

BOOKS

[*The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas P.M. Barnett, Putnam, 385 pages]

Don't Say the (Other) N-Word

By James P. Pinkerton

IF YOU EVER find yourself wondering why Iraq has proved to be a quagmire, you might take a look at *The Pentagon's New Map* by Thomas P.M. Barnett.

The book's optimism is as bold as the administration's promises of Iraqi "jubilation" that we heard two years ago. Indeed, for those seeking a "new operating theory to explain how this seemingly 'chaotic' world actually works," the dust jacket assures us, "Barnett has the answers." But answers for whom? The book does not explain the world as it is; Barnett's two-variable analysis—people are driven by economics, except when they must be kept in line by American military force—has already been refuted by world events. Instead, the author answers a different, sneakier, question: how does one establish neoconservatism as the dominant politico-military paradigm—without using the word "neoconservative"? That is, how does one mainstream radical ideas, making them seem as normal and American as apple pie and PowerPoint?

Barnett's mission, seemingly, is to synthesize two strands of neoconservatism. One is the "conservative" interventionism of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and the Bush 43-ized Republican Party. The other strand, perhaps more important in Barnett's view, is the liberal interventionism of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman and much of the Clintonized Democratic Party. To be sure, Friedman's economism, leading to utopianism, has

been discredited in the eyes of many, even before Iraq. Yet other Americans remain susceptible to a Barnett vision of the post-Cold War world—namely, a "grand strategy on par with the Cold War strategy of containment," a strategy in which the U.S. leads civilization against the dark forces of barbarism.

Barnett, a senior military analyst with U.S. Naval War College, is touted on the dust jacket as having "given a constant stream of briefings over the past few years, and particularly since 9/11, to the highest of high-level civilian and military policy-makers." And now, the jacket continues, "he gives it to you."

Actually, this briefing will cost you \$26.95. The U.S., meanwhile, has committed close to \$200 billion for the war in Iraq—which Barnett cites as "obviously" the first action item for his geostrategic plan—so why start pinching pennies now? A few hours spent with this book will leave the reader with a better understanding of how marchers of folly first put their boots on. In Barnett's case, it begins with a map of the world, a little jargon, a few factoids—and a brash theory unalloyed by judgment or historical perspective.

Yet Barnett appears to have influence in the U.S. government. In addition to his post at the Naval War College, he has also worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Center for Naval

and Australia, plus Russia, China, and India. The Gap includes most nations of Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

The great work of the 21st century, Barnett says, is for the "connected" Core countries to come to the rescue of the "disconnected" Gap regions. How to do this? One route is foreign aid, another is trade. Yet another route is the military—yes, armed intervention. That is, the Core must prove its systemic superiority by invading the Gap. Paying no mind to St. Augustine, Barnett explains, "My definition of just wars is exceedingly simple: They must leave affected societies more connected than we found them." In other words, perpetual war for perpetual connectivity.

So the ideal is globalization in all forms, by all means. Indeed, Barnett goes into full pompous-reverential mode to declare that Tom Friedman's 1999 book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* is a "seminal volume." One might think of Barnett as Friedman with a security clearance. This Pentagon guru declares, "America's national interest in the era of globalization lies primarily in the extension of global economic connectivity." With that single thought in his head, restated endlessly across nearly 400 pages, he reduces all the complexity of the world down to one simplicity: whether or not countries are "connected."

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Analyses; if the Pentagon had disapproved of Barnett's bold title, presumably the brass could have stopped him from using it. Instead, they funded his work and even blurbed his book.

Barnett's Big Idea is to draw lines across the planet delineating the "functioning Core" and the "non-integrating Gap." The Core consists of the rich countries of North America, Europe, Japan,

And like Friedman, he never doubts that the U.S.—the worldwide history of failed colonialism notwithstanding—can reliably do the connecting.

In a weak moment, Barnett admits, "globalization's progressive advance will trigger more nationalism around the world, not less." Then he catches himself—the cure for the measles of nationalism, he insists, is more globalism.

“For each time we expand globalization’s Functioning Core, we expand for all those living within it the freedom of choice, movement and expression.” Prosperity, in other words, begets harmony.

But is affluence really the antidote to war? As Aristotle once observed, no tyrant ever conquered a city because he was cold and hungry. And the Stagyrite knew whereof he spoke: his pupil Alexander the Great suffered little deprivation in his Macedonian royal family. Yet Alexander’s chosen form of “movement and expression” was to conquer the world.

But we haven’t got to the real thrust of the book, which is that it’s the mission of the Core—all united, of course, as one big connected and integrated family—to fill in the Gap, with treasure, blood, and the American way. This shiny, happy vision includes such unhappy Core-iors as France, Germany, and Russia. Indeed, Barnett even sees China as “a serious strategic partner in managing global stability.” Do I hear the word “Taiwan”? Only by ignoring a dozen nuclear-edged feuds among the richer nations does Barnett get to the Friedman Station—to the terminus of a certain historical view, to the place where history ends because everyone is sitting peaceful and pretty. That is, if they are on the right side of the global tracks.

Because on the wrong side of the tracks, Barnett warns, lies a world of despair and danger. So even as the Core forms its multinational condominium, it must venture forth to slay the monsters. Barnett explains, “If the Core seems to be living the dream of Immanuel Kant’s perpetual peace, then the Gap remains trapped in Hobbes’ far crueler reality.” As a result, America’s globocop destiny is manifest: “American soldiers will end up being the tip of the spear.”

If some of this is starting to seem familiar, that’s because those ideas that were not cribbed from Friedman were taken from Wolfowitz.

Thus we come to “The National Security Strategy of the United States,” released by the White House in September 2002. That document, on which Wol-

fowitz had been working while serving in the Bush 41 administration a decade earlier, asserted that the world now has only “a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.”

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shove. Operation Iraqi Freedom was the beta test for the new strategy. And although the war hasn’t gone exactly as planned, President Bush continued to prove that theory often trumps reality, insistently describing Iraq as the first step on the long march to peace and freedom for the world.

Yet interestingly, the word “neoconservative” never appears in this book’s index. In fact, Barnett goes to great lengths to disguise the neocon-y nature of his argument. At one point, he launches into a reverie in which he claims to be “the real Fox Mulder,” referring to the ’90s TV show “The X-Files.” Continuing in his self-dramatization, Barnett describes a sinister conspiracy inside the U.S. government: “Now the ZOG [Zionist Occupation Government, a term used by Timothy McVeigh types] conspirators basically have control of the Pentagon, with the Jews Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith running the show.” The ZOG running the military? What are we supposed to make of that? One suspects that the purpose here is for us to have a good laugh, thus chuckling away legitimate concerns that perhaps neocon world-historical utopians are careening America over a cliff top.

The suspicion that Barnett is carrying heavy neocon baggage, however disguisedly, increases as he turns toward the Middle East; there he wipes away

centuries of history and oceans of blood with his simplifying globalizing brush. “What makes suicide bombers possible?” he asks. The answer: “It’s not the poverty, because most of the terrorists are middle class and educated. It’s that they have no realistic expectations of a better life for themselves or their children.” This economic-determinist dogma might amuse the late Mohammad Atta,

the Egyptian-born ringleader of 9/11, who had made his way to affluent Germany before embracing al-Qaeda ideology. Nor would it explain the mysterious rise in suicide bombing in “liberated” Iraq, rising from, well, zero into the hundreds since the Connectivity Invasion. In fact, as Robert Pape of the University of Chicago has demonstrated, the single biggest factor in suicide bombing is the bombers’ desire to drive out foreign occupiers. Pape goes unmentioned by Barnett.

Instead, Barnett plows ahead with his variable-less view of the world, leading him to dismiss all patriots everywhere as retrogrades: “When individuals cannot find opportunity in life, they are reduced to fighting over what’s left over: the land and the cultural identity they attach to its history.” Such nostalgic rootedness, he maintains, is only for losers. It’s far better to “define a society by connectivity and the individual opportunities it provides.” Then, Barnett cheers, “You will see that primordial attachment to the land disappear ... as mobility trumps tradition.” So when that Great SUV-Day arrives, patriotism will become obsolete. And as for Americans, we can build condos atop Bunker Hill and pave over Gettysburg.

Barnett ends by offering a world-fixing to-do list: “ten steps toward this world worth creating.” And although the

book was published just this year, it looks as though he might want to rework some of his presentation slides.

The first item on his list has already been tried: the Iraq War. Dutiful apparatchik that he is, Barnett lauds “our efforts to recreate Iraq as a functioning, connected society within the global economy.” We feel no surprise there—although maybe his further prediction that “the Middle East will be transformed over the next two decades” needs to be tweaked a bit.

Item two on the list: apply the Iraq solution to North Korea. Writing with the jingoistic breeziness of someone who has never seen combat and never understood how a war turns out, Barnett announces, “Kim Jong Il must be removed from power and Korea must be reunited.” He adds, “There is simply no good reason why Northeast Asia should put up with this nutcase any longer.”

Of course, some might argue that the “good reasons” for negotiating with Pyongyang include its six to eight nuclear weapons. But if neoconservatism doesn’t exist in Barnett’s exoteric vocabulary, it’s no surprise that realism doesn’t feature in the text of his book.

Item three: Iran. Once again, Barnett sees regime change as a great idea. Echoing his neocon mentors, he wants to make “Iran the greatest reclamation project the world has ever seen.”

Some might note that this list echoes George W. Bush’s axis of evil. Indeed, Barnett is lavish in his praise of his commander in chief, even if it means trashing another Republican president: “I prefer comparing George W. Bush to Harry Truman rather than Ronald Reagan.” Why is that? “Reagan didn’t win the Cold War but had it handed to him on a silver platter.” In other words, according to Barnett’s revisionist history, the world situation that Ronald Reagan inherited from Jimmy Carter in 1981—Soviets occupying Afghanistan, NATO drifting toward defeatism, pro-Castro forces winning in Central America—presented nothing more than a silver-platter challenge.

So we think again of that one group of nominally conservative thinkers who argue that the Gipper is overrated. Yup, it’s the neocons, the Straussian silent partners in Barnett’s book. They’re the ones who lump Reagan in with the quarter-century of American presidents before Bush 43 in order to support the claim that America’s Middle East policy has been weak and morally cloudy since the fall of the Shah of Iran.

And what else does Barnett recommend? Faster immigration, please. Europe, he avers, needs to “move beyond ‘guest workers’ and into American-style encouragement of immigration flows.” Indeed, “The right-wing anti-immigrant politicians need to be shouted off the political stage and pronto.” Moreover, after encouraging Europe to become more like the U.S. on immigration policy, Barnett next encourages the U.S. to become more like the United Nations. In his dream scenario, the U.S. would merge with Mexico and by 2050, a “United States” president would be elected directly from the former Mexico. As Steve Sailer has noted, the neocon vision is a two-step: first, America invades the world; then, America invites the world.

America, meet Tom Barnett. Your government rates him as one of the best and the brightest. He endorses the radical world-remaking foreign-policy agenda of the neocons, although he won’t quite come out and say it. Yet, lest anyone mistake him for a mere stooge of the neocons, he endorses a few nation-remapping ideas that are even more radical than anything the neocons have proposed, at least in public. So this would-be Clausewitz, writing from the bosom of the military-industrial-PowerPoint complex, demonstrates that the neocon bubble has yet to burst. If his book is any indicator of the future, then we ain’t seen nothing yet. ■

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[Adorno: A Political Biography, Lorenz Jäger, trans. by Stewart Spencer, Yale University Press, 235 pages]

Bourgeois Radical

By Paul Gottfried

Lorenz Jäger’s biography of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) is a useful study of an unpleasant but influential figure. From the 1920s until his death, Adorno was the prime mover behind the aggregation of cultural and social iconoclasts known as the Frankfurt School. Together with his more down-to-earth co-organizer Max Horkheimer, who contributed family wealth to their enterprise, Adorno took his socially radical think tank, the Institute for Social Research, in 1934 from its interwar home in Frankfurt to New York and later Los Angeles.

In 1949, at the urging of Horkheimer, who was then rector at the University of Frankfurt, he returned to his native city to resume their research activities uncovering the bourgeois sources of “fascist” and “pseudo-democratic” pathologies. During their American wartime stay, the two friends also collaborated in the compilation of a bulky anthology of disquisitions dealing with the allegedly fascist mentality of the American population. This work, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), had far-ranging consequences for American educators and social reformers despite its turgid and preachy prose and the dubious proofs extracted by the authors from primitive interview techniques.

The Adorno depicted by Jäger was a man of many parts—a philosopher, a sociologist, a talented pianist, and an enlightening commentator on 12-tone music. His social radicalism took shape after the First World War but not for the reasons that his interpreters sometimes mechanically provide. Despite having a Jewish father—whose name, Wiesengrund, he