

## The Bush Doctrine and Iraq

### A Sound Application of a Sound Doctrine

Some conservative critics, such as Patrick Buchanan, Bruce Bartlett, Jonathan Clarke, and Stefan Halper, have accused the neoconservatives and President George W. Bush of betraying the Reagan legacy in foreign affairs.<sup>1</sup> This is false. The foreign and national security policies of President Bush largely reflect not only Ronald Reagan's legacy, but that of other great presidents who prevailed over perilous threats to freedom. Moreover, thoughtful critics of neoconservatism such as Francis Fukuyama also recognize the fundamental affinity between the neoconservatives and Reagan in the realm of foreign affairs:

Of the two presidents in question [Reagan and Bush], Ronald Reagan in my view more clearly qualifies as a neoconservative. Much as his critics are loath to admit it, Ronald Reagan was an intellectual of sorts: in the first decade of his career, all he had to offer were ideas and arguments about communism and the free market, American values, and the defects of reigning liberal orthodoxy. He also bore a similarity to the City College crowd insofar as he came to anticommunism from the left: he started out as a Democrat and an admirer of Franklin Roosevelt and was a labor leader as president of the Screen Actors Guild. His insights about the nature of

communism seem to have arisen as a result of his struggles with communists or communist sympathizers in Hollywood. . . . He believed firmly that the internal character of regimes defined their external behavior and was initially unwilling to compromise with the Soviet Union because he saw more clearly than most its internal contradictions and weaknesses.<sup>2</sup>

No one speaks more authoritatively on this subject than George Shultz, President Reagan's secretary of state:

I don't know how you define "neoco conservatism," but I think it's associated with trying to spread open systems and democracy. I recall President Reagan's Westminster Speech in 1982—that communism would be consigned to "the ash heap of history" and that freedom was the path ahead. And what happened? Between 1980 and 1990, the number of countries that were classified as "free" or "mostly free" increased by about 50 percent. Open political and economic systems have been gaining ground and there is good reason for it. They work better. I don't know whether that is neoconservative or what it is, but I think it's what has been happening. I'm for it. . . . I'm in favor of the vision. Ronald Reagan had a vision.<sup>3</sup>

As Daniel Heninger observes, likewise, neoconservatives did not originate the Bush Doctrine's most controversial tenet—preemption. Shultz himself was the father of that idea during the Reagan administration.<sup>4</sup> "We must reach a consensus in this country," Shultz said in 1984, "that our responses to terrorism should go beyond passive defense to consider active means of prevention and retaliation."<sup>5</sup>

A fundamental affinity exists, too, between the outlooks of Presidents George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan: as happened to President Reagan, critics have lacerated President Bush for his controversial policies. Likewise, as also happened to President Reagan, President Bush's detractors have called him stupid, uninformed, a unilateralist menacing our traditional allies, morally arrogant, a cowboy, and fiscally irresponsible.

Like Reagan with regard to nuclear weapons and strategic defense, President George W. Bush concluded that the events of September 11, 2001, rendered obsolete defensive strategies that assumed our adversaries always

calculated risks rationally, especially with the ominous convergence of the proliferation of WMD and the rise of fanatical movements devoted to destroying American freedom. Like Ronald Reagan and Harry Truman with regard to the Soviet Union, and like Franklin Roosevelt with regard to Nazi Germany and imperial Japan, President Bush sought to inject moral clarity into the struggles with our enemies. Like his great predecessors, he defines regime change and the spread of stable, liberal democracy to address the real root cause of aggression as the ultimate goal in the war on terror.

President Bush even echoes President Reagan's very words in making his case for the imperative to spread democracy. Delivering an address to the British Parliament on June 8, 1982, Ronald Reagan declared:

The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the intra-structure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means. This is not cultural imperialism; it is providing the means for genuine self-determination and protection for diversity. Democracy already flourishes in countries with different cultures and historical experiences. It would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy. Who would voluntarily choose not to have the right to vote, decide to purchase government propaganda handouts instead of independent newspapers, prefer government to worker-controlled unions, opt for land to be owned by the state instead of by those who till it, want government repression of religious liberty, a single political party instead of a free choice, a rigid cultural orthodoxy instead of democratic tolerance and diversity?<sup>6</sup>

Delivering his Second Inaugural Address, President George W. Bush declared:

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-

government, because no one is fit to be master, and no one deserves to be slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time. So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.<sup>7</sup>

Presidents Reagan and Bush thus largely agree on first principles of American foreign policy. The differences in the strategic circumstances each faced account for the minor variation that exists in their approach. The existence of the Soviet Union, armed with thousands of nuclear weapons, deprived President Reagan of the same latitude in an era of bipolarity that his successors have enjoyed in a unipolar age, in which American power is pre-eminent. Virtually all the major figures serving at the upper echelon of the Reagan administration's defense and foreign policy apparatus endorsed President Bush's conduct of and rationale for the war on terror, including the invasion of Iraq.

The Bush Doctrine is indeed a prudential strategy for the post-9/11 world. To be sure, the president has not embraced the strategy of preemption (really prevention) as the norm. This option is just one aspect of a comprehensive strategy that includes building ballistic missile defense, strengthening nonproliferation endeavors, and mounting effective collective diplomatic action when possible. Nevertheless, the president wisely included prevention and preemption (the latter arises when the threat is more imminent) as potential options in the war on terror.

As the lessons of history attest, critics of the president are wrong to object to prevention or preemption categorically. Whether it is prudent to use force preemptively or preventively depends on the interplay of circumstances: the gravity of the danger, the probability of its consummation but for decisive action, the likelihood of the threat's being dealt with successfully by preemptive means, and the availability of other, more plausible, less risky alternatives. The Bush Doctrine constitutes the same type of innovative response to the dynamics and changing conditions of world politics as the belated but necessary abandonment of isolationism during the twentieth century. Facing rogue regimes or terrorists with a dangerous propensity

to take enormous risk, a prudent statesmen may have to use decisive force sooner rather than later.

As the lessons of history attest, critics are wrong to object to the Bush Doctrine because it does not defer categorically to the UN Security Council or to multilateralism in any guise as an end in itself. The inability of the UN to operate effectively against powerful aggressors is intrinsic to the institution. The unquenchable hostility of the French to American leadership also precludes unanimous NATO support for any American enterprise outside Europe entailing the vigorous use of force.<sup>8</sup>

As the lessons of history also attest, critics are wrong to deem as arrogant and imprudent President Bush's commitment to spreading democracy to the Middle East. This aspect of the Bush Doctrine is not new; rather, it is tried and true and based on one of the few robust theories of international politics for which there is abundant empirical confirmation: stable, liberal democracies do not go to war with one another. As is consistent with the grand traditions of American diplomacy that World War II and the Cold War vindicated, President Bush also considers regime change a fundamental part of American grand strategy in the war on terror, a war that we did not initiate but our adversaries thrust upon us. As President Bush put it:

The war we fight today is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the twenty-first century. On one side are those who believe in the values of freedom and moderation—the right of all people to speak, and worship, and live in liberty. And on the other side are those driven by the values of tyranny and extremism—the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views on all the rest. . . . You have seen this kind of enemy before. They're successors to Fascists, to Nazis, to Communists, and other totalitarians of the twentieth century. And history shows what the outcome will be: This war will be difficult; this war will be long; and this war will end in the defeat of the terrorists and totalitarians, and a victory for the cause of freedom and liberty.<sup>9</sup>

Granted, many thoughtful people believe that regime change will fail in the Middle East: that it is too ambitious; that unlike those in Western Europe and Japan after World War II, the conditions there are not propitious for stable, liberal democracy to succeed.<sup>10</sup> Critics of the Bush Doctrine point

to the electoral success of the terrorist organization Hamas and the surging violence in Iraq as evidence for the folly of the Bush administration's policy of encouraging democracy in the Middle East. Their argument runs as follows. The United States cannot impose democracy by force; it must wait for it to emerge organically, only when a mature, civil society is in place. Meanwhile, the United States is better off relying on authoritarian dictators such as Mubarak in Egypt, because the real alternatives are terrorism, fundamentalism, and anarchy.<sup>11</sup>

Although these are serious arguments, under current circumstances the case for the Bush approach is more compelling. For one thing, few at the time were optimistic about establishing stable, liberal democracy in Japan or Germany, or throughout a defeated, demoralized Europe confronting a malevolent, powerful, brutal, and insatiably expansionist Soviet Union. Before American occupation after World War II, the only experiences Germany and Japan had with democracy ended badly: the reviled Weimar democracy in Germany between 1918 and 1933, and the not much more highly regarded Taisho democracy in Japan during the 1920s.

Nor are al-Qaeda adherents or the terrorists in Iraq the first homicide bombers the United States has encountered. Imperial Japan employed this gruesome tactic against us formidably during the Second World War. Who, too, would have predicted in 1944, with a Nazi regime still fanatically implementing the "Final Solution" even on the brink of total defeat, that West Germany would emerge as a stable, liberal democracy just four years later, thanks in no small measure to the enlightened but firm use of American military, economic, and political power.

The Marshall Plan and the NATO alliance so pivotal to Western Europe's democratic resurgence came about as responses to conditions in Europe that had deteriorated a full two to three years after the end of World War II. The dispatches of many American foreign policy experts in 1946 and early 1947 brim with pessimism about Europe's prospects and American purposes.<sup>12</sup> Many important developments in the Middle East over recent months have contingently confirmed rather than confounded the president's determination to push for regime change and democratization. Witness, in this regard, the Iraqi elections; the drafting of a decent Iraqi constitution; the dismantling of Libya's WMD program; the breakup of the Pakistani A. Q. Khan's nuclear smuggling ring; the largest in history; the end of Syrian tyr-

any in Lebanon; demonstrations against homicide bombers in Jordan; and mounting demands for reform throughout the region. Though still facing formidable obstacles, those who believe in democracy and civil society are finally emerging as serious actors, thanks in large measure to the American invasion of Iraq. Saad Ibrahim, a democratic activist in Egypt, originally opposed the war, but he changed his mind: "It has unfrozen the Middle East, just as Napoleon's 1798 expedition did. Elections in Iraq force theocrats and autocrats to put democracy on the agenda, even if only to fight against us. Look, neither Napoleon nor President Bush could impregnate the region with political change. But they were able to be the midwives."<sup>13</sup>

If, as even thoughtful critics of the president such as Fareed Zakaria admit, "Iraq, Afghanistan, and perhaps an independent Palestine and a democratic Lebanon are thriving countries with modern political and economic systems, America will be honored and respected—and the talk of anti-American terror will have dissipated considerably." Zakaria is wrong, however, to suggest that the United States will not be significantly better off in the Middle East if these countries remain "more chaotic and troubled," like those in Central Europe.<sup>14</sup> Even this more modest outcome would be a vast improvement, just as Eastern Europe is significantly better off without the Soviet Union, regardless of the regions' current troubles.<sup>15</sup> Contrary to the untenable claims of Francis Fukuyama, the United States cannot achieve such benign results merely by relying on a crude historicism, sociology, economics, or other categories of social science. The defeat of radical Ba'athist or Islamist ideologies, menacing to millions in the Middle East and beyond, depends on the decisive use of American power. Or as Fouad Ajami, a professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, incisively put it:

A battle broader than Iraq itself, then, was playing out in the country. There was no need for the United States to apologize to the other Arabs or Iran's theocrats about its presence in Iraq and its aims for that country. The custodians of Arab power, and the vast majority of the political class in the Arab world, never saw or named the terrible cruelties of Iraq under Saddam Hussein. A political culture that averted its gaze from mass graves and worked itself up into self-righteous hysteria had turned its back on political reason.<sup>16</sup>

Keep this in mind, too: critics wrongly assailed Ronald Reagan's demand for democratic regime change in Eastern Europe in the very same terms as those who now criticize President George W. Bush. Democracy has often succeeded in places such as South Korea, India, South Africa, the Philippines, and El Salvador, where many of the purported prerequisites for democracy were wholly or partially lacking.<sup>17</sup> In the Middle East, with the dangerous intersection of radicalism, tyranny, and the spread of WMD, the United States does not have the luxury of waiting for the organic growth of democracy any more than it did with Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. Those who would rely on authoritarian regimes as the bulwark of American foreign policy in the region confuse rigidity for stability: many autocratic regimes such as Saudi Arabia's are neither durable in the long term nor all that reliably moderate. Even in places such as the Palestinian territories, where elections yielded results we justifiably deplore, a brutal and corrupt PLO under Arafat offered no better alternative for peace, provisional justice, or stability. A more decent and responsible leadership will never emerge in Palestine without the necessary if insufficient conditions of elections and transparency. The United States must remain firm and patient until Palestinians renounce at the ballot box the radicalism of either Hamas or Arafat's PLO.<sup>18</sup>

Even if democracy will not succeed swiftly or in all places in the Middle East, promoting it is a more prudential strategy than the alternative of neglecting the real root cause of 9/11 and similarly inspired aggression: the insidious interaction of poverty, brutality, and oppression that spawns secular and religious radicals and rogue regimes implacably hostile to the United States mainly for what it is rather than what it does.

The invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam in March 2003 was necessary and long overdue. Saddam was a symbol of defiance to American power in a region emboldened to defy it, especially after 9/11. Saddam not only had once possessed WMD, but had used them at home and abroad: against Kurds, Shiites, and Iranians. He launched Scud missiles into Israel during the First Gulf War. To the end, Saddam continued to act as if he possessed weapons of mass destruction; every reputable intelligence service shared our assumption that he still possessed them, an error for which Saddam rather than President Bush was to blame. According to the Kay Commission and the Duelfer Report, Saddam never wavered in his determination to reacquire WMD once the UN sanctions (already so porous) inevitably

broke down completely. Nor could the United States have prudently relied on the UN inspectors to verify Saddam's compliance with the disarmament resolutions, which the UN lacked the will to enforce. Saddam also exploited the rampantly corrupt UN oil-for-food program to buy off the French, Russians, and Chinese to abet his diabolical plans for developing WMD capability.<sup>19</sup>

For decades Saddam demonstrated a propensity to take enormous risks that rendered inadequate the options of containing or deterring him. He mounted an assassination attempt against an American president, maintained a regime hideous even by the low standards of the Middle East, and routinely assisted homicide bombers on the West Bank of Palestine (if not al-Qaeda directly) by paying the families of such murderers \$25,000 per family for blowing up elderly Jews worshiping at a Passover Seder. Saddam also had ample opportunity to save himself and his regime by complying with the UN sanctions, which would have deprived President Bush of the political support necessary to wage a war to remove him.<sup>20</sup> Contrary to the claims of the president's critics, the strategy of containing Iraq had reached the point of diminishing moral and strategic returns. Sanctions imposed monumental suffering on millions of innocent Iraqis without addressing the real root cause of their misery and the source of the danger to Iraq's neighbors: Saddam's odious regime.<sup>21</sup>

In the war on terror, there is simply no substitute for American power and the willingness to use it in collaboration with as many allies as possible and as is compatible with the integrity of the mission. Ponder the lessons of our current predicaments with North Korea and Iran, where negotiations alone have yielded nothing but dissimulation and defiance. This is not to say the United States should use preemptive force against these rogue regimes. Nor should the United States rule out the use of military force against them. The cost of destroying the Iranian WMD program would be greater than in the case of Iraq, the chances of success more remote, the alternatives more plausible, and Iranians perhaps more deterrable. North Korea is not a symbol of defiance to the United States. It is a hideous but dying regime whose extinction we should hasten as much as possible within the bounds of prudence. Nevertheless, the United States is right to aim for regime change in Iran and North Korea as well as Iraq.<sup>22</sup> In the case of Iran, the argument for preemption has become stronger as the Iranian nuclear program has become riper and the Iranian leadership more militant and reckless. Indeed,

The president has reiterated that victory will also take time and persistent effort across many fronts.<sup>27</sup> Iraqis must overcome not only decades of brutal tyranny but Saddam's devastation of the nation, which ravaged its economy, infrastructure, and human capital. The United States and Iraqis face a ruthless enemy in a region with tyrannies such as Syria and Iran actively working to undermine fledgling Iraqi democracy. Many Iraqi Sunni Muslims have yet to come to terms with their unaccustomed role as a minority in a new democracy rather than a pillar of Saddam's Bath Party. The intensity of sectarian violence remains distressingly high, despite the success of the American military in smiting the symbol of the insurgency's fanaticism: the homicidal Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. It will require a long-term, integrated military, economic, and political strategy to prevail over Iraqi terrorism and insurgency.<sup>28</sup> The administration should heed, too, the advice of William Kristol and Rich Lowry, stalwart supporters of the Bush Doctrine, that more U.S. troops in Iraq would significantly improve Americans chances of success.<sup>29</sup>

Yet the United States should not exaggerate the difficulties the Bush administration has faced or underestimate the considerable progress it has achieved. We face a far less dangerous situation now with Saddam gone than we did before; we face a far less dangerous world now than in 1941 or 1961, when two vastly more powerful evil empires menaced us. The first phase of the Iraq War of 2003 went much better than expected; even this more difficult phase, which we should have anticipated better, has been less costly by far than past wars of comparable or even lesser magnitude.<sup>30</sup> For instance, the United States lost more than 4,000 dead pacifying the Philippines between 1898 and 1902—considerably more than the more than 2,900 Americans servicemen killed in Iraq as of the end of October 2006.<sup>31</sup> More than 58,000 American soldiers lost their lives in the Vietnam War, which ended in defeat. Likewise, the tragic loss of American combat lives in Iraq pales in comparison to those in the Civil War (660,000); World War II (450,000); World War I (175,000); and Korea (38,000). Although we have a long way to go, the United States has already accomplished an enormous amount in Iraq, including “the removal of Saddam’s tyranny, negotiation of an interim constitution, restoration of full sovereignty, holding of free national elections, drafting of a permanent constitution, ratification of that constitution, introduction of a sound currency, gradual restoration of Iraq’s neglected infrastructure, and the ongoing training and equipping

prudence dictates that the United States ought to pursue regime change in Iran—by vigilant containment if possible but by force if containment fails. The Iranian author Amir Taheri compellingly explains why:

The Islamic Republic is unlike any of the regimes in its environment, or indeed, anywhere in the world. It is genetically programmed to clash not only with those of its neighbors who do not wish to emulate its political system but also with those powers that all too reasonably regard Khomeinism as a threat to regional stability and world peace. . . . For as long as the Islamic Republic continues to behave as a revolutionary cause, it will be impossible for others, including the United States, to consider it a partner, let alone a friend or an ally. This does not exclude talks, or even periods of relative détente, as happened with the USSR during the Cold War. But just as the Soviet Union remained an enemy of the free world right up until the end, so the Islamic Republic will remain an enemy until it once more becomes a nation-state.<sup>32</sup>

Americans should not minimize the serious difficulties that lie ahead in Iraq or in the war on terror. The United States has lost more than 2,900 lives in the war in Iraq, every one of which is precious. The costs continue to mount. The month of October 2006 was one of the deadliest months for U.S. troops in Iraq. The United States has spent more than \$200 billion in the noble attempt to create democracy in Iraq; homicide bombers still blow up innocent Iraqis without remorse. As even its informed supporters have conceded, the Bush administration made some indisputable errors in the implementation of the Bush Doctrine in Iraq: the failure to police the Iraq-Syrian border; “the lack of post-invasion planning; the lack of ground troops; the lack of coordination of oversight; and the lack of electricity.”<sup>34</sup> Charles Krauthammer rightly criticizes the administration for mishandling the trial of Saddam Hussein. The United States has allowed Saddam to control the proceedings rather than use them to educate the Iraqi people about the horrors of his regime.<sup>35</sup> Just as the Nuremberg trials enormously bolstered the prospects for democracy in West Germany by exposing the monstrosities of the Nazi regimes, the trial of Saddam could have the same beneficial effect for Iraqi democracy if the Iraqis and their American allies restore order and deny Saddam the capacity to disrupt the proceedings.<sup>36</sup>

of Iraq's security forces."<sup>32</sup> For all the misgivings about the way the administration has handled its policy, even Fareed Zakaria does not consider Iraq a hopeless cause that should be abandoned. Zakaria chides antiwar critics that the old order in Iraq rested on fear and terror. He depicts the situation in Iraq as "stumbling toward nation-building by consent, not brutality" and considers Iraq "as a model for the Middle East."<sup>33</sup>

Dwell on these eloquent words of an Arab merchant, which describe contemporary realities in the Middle East with uncommon clarity and candor:

The biggest problem . . . is that George Bush opened a can of worms and all of a sudden everybody realized there is no such thing as the Arab world or Moslem world for that matter. With one sweep, he cleared the deck and exposed everyone to the false world they have been living in. A fact that they do not want to recognize and do not want to face. They are scared of the future and fighting to preserve the false world they have been living in. Their dream is to make the U.S. fail.<sup>34</sup>

Critics have judged President Bush on the basis of a utopian standard the world's greatest commanders in chief would have failed to meet. Should we rate Abraham Lincoln poorly and treat him with contempt because of the veritable litany of mistakes, disasters, and poor commanders that made the Civil War the most costly war in our history—exponentially more costly than the war on terror? Have the Bush administration's mistakes and miscalculations reached the level of FDR's and the American military's in World War II—Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, the Kasserine Pass, Tarawa, Anzio, Dresden? Yet no sensible, informed person denies Lincoln or FDR his due rank as being among our greatest commanders in chief. Nor does any sensible, informed person deny Churchill's greatness despite his serious and costly mistakes: the Norway Campaign of 1940; the debacle in Greece in 1940; the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*; the fall of Singapore; and his illusions about Italy and Greece constituting the soft underbelly of Hitler's Europe. Nor should we reconsider Truman's justifiably lofty ranking as a foreign policy president because of his administration's monumental failure to anticipate Chinese intervention in the Korean War. It is therefore unfair, unwise, and premature to pronounce President Bush

an incompetent commander in chief, given the magnitude of the endeavors the administration has undertaken in response to a clear and gathering danger.<sup>35</sup>

The president also has displayed a firmer grasp of the essentials, specifics, and dynamics of the insurgency than his critics. Consider, for example, the deeply flawed analysis of former ambassador Richard Holbrooke, a leading candidate for secretary of state in any future Democratic administration. In a widely read editorial in the *Washington Post* that represents the conventional wisdom among the president's detractors, Holbrooke assails the president's policies as "a muddle-headed version of Wilsonianism," which he claims has resulted "in an unprecedented decline in America's position in the world," provoked "dangerous, new anti-American coalitions," and encouraged "a new generation of terrorists." Holbrooke calls instead for "unwinding America's disastrous policy in Iraq," negotiating with the Iranians and the Syrians, and reviving the Clinton administration's policies of active engagement with the Arab-Israeli peace process.<sup>36</sup>

Yet what Holbrooke recommends is merely a reprise of the failed policies of the past, which grim experience has discredited. It was during the Carter administration and its inept handling of the Soviet threat and the hostage crisis with Iran that American international prestige sank to its lowest level since before World War II. It was the Clinton administration that pursued a feckless multilateralism oblivious to the reasonable distinction between democratic India's nuclear weapons program and the nuclear aspirations of rogue regimes such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. It was the Clinton administration that ineffectually negotiated an arms control agreement North Korea, which tranquilized the United States as the North Korean nuclear program proceeded unabated. It was the Clinton administration that contributed mightily to the dangerous erosion of American credibility that preceded 9/11: by its failure to follow through on Vice President Al Gore's demand for regime change in Iraq; by its precipitous withdrawal from Somalia after the firefight in Mogadishu; by its halting and ineffective responses to the Khobar Tower bombings and the attack on the *USS Cole*; by its incremental, halfhearted use of force against Saddam when he threw out the UN weapons inspectors in 1998. It was President Clinton who invited Arafat to the White House more than any other leader, on the premise that Arafat had abandoned his goal of eliminating Israel—a premise that Dennis Ross, President Clinton's chief negotiator for the so-

in a culture of tyranny, bears for the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>40</sup> The president and the nation should reject any of the commissions' recommendations to repudiate the Bush Doctrine's pivotal goal of bringing more freedom to people of the Middle East.<sup>41</sup>

Not, contrary to the conventional wisdom, did the administration err in disbanding the Iraqi army and purging it of Baathist elements after the initial phase of the war concluded with the liberation of Baghdad. Keeping the army intact would have made a difficult situation much worse. Imagine the insurgency the United States would face if Sunni Baathists still controlled the armed forces responsible for murdering hundreds of thousands of Shites and Kurds, who collectively constitute the vast majority of the Iraqi population.<sup>42</sup>

Also, critics who focus on the cost of the Bush administration's actions and those on the fence have reacted had the Bush administration remained paralyzed in the UN with Saddam still in defiance, flouting seventeen UN resolutions? Felicitously, President Bush rendered these hypothetical questions. Nor can the United States prudently afford to set an arbitrary deadline for the withdrawal of coalition forces. Leaving Iraq too soon risks repeating the catastrophic mistakes of the United States' withdrawing from Europe precipitously after World War I and leaving Saddam in power after the First Gulf War. It would signal to terrorists, tyrants, and rejectionists that the United States lacks the will to prevail. British Prime Minister Tony Blair put it best:

Today's worldwide struggle against terrorists is not a clash between civilizations. It is a clash about civilization. It is the age-old battle between progress and reaction, between those who embrace and see opportunity in the modern world and those who reject its existence. Critics of intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan advocate a view which sees the world as not without challenge, but basically calm, with a few nasty things lurking in deep waters, which is best to avoid. That stance amounts to a doctrine of benign inactivity. . . . The failure to construct a common global policy based on common values would risk chaos threatening our stability—economic and political—through letting extremism, conflict, and injustice go unchecked. Terrorist violence springs from deeply embedded

called Israeli-Palestinian peace process, has repudiated.<sup>37</sup> It was the Clinton administration that stumbled badly in dealing with Serbian aggression in Bosnia and Kosovo until it belatedly and momentarily came to its senses and bypassed rather than deferred to the United Nations. It was the Clinton administration, according to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, that systematically slighted the salience of religion and regime type in world politics. It was the Clinton administration that insisted that the Balkans crisis, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the al-Qaeda bombings of the U.S. embassy had nothing to do with religion.<sup>38</sup>

It is President Bush who recognizes that negotiating with these rogue regimes will yield only illusions on our side and defiance on theirs. It is President Bush who recognizes the futility of negotiating with Hamas until it abandons its goal of eradicating Israel. It is President Bush who recognizes that the United States must prevail in Iraq lest the blow to America prestige that Holbrooke rightly worries about becomes a reality. It is President Bush who recognizes that the real root cause of the war on terror: the culture of tyranny and oppression that has spawned and sustained an unsavory coalition of Islamo-fascists, jihadists, and secular radicals who identify American freedom as their mortal enemy. It is President Bush who recognizes the imperative of democratic regime change in the Middle East to address this root cause of the conflict.

President Bush is also wiser than his conservative critic George H. W. Bush, who has embraced the unrealistic realism of Brent Scowcroft and James Baker III, which will so insightfully repudiated during the 1970s when stalwartly opposing détente as Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, and Jimmy Carter conceived it. What will strives to achieve—stability in the Middle East—is a dangerous illusion when the real root cause of the war on terror, which is our adversaries' regime types and noxious ideologies, is not addressed.<sup>39</sup> It inspires much less confidence in this writer than it does in Will that James Baker III is chairing the Iraq Study Group. Throughout his political career, Baker has proved to be a superior tactician but an unrealistic realist in the realm of foreign policy who has underestimated the significance of regime type and ideology in the realm of foreign affairs. Baker's own account of his tenure as secretary of state starkly reveals that his vaunted realism blinded him to the full dimensions of the Soviet threat during the Cold War, the robustness of the democratic peace, and the primary responsibility that Palestinian intransigence, rooted



ideological roots. Today in well over 30 or 40 countries, terrorists are plotting action loosely linked with this ideology. The struggle against terrorism in Madrid or London or Paris is the same as the struggle against terrorist acts of Hezbollah in Lebanon, or the Islamic Jihad in Palestine or rejectionist groups in Iraq. . . . The fundamental battle is not just a fight against Islamic extremism, but a battle about modernity, about helping unite Islam and democracy. It is a battle of values and progress, and therefore, it is one we must win.<sup>43</sup>

Victory in Iraq is a vital national interest for the United States in waging the war on terror. It will make America safer and stronger by removing a dangerous tyranny, keep terrorists on the run by depriving them of the sanctuary of a rogue regime, and embolden the forces of democratic reform in a region that sorely needs freedom to address the real root cause of terror. Conversely, failure in Iraq would undermine the credibility of American power in the eyes of our friends and enemies, destabilize the entire Middle East, vindicate the brutal tactics of our adversaries, and hence invite more dangerous attacks on the United States and its allies. Courageously defying the prevailing sentiment within his party, Senator Joseph Lieberman, Democrat from Connecticut, found much cause for optimism after his trip to Iraq:

It is a war between 27 million and 10,000; 27 million Iraqis who want to live lives of opportunity and prosperity and roughly 10,000 terrorists who are either Saddam's remnant or Iraqi Islamist extremists or al-Qaeda foreign fighters who know their wretched cause will fail if Iraq becomes free and modern. The terrorists are intent on stopping this by instigating civil war that will produce the chaos that will allow Iraq to replace Afghanistan as the base for fanatical war-making. We are fighting on the side of 27 million because the outcome of the war is critically important to the security and freedom of America. If the terrorists win, they will be emboldened to strike us directly again and to further undermine the growing stability and progress of the Lebanese who have risen up in proud self-determination after the Hariri assassination to eject their Syrian occupiers (the Syrian and Iranian-backed Hezbollah

militias should be next), and the Kuwaitis, Egyptians, and Saudis who have taken steps to open up their governments more broadly to the people. In my meeting with the thoughtful prime minister of Iraq, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, he declared with justifiable pride that his country now has the most open, democratic political system in the Arab world. He is right.<sup>44</sup>

Critics of the Bush Doctrine exaggerate likewise the damage the war in Iraq has inflicted on American alliances and underestimate the diplomatic and military costs of inaction. Our problem with some of our NATO allies, particularly France, is deep and structural, and it long predated the Iraq War. Actually, the diplomatic controversy with Europe over Iraq may work in the long run to improve America's overall diplomatic and political situation: the United States not only bolstered its credibility by eradicating Saddam's tyranny, but exposed to the new Europe—Eastern Europe and our traditional British allies—the depth of French antipathy to the very existence of American power and France's delusional obsession with undermining it at every turn. Ultimately, most of Europe will recoil from France's agenda of weakening a United States that continues to underwrite Europe's freedom and prosperity.

Even on the Arab-Israeli conflict, historically one of the most serious issues of contention between the United States and Europe, European opinion has begun tentatively to move in President Bush's direction. Finally, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has begun to receive at least grudging respect from European leaders for the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and for his contributions to the peace process in a manner that defied their expectations. Great Britain's foreign Secretary Jack Straw lauds Sharon as "a towering figure, not only in Israel but in the whole region." Sharon's efforts to achieve a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute "has earned him huge respect across the world," according to Straw.<sup>45</sup>

Europe's recent experiences with Islamic terrorism and fanaticism—the train bombings in Madrid in 2004, murdering 191 people; the subway bombings in London in 2005, murdering 52 more; the recent victory of the militant Hamas in the Palestinian territory; ferocious Islamic riots over the publication of a mere cartoon in the Danish press—have perhaps begun to dispel the illusions of even the French about the desirability and possibility of appeasing terrorism. "We are not at the point where we would use mea-

sures Israel does, but we understand them better," conceded François Gère, president of the French Institute for Strategic Analysis.<sup>46</sup>

The most plausible objection to the Bush Doctrine is that it establishes a dangerous precedent. There are, however, in the United States already formidable constraints to the abuse of preemption in the form of the separation of powers and public accountability. These constraints also operated with great effect in the debate leading up to the American invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Contrary to the assertions of critics, the United States did not rush to war against Saddam; it resorted to this option only after more than a year of extensive discussion at home and abroad, and only after more than a decade of Saddam's brazen defiance.<sup>47</sup> As a practical matter, no president can resort to the preventive or preemptive use of force cavalierly. Nevertheless, other nations in different circumstances may not calculate so prudently. We cannot evade but must acknowledge this danger, attempt to minimize it by making reasonable distinctions, and strive to create an international environment that discourages the unjust, precipitous resort to prevention or preemption.

## Conclusion

# Beyond the War on Terror

Elsewhere President Bush's foreign policy has largely conformed to the tenets of moral democratic realism. The Bush administration has enjoyed good relations with Russia, despite serious differences. The president has cooperated with Russian President Vladimir Putin when possible, but he has pursued an independent course when necessary. Contrary to the dire warnings of the administration's critics, Russia acquiesced to President Bush's abrogation of the ABM Treaty, a necessary if not sufficient condition for devising comprehensive and effective missile defense for the United States to deal with a wide array of potential threats. The administration also helped to foil Russia's attempt to subvert the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine. Putin heavily-handedly backed Viktor Yanukovich, an authoritarian in his own mold, in the Ukrainian presidential elections of 2004. Emboldened by American and Western European diplomatic pressure on Putin, thousands of Ukrainians wearing orange, the trademark color of Viktor Yushchenko, Yanukovich's Western-oriented opponent, refused to accept the results of a flawed and corrupt election that declared Yanukovich the winner. Consequently, Yushchenko became president in December 2004, in defiance of Putin's ineffectual protests.<sup>48</sup>

None of this adversely affected Soviet-American collaboration in intelligence gathering in the war on terror or in devising a scheme that reduces the danger of loose nuclear weapons from the former Soviet Union getting into the wrong hands. Nevertheless, the antidemocratic trend in Russia over the past five years is disturbing. Although Russia today is not a full-blown dictatorship and Putin still wants good, stable relations with the