



Is the foreign policy of the Bush
Administration driven as much by
Idealism as it is by Realism?

Christian Bühlmann

4 June 2007

1. Introduce the subject

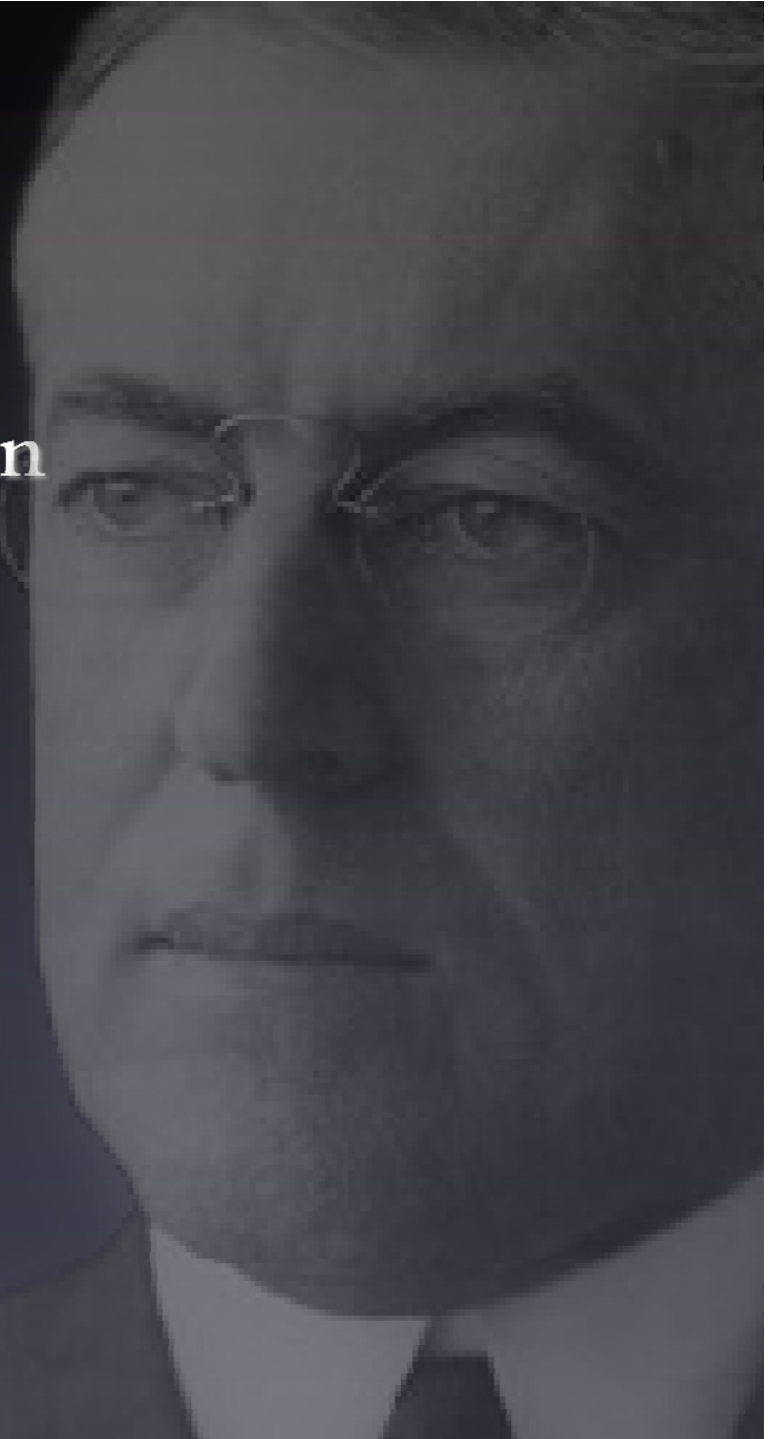
2. Review the sources

3. Frame the discussion

4. Wrap up / conclude

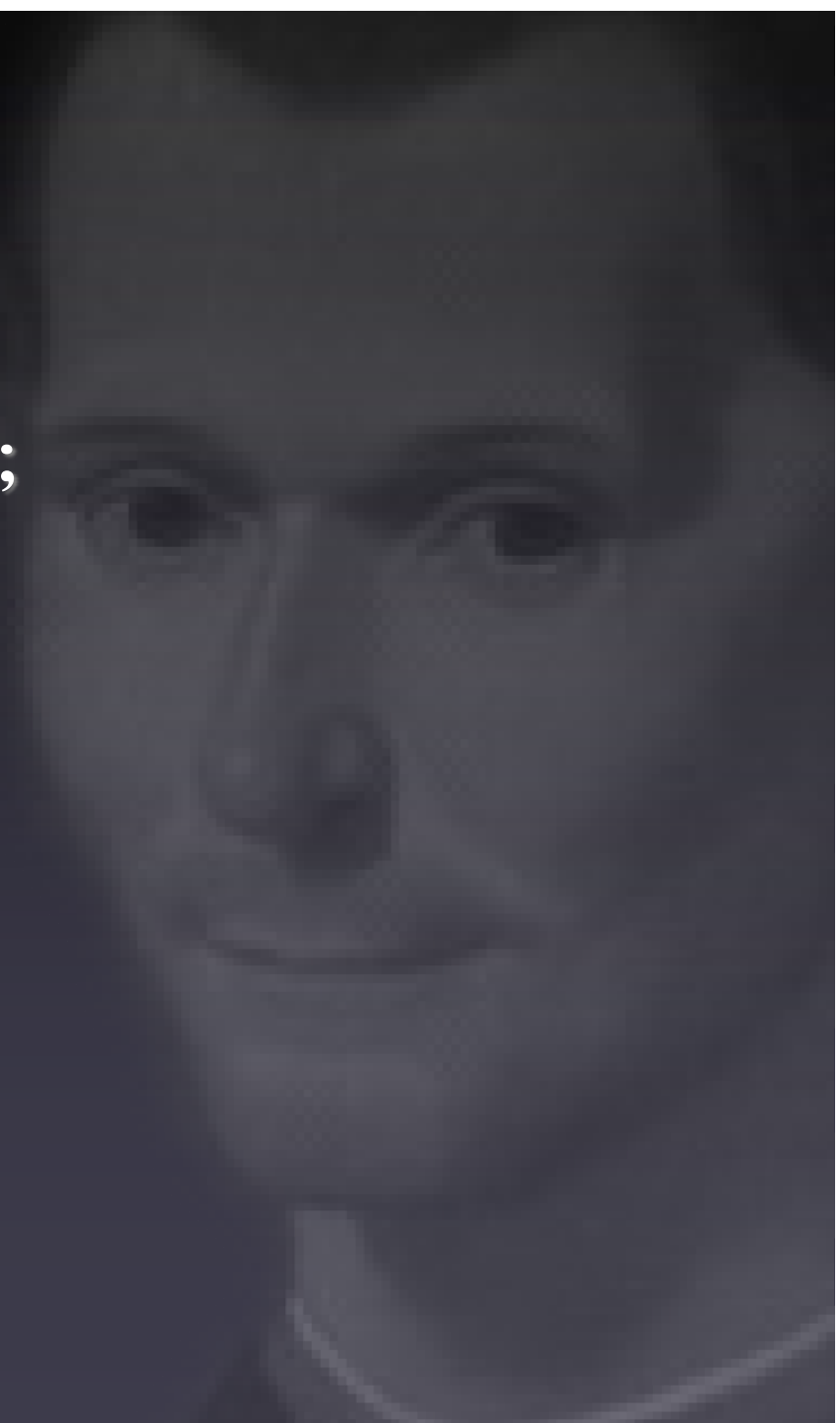
Idealism is about values

- Primacy of values (eg. freedom, democracy, human rights) in ensuring that just political order is obtained
- Assumes cosmopolitan ethics
- Multilateralism
- Internationalism



Realism is about Power

- Balance of power:
key to stability and peace;
- Self-help in an anarchic world;
- Values and the internal structures of states less important (Black box)
- Unilateralism acceptable
- Isolationism acceptable



National Security Strategy of the U.S., 2002

- ...forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.
- Russia is in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future

THE NATIONAL
SECURITY STRATEGY
OF THE
UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA



National Security Strategy of the U.S., 2002

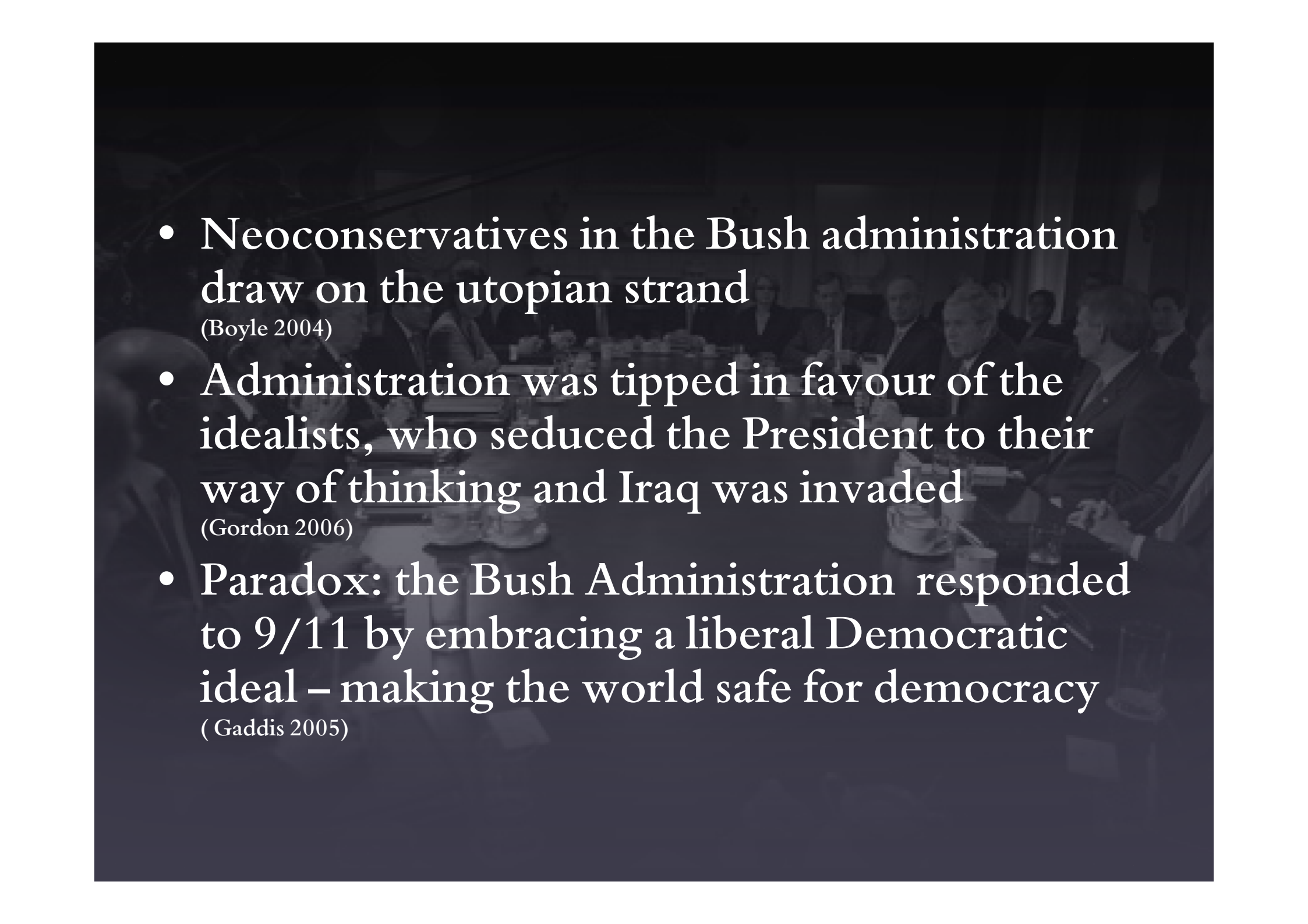
- We do not use our strength to press for unilateral advantage. We seek instead to create a balance of power that favors human freedom
- Prevent another major attack on the U.S.
 - Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government
- America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.
- We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.

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- Neoconservatives in the Bush administration draw on the utopian strand

(Boyle 2004)

- Administration was tipped in favour of the idealists, who seduced the President to their way of thinking and Iraq was invaded

(Gordon 2006)

- Paradox: the Bush Administration responded to 9/11 by embracing a liberal Democratic ideal – making the world safe for democracy

(Gaddis 2005)

Review

- **Between the realist philosophy of Bush Senior and the competing pull of neo-Reaganism**
(Corothers 2003)
- **Neocon = realism + liberalism**
(J Snyder 2004)
- **Establish a sense of proportion between Idealism and Realism**
(Kissinger 2005)

Review

- George W. Bush attracted to the realist label:
 - Realism gives good ‘spin’
 - Places an emphasis on accumulating and wielding military power
(Legro & A Moravcsik 2001)
- Potential failure of Bush’s policy because of the nature of liberalism
(Rhodes 2003)
- Many senior Bush administration officials are not realists
(Mazarr 2003)
- Strategy has more to do with exercising power than with exercising leadership
(Ikenberry 2002)

Review

- Realism vs. idealism does not clearly define Bush's policies: Rather unilateralism and "balance of power"

(Leffler 2003)

- The deep core of Bush's value runs deeper than idealism vs. realism.

(Daalder and Lindsay 2005)

- Limitation of the IR paradigm realism vs. idealism to cope with domestic policies

(Wiarda & Wylie 2002)

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How does the Idealist expectation compare with actual foreign policy?

- *Our national security strategy is idealistic about goals.*
- *Values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.*
- *Russia is in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future*
- *America's national interests and moral values drive us in the same direction: to assist the world's poor citizens and least developed nations and help integrate them into the global economy.*
- *True*
- *US engages with repressive regimes in pursuit of national interests*
- *US bilateral with Georgia, installing missile defence in Eastern Europe*
- *US leading the world in foreign aid in combating HIV/AIDS in Africa.*

How does the Realist expectation compare with actual foreign policy?

- *We seek to create a balance of power*
- *“A Balance of Power That Favors Freedom” (Rice 2002).*
- *Prevent another major attack on the U.S.*
- *The ‘global war on terror includes no great powers like Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Indonesia, and India that could tip the global balance*
- *America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.*
- *Realism does not consider Non State Actors (eg. Al-Qaeda).*
- *National security strategy that recognizes the limits to what even a nation as powerful as the United States can achieve by itself.*
- *Our national security strategy is realistic about means.*
- *Fighting GWOT with multiple, simultaneous fronts*
- *America cannot know peace, security, and prosperity by retreating from the world.*
- *The US is engaging with the world, not going an isolationist path*

Conclusions (1)

- The Bush Administration considers itself 'Realists' but its NSS and actual foreign policy is more 'Idealist'
- The Bush Administration has adulterated both Realism and Idealism
 - More like 'new realism' and 'utopianism'
- Bottom Line: Realism vs Idealism is a false argument
 - Feasible, acceptable, suitable foreign policy requires a balance between the two

Conclusions (2)

- U.S. Foreign policy defined both by external and domestic factors.
- U.S. Foreign policies a mix between ideology (Idealism + Realism), power and (domestic) interests.
- Domestic Foreign policy-making is pluralistic; Special interest groups play an important role.
- Therefore the high level framework of IR theory of Idealism vs. Realism is less applicable to the level of domestic policies.

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Is the foreign policy of the Bush Administration driven as much by Idealism as it is by Realism?



Realism vs Idealism

“As a professor, I recognize that this debate has won tenure for and sustained the careers of many generations of scholars.

As a policymaker, I can tell you that these categories **obscure reality.** ”

(Rice 2002)

The image features the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom, which is a heraldic emblem. It consists of a shield supported by a lion on the left and a unicorn on the right. Above the shield is a helmet with a crest of a lion holding a cross. A ribbon scrolls across the shield with the motto 'DIEU ET MON DROIT'. The shield is divided into four quarters, each containing a different symbol: a lion, a unicorn, a lion, and a unicorn. The shield is set against a dark background.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF
DEFENCE STUDIES

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M. Boyle, "Utopianism and the Bush Foreign Policy", Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol 17 No 1, April 2004, pp 82-103

- Amidst a renewed debate over the existence of an American empire, serious questions have emerged about whether the Bush foreign policy can be described as 'realist' given the widespread opposition that it encounters from academic realists.
- This paper is an attempt to shed light on this vexing issue by interpreting the Bush foreign policy through the lens of the broader religious/political tradition of America.
- Argues that the neoconservatives in the Bush administration draw on the utopian strand of this tradition when setting their foreign policy agenda and justifying their decisions to the public.
- Referring to Iraq, it discusses how three key utopian themes: the perfection of human life on earth, the possibility of limiting evil through conversion and the prospect of arresting human development are reflected in the neoconservative agenda.
- Paper concludes with a brief discussion of how these themes run counter to the tenets of classical realism and of the ethical and political hazards that emerge from an attempt at utopian empire
- **Bottom Line : the neoconservatives in the Bush administration draw on the utopian strand**

G.J. Ikenberry, 'America's Neoimperial Ambition', Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, September/October 2002, pp. 44-60

- Proven legacies: Realism grand strategy and Liberal grand strategy
- Bush Admin: a new grand strategy with seven elements
- Costs incurred by this strategy:
 - US needs the UN it's weakening;
 - Use of force to overturn regimes is never simple
 - Costs of putting the country back together are never cheap.
- Neoimperial Strategy flaws:
 - Cannot generate the cooperation needed to solve practical problems in US foreign policy agenda
 - The policy will trigger antagonism and resistance leaving America in a more hostile and divided world
 - Strategy hasn't articulated a vision of post-war intl order which is why 9/11 goodwill has vanished.
- **Bottom Line : Strategy has more to do with exercising power than with exercising leadership**

J Snyder, 'One World, Rival Theories', Foreign Policy, Vol. 145, November/December 2004, pp. 53-62

- Analyzes three political theories: realism, liberalism, and constructivism, and questions whether political theories need to be changed in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.
- Instead of radical change, International Relations academics have adjusted existing theories to meet new realities
 - Has this approach succeeded?
 - Does international relations theory still have something to tell policymakers?
- Six years ago, political scientist Stephen M. Walt published "One World, Many Theories"
 - Three dominant approaches: realism, liberalism, and an updated form of idealism called "constructivism."
 - Professor Michael N. Barnett's 1998 book *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* examines how the divergence between state borders and transnational Arab political identities requires vulnerable leaders to contend for legitimacy with radicals throughout the Arab world
 - a dynamic that often holds moderates hostage to opportunists who take extreme stances
- **Bottom Line : Neocon = realism + liberalism**

T. Corothers, “Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 82, No1, January/February 2003, pp 84-97

- The focus of the paper is on the contradictory imperatives facing the US Administration
- On the one hand the war against terror tempts Washington
 - to put aside its democratic scruples and seek closer ties with autocracies throughout the Middle East,
 - on the other many believe it is that lack of democracy in such countries that helps breed Islamic extremism
- Bush the realist – actively cultivates warm relations with friendly tyrants
- Bush the neo-Reaganite – makes ringing calls for a democracy campaign in the Middle East
- Running throughout the new US security relationships in South and Central Asia is the challenge of aligning State Department (human rights and democracy issues) and Pentagon (securing military access or co-operation) goals.
 - Eg Afghanistan and Indonesia, where military aid to the shaky democratic government is being reconsidered.
- Finding some difficulty because of contradictions
- The fault line between the realist philosophy of his father and the competing pull of neo-Reaganism has been laid bare

J L Gaddis, 'Grand Strategy in the Second Term',
Foreign Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 1, January/February 2005,
pp. 2-15

- President Bush's second term is an opportunity to reevaluate his grand strategy.
- Comparing administration intentions with accomplishments:
 - More than 4 years have passed without another attack on the U.S.
 - Preemption defined as prevention resulted in far less intl support than the administration anticipated and the US has sustained an unprecedented collapse of support from abroad.
- To regain influence the US must focus on persuasion, explaining policy, and sharing a vision for preemption in these terms.
- Iraq is littered with gaps between intentions and accomplishments...but there is still time to defeat the insurgency if the US learns from its mistakes.
- The second Bush administration will now have the opportunity to reinforce the shift in Middle East status quo.
- If Bush can shift from shock and awe to the reassurance – and attention to detail the prospects for his post-September 11 grand strategy would improve.

P.H. Gordon, “The End of the Bush Revolution”,
Foreign Affairs, Vol 85, No 4, July/August 2006, pp
75–86

- Bush Revolution lives on but the revolution itself is over
- Administration, in the early months, was deeply divided, the focus for the way ahead was on enduring national interests rather than idealistic humanitarian goals
- After 9/11 there was a change from cautious realism to the invasion of Iraq
- Success in Iraq and falling off of domestic support for the administration at home have had a major impact on the Administrations ability to pursue their transformative foreign policy
- A modified approach, more pragmatic, is apparent at the commencement of Bush’s second term – Iraq and North Korea, Syria
- What would cause relapse
 - Terrorist attack
 - WMD attack
 - Iran nuclear weapon
 - Success in Iraq

After 9/11, how would the Bush Admin be expected to act according to Realism?

- We do not use our strength to press for unilateral advantage. We seek instead to create a balance of power that favors human freedom
- Prevent another major attack on the U.S.
 - Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government
- America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.
- We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.
- The times require an ambitious national security strategy, yet one recognizing the limits to what even a nation as powerful as the United States can achieve by itself.
- Our national security strategy is idealistic about goals, and realistic about means.
- America cannot know peace, security, and prosperity by retreating from the world. America must lead by deed as well as by example.

After 9/11, how would the Bush Admin be expected to act according to Idealism?

- *...forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise*
- *values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.*
- *Russia is in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future*
- *The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere*
- *America's national interests and moral values drive us in the same direction: to assist the world's poor citizens and least developed nations and help integrate them into the global economy.*
- *Peace and international stability are most reliably built upon a foundation of freedom*

J Legro & A Moravcsik, 'Faux Realism', *Foreign Policy*, July–August 2001, pp. 80–83

- Why George W. Bush is attracted to the realist label for its foreign policy doctrine
 - Realism gives good 'spin'
 - Places an emphasis on accumulating and wielding military power
- Yet the Bush Administration practices what it calls 'new realism' which isn't realism at all
- Bush Administration's global threat perception has little to do with power balancing
- In the end, the authors believe that the Bush Admin will develop a 'sensible foreign policy'

E. Rhodes, “The Imperial Logic of Bush’s Liberal Agenda”, *Survival*, Vol 45, No 1, Spring 2003, pp 131-153

- Addresses US grand strategy to consider the world America seeks to create and how the US proposes to create it
- America it is argued has a global duty – protecting itself and creating global peace
- American power, especially military power will be key
- Considered Wilsonianism – objective of foreign policy is a transformation of world politics
- Requires not simply American power but a global American military hegemony
 - To be used aggressively not passively and globally
- Paper then argues the potential failure of this policy because of the nature of liberalism
- Concludes that the neat distinctions between good and evil that the Bush administration draws on are impossible to make in the real world

Mazarr, Michael J. "George W. Bush, Idealist."
International Affairs 79, no. 3 (2003): 503-522.

- Anger about the character of the Bush administration's foreign policy. Perceived American unilateralism is raising questions.
- The article contends that many senior Bush administration officials are not realists.
- Threats to security often originate in ideology rather than material strength; hopeful faith in long-term historical trends.
- No getting around the contradictions required of US foreign policy in an age of
 - American unipolarity is the leading power,
 - Globalisation,
 - old-style threats to the peace remain.
- Washington could do more to smooth the edges of those contradictions in order to point up the idealism and hopefulness of US policy

Kissinger, Henry. "Realists vs idealists " International Herald Tribune, 12 May 2005.

- Issue : Establish a sense of proportion between Idealism and Realism.
- Realism – balance of material forces and understanding of context → balance.
- Idealism – call for crusades to change regimes → conversion.
- We must avoid the danger that a policy focused on our domestic perceptions may generate reactions in other societies rallying around patriotism and leading to a coalition of the resentful against attempts at perceived American hegemony.

Leffler, Melvyn P. "9/11 and the Past and Future of American Foreign Policy." *International Affairs* 79, no. 5 (2003): 1045-1063.

- Analyses the NSS 2002 and the historical context of foreign policy making in time of crisis.
- Realism vs Idealism is irrelevant for policy making (Rice)
- The strategy (pre-emption) has always been a part of previous.
- NSS 2002 was created out of fear, not in order to get more power.
- U.S. foreign policy is based on relations between power, ideology and interests.
- Personal conclusion:
 - Realism vs. idealism does not define clearly Bush's policies.
 - Rather unilateral and "balance of power"

I H Daalder and J M Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2005) Extract: pp. 185-

202

- President Bush : self-righteous and convinced of his own righteousness views.
- President Bush thinks that his own vision is shared by every other state.
- No negotiation. Unilateralism.
- Continuity from the 1st to the 2nd mandate.

The deep core of Bush's value runs deeper than idealism vs. realism.

H J Wiarda & L L Wylie, 'New Challenges in US Foreign Policy', in S W Hook (ed), Comparative Foreign Policy: Adaptation Strategies of the Great & Emerging Powers

- External and domestic influences on U.S. Foreign Policy.
- Greater impact of domestic influences caused and resulting from shift in foreign policy decision-making:
 - Increase of pluralism in the U.S. society
 - Interest groups
 - Political alliance
 - Bureaucratic politics
- More liberty to play politics
- Interdependent nature of the policy making environment
- Goals and direction of U.S. Foreign policy to be streamlined.
- 3 dimensions of U.S: foreign policy
 1. Realism vs. idealism
 2. Unilateralism vs. multilateralism
 3. Isolationism vs. internationalism

Personal conclusion – Limitation of the IR paradigm *realism vs. idealism.*