatives and Christian fundamentalists that dominates the Republican Party's foreign policy.

This political pathology in the United States led us to the Iraq War and poses a dangerous structural problem in the international system that engenders international terrorism and instability.

The current policy debate in the United States represents a confrontation between those Republicans, Democrats, and Independents who advocate the core values of the traditional United States approach to foreign relations, as established by the Founding Fathers, and the war faction led by the neo-conservatives. American foreign policy traditionalists—Republican, Democrat, and Independent—reject a policy of permanent global imperialism and pre-emptive war. Traditionalists say that international law must be respected, and that our policy should be, in the words of George Washington, to "observe good faith and justice toward all nations" and to "cultivate peace and harmony with all."

In my judgment, the Republican Party must return to our nation's authentic foreign policy traditions and ideals that embody a "decent respect for the opinions of Mankind" and a firm commitment to justice and international law. To make this policy change, it follows logically that the neo-conservative policy network, and the Christian Zionists, must be eliminated from the party's councils.

The Neo-Conservative Problem

How did the neo-conservative policy network penetrate the Bush 43 Administration?

Quite simply, former Secretary of State George Shultz, the Bush campaign co-chairman with former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, expressly brought in the neo-conservative policy network to educate and advise the inexperienced Presidential candidate George W. Bush.

The neo-conservatives, under the protection of George Shultz, formed the so-called "Vulcan Group" of about a dozen foreign policy experts that was led by Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, and coordinated by Condoleezza Rice. This

"Vulcan Group," as it was nicknamed, created the main lines of candidate Bush's foreign policy. Their advice to candidate Bush on Middle East policy was to put Iraq on the front burner, and to put the Palestine Question on the back burner, if not in the freezer or in the trash.

Following Bush's election, the neo-conservative policy network was rewarded with a variety of top positions in the new Administration. And their policy line is supported by the Christian Zionist phalanx of Republicans in Congress. Owing to the penetration of the Republican Party by the neo-conservative policy network during the past 20 years, the Republican Party now faces a severe internal crisis.

The "neo-conservative" movement emerged in the 1950s from the work of two key intellectuals, Norman Podhoretz and Irving Kristol. They both, according to some intellectual historians, drifted from pre-World War II Trotskyism to post World War II Cold War Zionism. They became Truman Democrats, and espoused a militant Cold War Zionism.

As close observers point out, the philosophical underpinnings of the neo-conservatives include the doctrines of Friedrich Nietzsche, advocate of amoral power, and Vladimir Jabotinsky, advocate of militant revisionist Zionism and himself a Nietzschean. Additional influences include Martin Heidegger and similar proponents of the "Conservative Revolution" in Europe, which led to Mussolini and Hitler. Their antecedents include, of course, de Maistre, de Bonald, and Fabre d'Olivet.

As is obvious, this form of modern European Fascism is certainly a very far cry from the political and cultural traditions of the United States, our Founding Fathers, and our Constitution.

In the early 1970s, the neo-conservatives clustered around U.S. Sen. Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson, a Democrat from Washington State. Jackson was a defense hard-liner and staunch Truman-style Cold Warrior. In the late 1970s, the neo-conservatives, opportunistically, bolted the Democratic Party led by President Jimmy Carter, in disagreement with his constructive and balanced approach to the Middle East.

The neo-conservatives then penetrated the Republican Party and the incoming Reagan Administration in 1981. They obtained top jobs in the administration, and their ranks included Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Elliott Abrams, Steve Bryen, and Frank Gaffney, all well-known neo-conservatives who are today as politically active as ever.

The neo-conservatives operate from a small cluster of well-financed foundations and think-tanks, including the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Hudson Institute, the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (IASPS), the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the Center for Security Policy (CSP), the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and the Project for a New American Century (PNAC). These think-tanks use their influence to promote the adoption of neo-conservative foreign policy by the White House and Con-



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Judging from articles appearing in the Israeli press in such respected daily newspapers as *Ha'aretz*, Israeli moderates and liberals are appalled by the U.S. neo-conservatives, and their alliance with the extreme right in Israel. In fact, it appears that some of the Israeli Labor Party members are slowly waking up to the fact that the extremist neo-conservatives in Washington are threatening the long-term peace and stability of the Middle East, and thereby calling into question Israel's own long-term security. On top of this, it is becoming increasingly clear to Israeli liberals that the neo-conservatives' key political ally in the United States are the Christian Zionist fundamentalists, who are allied to the most extreme right-wing messianic elements in Israel.

The Christian Zionist Problem

Why has the White House adopted a neo-conservative foreign policy? Why has Congress become a rubber stamp for neo-conservative foreign policy in the Middle East? And why has Congress become an engine for the destruction of U.S. relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds?

gress, and many officials in the Administration come from these very same think-tanks.

It is no secret in Washington that the neo-conservatives work closely with hard-line Israeli think-tanks and coordinate their policy recommendations with influential members of the Likud Party, including Bibi Netanyahu. These Israeli think-tanks include the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (IASPS) that I mentioned a minute ago—and it has a Washington, D.C. office—the Ariel Center for Policy Research located in Ariel, Israel, and the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT), located in Herzliya, Israel.

Influential "pro-Israel" lobby groups in the United States, such as the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), promote neo-conservative foreign policy by intensively lobbying Congress and the White House. A simple examination of their websites will give you a clear view of their policy positions. AIPAC has been under an intensive counterintelligence investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies for several years, as the recent Franklin espionage case revealed.

Neo-conservatives see the destabilization of the Arab and Muslim Middle East as good for Israel. I myself, to the contrary, think this policy is harmful—even dangerous—to the long-range security of Israel, not to mention to the region as a whole. Israel, like all states in the neighborhood, desperately needs a stable, peaceful, and prosperous regional environment.

Well, the short answer is that beginning about 1980, the parasitic neo-conservative element in the Republican Party aligned with the fundamentalist Christian Right. Although this strategic political alliance was forged in the early 1980s, it did not become a topic of national political discussion until the current crisis in the Holy Land triggered by the Israeli provocation and aggression led by Sharon.

Any doubt about the pervasive influence of Christian Zionist ideology in the U.S. Congress was erased in May 2002 by the leader of the Republican Party in the House of Representatives. On May 1, Texas Congressman Richard Armey, on national television, bluntly told MSNBC talk show host Chris Mathews that he supported the mass expulsion, called "transfer," of Palestinians from Israeli-occupied Palestine.

Congressman Armey, like dozens of his colleagues, espoused the Christian Zionist idea that Palestine does not belong to the Palestinians because somehow the Bible says it belongs to the Israelis. You can find this same mindset in the Senate of the United States in the speeches of Senator Imhofe of Oklahoma, among others. Even though Congressman Dick Armey retired in 2002, his protégé and fellow Texas Congressman, Tom DeLay, stepped into his place. Like Armey, DeLay openly espouses Christian Zionist ideology, using such coded terms as "Judea and Samaria" to describe today's occupied Palestine. DeLay's replacement, Roy Blunt, a Republican Congressman from Missouri, is also a militant Christian Zionist.

While rejected by all mainline Christian churches in the United States, so-called "Christian Zionist" ideology is ag-



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"About 1980," Kiracofe said, "the parasitic neo-conservative element in the Republican Party aligned with the fundamentalist Christian Right," with its Christian Zionist ideology. Rev. Pat Robertson, shown here with Rev. Sun Myung Moon, is a typical Christian Zionist.

gressively promoted by a small minority of "fundamentalists" linked to the Jewish Zionist lobby in the United States, and allied to the most militant extremist elements of the Israeli political spectrum such as the Gush Emunim.

Christian Zionists, such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, follow the bizarre cultic theology spread in parts of the United States during the mid-19th Century by the de-frocked Anglican priest from England, John Nelson Darby. In a series of visits between 1859 and 1872, Darby promoted his cult in the United States and Canada. A simple Internet search of the name "John Nelson Darby" will flood your desktops with ample data, I can assure you.

But let me say briefly that this bizarre 19th Century millennialist cult has no relationship, at all, to the traditional Christian churches established in the United States during the 17th and 18th centuries. This cult has nothing to do with the traditional Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, German Reformed, Mennonite, Amish, and all other such authentic Christian churches that have for centuries transmitted authentic spiritual values in the United States.

The Darbyite cultists often refer to themselves as "Dispensationalists." This term is derived from John Nelson Darby's bizarre, and blasphemous, idea that history is divided into seven periods that he calls "dispensations." According to Darby, mankind has been in the seventh and final "dispensation," or age, since about the 19th Century. Darby said that because humankind lives in the final age, the so-called "End Times" are near.

Darby said Jews must be gathered into the Holy Land to await the imminent arrival of the Messiah. Hence, Darbyism is a form of Zionism, and that is why these people currently

call themselves "Christian Zionists." It is a strange form of Zionism, because Darbyites say that only 144,000 Jews of those eventually assembled in the Holy Land would be converted to Christian belief and thereby saved at this time; the rest would perish in the fires of the Apocalypse.

Darbyite cult followers believe that prior to the Apocalypse they, and they alone, will be taken bodily to Heaven by means of a so-called "Rapture." I would note that the rapture concept was an add-on to Darby's ideas developed by a British cult colleague of his, Edward Irving.

Because this bizarre apocalyptic Darbyite cult lies behind the Christian Zionist influence in Congress, and in the Administration, it must be understood for what it is. One can explain the behavior of a Dick Armey and a Tom DeLay and dozens of members of Congress, as well as some Senators, when it is understood that they themselves are Darbyite Christian Zionists.

If you have noticed that President George W. Bush's speeches are generously sprinkled with unusual Biblical and religious references, you should bear in mind that his former chief speech writer and current top White House advisor, Michael Gerson, is himself a Christian Zionist.

Christian Zionists and the Israeli Radical Right

The relevant background on the Israeli link to American Christian Zionists dates to the 1967 war. In the wake of the war, extremist elements in Israel formed the "Movement for Greater Israel," and the "settler" movement that established Kiryat Arba near Hebron. The extremist Gush Emunim settler organization grew out of this environment.

In the years after 1967, the Gush Emunim became the leading edge of the Israeli New Right. The components of this New Right were three: Labor Party factions supporting the Movement for Greater Israel, the new religious-nationalist activists, and the old-line Jabotinsky nationalist right converted into the Begin-led Herut party.

From 1974 to 1977, three Labor Party leaders vied for supremacy, and each had his Gush Emunim supporter within his ministry. Prime Minister Rabin had General Ariel Sharon as his special advisor. Defense Minister Shimon Peres had Yuval Ne'eman, later leader of the pro-Gush Emunim Hatechayah party. Foreign Minister Yigal Allon was the patron of the fanatic settler network behind Kiryat Arba.

By the time that the Likud came into power in 1977, the power of the Gush Emunim over the government was complete because Begin was a long-time supporter of the settler movement.

In the United States, as I mentioned earlier, the Carter Administration attempted to pursue a more even-handed policy in the Middle East in the face of an omnipotent domestic pro-Israel Zionist lobby. So hard-line Jewish Zionist policy intellectuals formerly associated with the Democratic Party as "Scoop Jackson Democrats" adopted a new stance. These

neo-conservatives penetrated the Republican Party foreign policy network, with a view to the 1980 election and a potential victory of Ronald Reagan.

Prior to the 1980 elections in the United States, the Israeli New Right made preparations to form political relationships with the Christian fundamentalist groups in the United States that adhered to the Darbyite apocalyptic cultic theology. These Christian Zionists, in turn, would pressure Congress and the White House to support the right-wing Likud Party's expansionist "Eretz Israel" (Greater Israel) policy. This Eretz Israel policy means, quite simply, permanently annexing the West Bank and Gaza, or what we call occupied Palestine.

The political alignment between the radical Israeli New Right and the Christian Zionists would enhance the position and influence of the Jewish neo-conservatives in a Republican administration in Washington.

One Israeli operational guide for targetting and manipulating Christian Zionists in the United States appeared in 1978. It is entitled, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel*. Written by the late Israeli scholar Yonah Malachy, the book was published by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In 1979, Jerry Falwell's trip to Israel cemented the alliance between the Darbyite Christian Zionists in the United States and the Likud Party in Israel. In fact, the American Christian Zionists developed complex and close relations with a range of extreme right-wing Messianic Jewish circles in Israel including the Gush Emunim, the "Settlers" movement, and the old-line Jabotinsky right-wing nationalists of Begin's Herut Party.

A key international Christian Zionist organization called the "International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem" (ICEJ) appeared in Jerusalem on Sept. 20, 1980. Mayor Teddy Kollek hosted the opening ceremony, and the organization became a leading international Christian Zionist support mechanism for the Likud's "Eretz Israel" ("Greater Israel") policy. The ICEJ's Washington, D.C. office became a focal point for Christian Zionist political and lobbying activity in the United States. I would point out that the ICEJ has numerous branch offices in Europe.

After several years of organizational activity in the United States, the Christian Zionist lobby came out of the closet with its first "National Prayer Breakfast for Israel" held in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 6, 1985. The event attracted many key political personalities and supporters.

The keynote speaker did not pull any punches. He said, and I quote: "A sense of history, a sense of poetry, and a sense of morality imbued the Christian Zionists who more than a century ago began to write, and plan, and organize for Israel's restoration. . . . The writings of Christian Zionists, British and American, directly influenced the thinking of such pivotal leaders as Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour, and Woodrow Wilson."



John Nelson Darby, a defrocked Anglican priest, spread Christian Zionism in the United States in the mid-19th Century. Today, the Christian Zionists are linked to the right-wing expansionists in Israel, although ironically, the bizarre Christian Zionist ideology includes the belief that only a fraction of the Jews who return to the Holy Land (144,000, to be exact) will be saved at the time of the Apocalypse.

The keynote speaker was none other than the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Benjamin Netanyahu. Today, he is the Foreign Minister of Israel.

Over the past decade, the so-called "National Unity Coalition for Israel" emerged as an important lobbying arm of the American Christian Zionists. It is not surprising that this organization—and many like it—has close links to the International Christian Embassy-Jerusalem, to neo-conservatives in Washington think-tanks, and to neo-conservative operatives inside the Bush Administration.

On Capitol Hill, the National Unity Coalition for Israel works in parallel with the well-established and influential American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Religious Right organizations such as the Christian Coalition, to dominate Congress when it comes to legislation and policy relating to the Middle East.

Conclusion

So, "What is to be done?"

At home, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—who oppose the extremist policies of the neo-conservatives and Christian Zionists—must work together to support a non-partisan foreign policy based squarely on our traditional principles in order to defend our national interests, and in order to promote peace and justice in today's world.

The Republican Party must, sooner or later, exclude the influence of the neo-conservatives and the Christian Zionists. These parasitic elements are a disgrace to the Republican Party, and to its highest ideals as embodied by our martyred President, Abraham Lincoln. They represent a clear danger to our Republic's constitutional order and national security.

Abroad, concerned Americans must reach out to those who are committed to the construction of a world order based on Westphalian principles of an international society composed of sovereign states, ordering their relations under international law. Our conference here in Berlin today is a direct contribution to this end and, again, I thank our hosts for providing this opportunity.