

view, bad policy as well as execrable grammar: “What about China? Is it U.S. policy to importune Chinese dissidents ‘to start on this journey of progress and justice’? How will we manifest our readiness to ‘walk at [their] side?’”

If the National Endowment for Democracy isn’t already on the job, the president’s recent pronouncements are bound to direct their efforts in China’s direction. Professor Claes Ryn saw where all this was leading, and he put it quite well in his 2004 address to the Philadelphia Society:

The notion that America knows better than all other nations and has a right to dictate terms to them betrays a monumental conceit. It also guarantees that other nations will see a need to arm themselves just to have some protection against American bullying. ... China, which has long found Western hegemony intolerable and is already strongly prone to nationalism, can be expected to respond to American assertiveness by greatly expanding its military power. If present trends continue, the time should soon be ripe—in 50 years perhaps?—for a horrendous Sino-American confrontation.

Nothing is “too massive a challenge to our liberationist policy” that it dwarfs the monumental edifice of the liberationists’ conceit. Yes, but “what about Saudi Arabia?” asks Buckley. “Will we refuse to buy Saudi oil?” I would think that the real objective is to seize it.

Peggy Noonan found the speech “startling,” and confessed it left her “with a bad feeling, and reluctant dislike” evoked by such grandiose phrases as “we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom.” This, she averred “is the kind of sentence that makes you wonder if this White House did not... have a case of

what I have called in the past ‘mission inebriation.’ A sense that there are few legitimate boundaries to the desires born in the goodness of their good hearts.”

Drunk with power, flush with Pyrrhic victories, and convinced that they are on the right side of history, the “mission inebriation” that bedevils this administration is Ms. Noonan’s polite way of describing megalomania. The defining characteristic of what Ryn calls the “imperialistic personality” is a monumental conceit: it is the same will to dominate that drove the Jacobins, the

[eve of destruction]

Wilson’s Ghost

Spreading freedom around the world
will destroy democracy at home.

By Christopher Layne

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH’S reelection brought considerable speculation about what foreign-policy tack he would take during his second term. Many hoped that the administration would moderate its bellicose unilateralism and seek to repair relations with traditional allies. But during inauguration week, hopes that the Bush team would chart a more temperate foreign-policy course were dealt a one-two knockout punch by Condoleezza Rice’s confirmation testimony and President Bush’s inaugural address.

Although it remains to be seen how the administration will implement its foreign-policy vision, Bush and Rice outlined its intellectual assumptions. In her

Bolsheviks, and the 19th-century followers of the nihilist Sergei Nechaev, upon whom the author of *The Possessed* modeled his characters. That American policymakers will likely end up like Dostoyevsky’s revolutionary conspirators—increasingly committed to state terrorism in pursuit of some utopian vision—seems horribly and tragically inevitable. ■

Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com and author of An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard.

declared, “We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world. America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one.”

In claiming that the survival of democracy in America depends on the successful export of democracy abroad, Bush has reprised Wilsonianism’s most dubious thesis. Since the U.S. emerged as a great power in the early 20th century, it is fair to say that American policymakers have never truly believed that America’s territorial integrity or its regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere have been seriously challenged. Rather, the threat that they have apprehended is much more nebulous and ideological in nature. Wilsonianism is based on a de-territorialized conception of the national interest as the defense of “core values.”

Core values are America’s domestic political and economic institutions or what colloquially can be called the

unless the United States can remake the world in its own ideological image, it will be transformed at home into a garrison state. That is, unless American liberal ideology is pre-eminent globally, the United States might have to accept curtailed political liberties and economic regimentation at home in order to ensure its security in an ideologically hostile world. This is why American foreign policy rests on the assumption that political and economic liberalism cannot flourish at home unless they are safe abroad.

The Wilsonian worldview is the outgrowth of a fundamental pathology in American liberalism. (In America, the Left and the Right both subscribe to the tenets of classical liberalism that stress the protection of individual liberty against state power, property rights, and due process of law.) As Louis Hartz pointed out in his classic book, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, in domestic politics liberalism has been deeply hostile to alternative ideologies and preemptively sought to suppress them. American liberalism can be secure at

America’s crusader mentality springs from liberalism’s intolerance of competing ideologies and the concomitant belief that—merely by existing—“non-democratic” states (including those, like Iran, that are democratic, albeit not liberal democracies) threaten America’s security and the safety of liberalism at home. Regime change had been a favored tool of American foreign policy long before Saddam Hussein came down the pike: if nondemocratic states were troublemakers, the obvious solution was for the U.S. to flex its muscles and transform them into democracies.

Here grand strategy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because it causes states that otherwise might not be actively hostile to become threats. That is, liberal imperialism causes the United States to be more, not less, insecure than it would be if its external ambitions were more modest.

When the U.S., by asserting the universal applicability of its own ideology, challenges the legitimacy of other regimes—by labeling them as outposts of tyranny or members of an axis of evil—the effect is to increase those states’ sense of isolation and vulnerability. With good reason, such states fear that their survival could be at risk. Iran is a good example. Given that states and regimes are highly motivated to survive, it’s no surprise that others respond to American policy by adopting strategies that give them a chance to do so. Simply put, states like Iran will respond self-defensively to their perceptions of an American threat to their security by acquiring WMD capabilities and supporting terrorism.

One thing is certain: because of liberal ideology—which, to repeat, is the essence of Bush’s vision—American foreign policy sets us up for confrontation and antagonism with others. In the Islamic world, for example, the United States is not hated because of what it

AMERICA’S CRUSADER MENTALITY SPRINGS DIRECTLY FROM LIBERALISM’S INTOLERANCE OF COMPETING IDEOLOGIES AND THE CONCOMITANT BELIEF THAT—MERELY BY EXISTING—“NONDEMOCRATIC” STATES THREATEN AMERICA’S SECURITY.

American way of life. What U.S. policymakers have feared for the last century is the closure of other regions of the world to the penetration of America’s democratic ideology. As the diplomatic historian Frank Ninkovich has put it, U.S. foreign-policy elites have worried that closure of these regions would “cut off the oxygen without which American society, and liberal institutions generally, would asphyxiate.” Wilsonianism always has been based on the fear that

home only when it has no rivals. Not to put too fine a point on it, American liberalism—supposedly an ideology of tolerance—aims to extirpate other ideologies and worldviews. Wilsonianism seeks to replicate externally American liberalism’s domestic primacy. In other words, American liberalism is the fountainhead of American imperialism and is therefore both the hegemonic ideology at home and the ideology of hegemony abroad.

stands for but rather because of what it does. Others resent Washington's policies in the region and even more that the U.S. is in their faces, using its power to force American ideology, culture, and values on them. It's hardly a surprise that American policy generates resistance: it is the fate of all dominant imperial powers to engender fear, resentment, and opposition. Here there is no American exceptionalism.

Wilsonianism views the world as sharply divided between good states and bad—or even “evil”—states. Thus the policy implications are obvious: if bad states are the source of war and terrorism, the prescription is for the United States to use its power to transform them into good states. In this respect, Wilsonianism reveals the dark side of American liberal ideology: permanent (or semi-permanent) war and the transformation of the United States into a garrison state or, as it came to be known during the Cold War, a national-security state. Contrary to Bush's assertion in his inaugural address, an interventionist—indeed, imperial—foreign policy geared to democracy promotion is antithetical to the flourishing of democracy and liberty here at home.

The claim that the fate of democracy in America hinges on a policy of exporting it abroad is curious indeed. One wonders whether Bush was aware of the jarring disconnect between his words—“the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands”—and the pictures of Washington, D.C. during the run-up to the inauguration. Like his predecessors, Bush believes that America can avoid becoming a garrison state only by following a policy of strategic internationalism and democracy promotion abroad. But Washington looked quite like a garrison state during inauguration week. Instead of the capital of a democratic state basking in freedom, it

resembled the militarily occupied capital of a banana republic in the midst of a coup. Just how robust is our domestic freedom when the War on Terror gives license to the government to whittle away at civil liberties?

This is not just a criticism of the Bush administration. The fact is that war inevitably leads to an expansion of state power and a consequent diminution of

TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AN IMPERIAL POLICY ABROAD—AND THEIR GRIP ON POLITICAL POWER AT HOME—AMERICAN FOREIGN-POLICY ELITES HAVE ENGAGED IN A POLICY OF CALCULATED THREAT EXAGGERATION.

liberty. This happened during World War I and its aftermath, during World War II, and during the Cold War. Those three conflicts led to the emergence of the national-security state and the imperial presidency—the effects of which on freedom and liberty at home have not been discernibly different from those attributed to the kind of garrison state that our leaders claim their ambitious overseas policies allow America to avoid becoming.

Bush's words about liberty and freedom ring hollow in another sense, too. American officials want to promote democracy abroad but are loathe to practice it in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. The reasons that democracies like the United States are supposed to be peaceful is that citizens can hold accountable leaders who squander blood and treasure on unnecessary wars. Moreover, democracy is supposed to ensure that policymaking is transparent and policies are subject to open debate. That's the theory at any rate. But it's based on a romantic notion of how American democracy works that any sophisticated fourth-grader knows is illusory.

What this theory leaves out is what political scientists call “the state”—a nation's central decision makers and the institutional mechanisms through which they exercise power. The American approach to political theory—and what most Americans believe about the political process—emphasizes the role of civil society (that is, individuals and interest groups) and downplays the role of the

state. But even in countries like the United States, the state is an autonomous actor. That is, rather than by being constrained by civil society, the state mobilizes the levers of power to manipulate civil society and harness it to support state policies. For example, to maintain public support for an imperial policy abroad—and their grip on political power at home—American foreign-policy elites have engaged in a policy of calculated threat exaggeration to overcome the stubborn fact that, because of geography and its overwhelming power, the U.S. is basically immune to serious military threats from abroad. Consequently, for well over a century, official American rhetoric has been based on a finely honed set of images: dangerous ideologies, a shrinking world, and falling dominoes. To mobilize support for its policies, the American foreign-policy elite has created a rhetorical climate of fear in order to convince Americans that only strategic internationalism can preserve the nation's security and way of life.

Another way the state manipulates civil society is by controlling the flow of information and thus shaping public opinion. In the U.S. government, there

even is a name for this: “perception management,” a euphemism for sophisticated lying. It is the kind of manipulation of the truth that the Bush administration engaged in during the run-up to the Iraq War—the claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and the assertion that Saddam Hussein was linked to the 9/11 attacks. But perception management is a bipartisan tool. During the Kosovo War, the Clinton administration justified American intervention by implying that Serbia was engaged in, as then-Defense Secretary William Cohen said, “a horrific slaughter”—a genocide of Holocaust-like proportions against the Kosovars.

Eventually, the actual facts may come to light. They did with respect to this administration’s false claims about Iraq and with the Clinton administration’s wild exaggerations about Kosovo. But in the short term, perception management allows policymakers to stifle dissent, pre-empt congressional opposition, and gain a free hand to carry out their interventions. By the time the Congress, the

It’s quite evident that the Bush administration has a rather blinkered view of the democratic process. On the eve of his inauguration, Bush claimed that the 2004 election had legitimized his foreign policy. In a recent *New Yorker* article, Seymour Hersh observed, “Bush’s reelection is regarded within the Administration as evidence of America’s support for his decision to go to war,” and an endorsement of its ambitious foreign policy, including “its basic long range policy goal in the Middle East: the establishment of democracy throughout the region.” They believe that the American electorate has given the administration a second-term green light to go after “outposts of tyranny” like Iran, Syria, and North Korea. Just how an electoral victory procured through disinformation—and by equating disagreement with the administration’s foreign policy with a lack of patriotism—amounts to a mandate is an interesting proposition. Yet as Bush himself put it, last November was the administration’s “accountability moment.” This too is a curious view of

Bush administration is trying to restructure the national-security apparatus so that it can wage “low intensity wars” in secret. So much for the notion that in a democracy policy is supposed to be made openly so that its merits can be debated fully. And so much for the notion that policymakers are to be held accountable for their actions.

In articulating the underpinnings of his foreign-policy doctrine, Bush has aligned himself squarely with one of the two grand historical narratives about America’s role in the world—the one that says that to achieve greatness and security, the United States must remake the world in its image. But there is another grand narrative that is rooted just as deeply in America’s history and political culture: that if America seeks to remake the world, the world will end up remaking America, eroding the very liberties that lie at the core of the American ideal and rendering the United States far less secure than it would be if it cultivated freedom at home and minded its own business abroad. This narrative also holds that policies are not measured on the basis of the intentions underlying them but rather on the basis of the consequences they produce.

Far from constituting a higher realism, this is a test that American imperialism flunks because its actual consequence is weakening liberty at home rather than strengthening it. During the next four years—with Iraq in chaos and the looming specter of war with Iran and North Korea—we are likely to find ourselves engaged in another of America’s periodic great debates about foreign policy, a debate in which these two grand narratives once again will do battle. ■

Christopher Layne will join the faculty of the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University in the fall.

THEY BELIEVE THAT THE **AMERICAN ELECTORATE** HAS GIVEN THE ADMINISTRATION A **SECOND-TERM GREEN LIGHT** TO GO AFTER “**OUTPOSTS OF TYRANNY**” LIKE IRAN.

public, and the media realize they were misled, it’s too late because the official policy has already been implemented and is irreversible. Indeed, some policymakers have been quite candid in urging the U.S. to formulate military strategies that will enable it to intervene and prevail quickly before congressional or public opposition can mobilize. In an interview with the *International Herald Tribune* on the eve of his retirement as NATO supreme commander, Wesley K. Clark urged precisely that the U.S. adopt strategies that could design around the constraining effects of the democratic process.

the American political process. In the United States, the accountability of officials is supposed to be ongoing, not momentary.

If the administration puts its current plans into effect, soon we may be denied even accountability moments in matters of war and peace. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *New Yorker* have all reported that the administration is moving to gut the Central Intelligence Agency and transfer key responsibilities for intelligence gathering and covert operations to the Pentagon, where these activities will be shielded from outside oversight and accountability. That is, the

[globalist manifesto]

The Anti-Conservatives

Who convinced the president that our democracy depends on a worldwide crusade?

By Patrick J. Buchanan

THAT GEORGE W. BUSH would seek to embed the Iraq War in the higher cause of global democracy was to be expected. That is the way of wartime presidents.

By late 1863, Lincoln's war to crush Southern secession was about whether "government of the people, by the people, for the people shall ... perish from the earth." By 1917, the European war whose causes Wilson professed not to understand in 1916 had become "the war to end all wars" and to "make the world safe for democracy."

Leaders alchemize wars begun over lesser interests into epochal struggles for universal principles because only thus can they justify demands for greater sacrifices in blood and treasure. But Bush has gone Wilson one better. He is not only going to make the world safe for democracy, he is going to make the world democratic. Where Lincoln abolished slavery in the South, Bush is going to abolish tyranny from the earth: "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."

A conservative knows not whether to laugh or weep, for Mr. Bush has just asserted a right to interfere in the internal affairs of every nation on earth. Why? Because the "survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands." But this is utterly ahistorical. The world has

always been afflicted with despots. Yet America has always been free. And we have remained free by following the counsel of Washington, Jefferson, and Adams and staying out of foreign quarrels and foreign wars.

Who is feeding the president this interventionist nonsense?

The president now plans to hector and badger foreign leaders on the progress each is making toward attaining U.S. standards of democracy. "We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and nation—the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right." This is a formula for "Bring-it-on!" collisions with every autocratic regime on earth, including virtually every African and Arab ruler, all the "outposts of tyranny" named by Secretary Rice, most of the nations of Central Asia, China, and Russia. This is a prescription for endless war. Yet as Madison warned, "No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare."

Who and what converted a president who came to office with no knowledge of the world to the idea that only a global crusade for democracy could keep us secure? Answer: 9/11—and the neoconservatives.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Bush calls 9/11 the day "when freedom came under attack." This is sophomoric. Osama did not send fanatics to ram planes into the World Trade Center because he hates the

Bill of Rights. He sent the terrorists here because he hates our presence and policies in the Middle East. He did it for the same reason FLN rebels blew up cafes in Paris and Hamas suicide bombers blow up pizza parlors in Jerusalem.

From the Battle of Algiers to the bombing of the Beirut Marine barracks, from the expulsion of the Red Army by the mujahideen of Afghanistan to the expulsion of Israel from Lebanon by Hezbollah, guerrilla war and terror tactics have been the means Muslims have used to expel armies they could not defeat in conventional war.

The 9/11 killers were over here because we are over there. We were not attacked because of who we are but because of what we do. It is not our principles they hate. It is our policies. U.S. intervention in the Middle East was the cause of the 9/11 terror. Bush believes it is the cure. Has he learned nothing from Iraq?

In 2003, we invaded a nation that had not attacked us, did not threaten us, and did not want war with us to disarm it of weapons it did not have. Now, after plunging \$200 billion and the lives of 1,400 of our best and bravest into this war and killing tens of thousands of Iraqis, we have reaped a harvest of hatred in the Arab world and, according to officials in our own government, have created a new nesting place and training ground for terrorists to replace the one we lately eradicated in Afghanistan.

Among those who have converted President Bush to the notion that with-