

Israel and Egypt (and Syria) after the 1973 Middle East War was only made possible when Richard Nixon re-established diplomatic ties with Cairo, co-opting it into the pro-American camp. It was the even-handed U.S. role that made it possible for Jimmy Carter to mediate the historic peace agreement between Israel and Egypt in 1979 and for George H.W. Bush to launch a round of Israeli-Arab negotiations after the Gulf War in 1991 that resulted in the peace accords between Israel and the PLO and Jordan. Hence, from an Israeli perspective that regards peace with the Arabs as a top national interest, the pressure by Nixon, Carter, and Bush to withdraw from occupied Arab territories in exchange for peace reflected a genuinely pro-Israeli direction of U.S. policy since the agreements with Egypt, the Palestinians, and Jordan advanced the Jewish state's long-term strategic interests. But if you were listening to the proponents of Greater Israel in Jerusalem and Washington, Nixon, Carter, and Bush were the enemies of Jewish people.

At the same time, a realist analysis of Israeli interests would have concluded that there was nothing pro-Israeli in the willingness of the Reagan administration to treat with benign neglect Israel's creeping annexation of the West Bank, creating the conditions for the outbreak of the first Intifada, or in giving Israel a yellow light to invade Lebanon in 1982. Those U.S. policies reflected the agenda of Likud and its neoconservative partners, with their emphasis on propping up the "strategic asset" by placing the Palestinian issue on the backburner and punishing the "pro-Soviet" PLO. They resulted in the rise of Palestinian and Shi'ite terrorism aimed against both the Jewish state and the U.S. and damaged core Israeli and American interests.

The same kind of geostrategic paradox—an American administration that

It pays to Google. The Shura Council, the co-ordinating body for Iraqi Sunni insurgents, and al-Qaeda in Iraq, comprised mainly of foreign Sunni Islamic militants, have been working together using the Google map feature to plan their sector-by-sector ethnic cleansing of Shi'a Muslims in central Iraq. The cleansing has removed Shi'a from many areas, but the discovery that the Sunni insurgents are using the Google map has allowed analysts to predict where the next wave of killings will take place, though not necessarily to stop them. Shi'a death squads, apparently less Google proficient, are reacting to every instance of Sunni cleansing by killing Sunnis at random in areas they control. U.S. patrols, working aggressively to prevent the religious murders, have become a prominent target for both sides and are caught squarely in the middle of the internecine violence, making October one of the worst months ever for American casualties.



In spite of the billions of dollars spent on air security over the past five years, very little air cargo is checked or x-rayed either in the United States or in Europe.

According to sources in the airline industry, more than 70 percent of air cargo is categorized as "known shipper," which means that it is not considered to be suspect and is normally not inspected. Such known shippers include major companies like UPS and FedEx, but smaller, private freight agencies are also in the same category even though their security procedures are not known and are not monitored. In Europe most air cargo goes on passenger aircraft down in the hold, not on specially designed cargo planes, which are more common in the U.S. This means that a terrorist in Europe could target a civilian airliner using a bomb with a timer in an airfreight package and be reasonably certain that it will not be inspected and will wind up in the hold of a plane carrying passengers. Other reports suggest that the specialized cargo planes also continue to be highly vulnerable to hijacking or bombing due to poor security at cargo terminals. European and American air-security experts are aware of the problems associated with air cargo but both government and the airline industry claim that inspection of each package is not feasible because of lack of resources and because it would bring the airfreight system to a halt. This response is, of course, nonsensical. A small fraction of the money and manpower being wasted in Iraq would make American air cargo completely safe.



According to Israeli sources involved with the post-mortem on the summer war in Lebanon, Hezbollah routinely listened to Israeli cellphone conversations,

including those of officers, as part of its extensive intelligence-gathering efforts and was also able to eavesdrop electronically on messages sent to pagers, including some that were transmitted through military-satellite uplinks. Exploiting its intercepts, Hezbollah successfully collected critical information on Israeli army units and their movements, both inside and outside Lebanon. The Israelis, who had been contemptuous of Hezbollah's intelligence-gathering abilities, are now reported to be astonished at the sophistication of the operation.

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is tagged as “pro-Israeli” but whose policies damage the longstanding interests of the Jewish state—will be recalled as one of the legacies of George W. Bush. After 9/11, and against the backdrop of the second Intifada and the Iraq War, a new generation of neoconservatives succeeded in marketing to another White House the notion that the U.S. and Israel were now being brought together in a strategic alliance against “Islamofascism.” This alliance would operate with America as sheriff and Israel as its deputy while Israeli-Palestinian peace is placed on the backburner. Bush and his advisers see America’s battle with Iraq and Israel’s battle with the Palestinians as part of the same war, according to *Ha’aretz* chief political analyst, Akiva Eldar. “They have actually suggested

that Israel will help the United States to take over the Middle East,” Eldar said. “They were sitting in think tanks that believed that you don’t even try to appease or satisfy the Arabs, you reach peace by force which means you impose it [and] you don’t make concessions to people you don’t trust, and that puts them and Sharon in the same party.”

Consider the results of U.S. policies—the coming to power of radical Shi’ites in Baghdad and the strengthening influence of Iran and its allies; the radicalization of the Palestinians, the election of Hamas, and an environment less conducive for Arab-Israeli peace; the growing isolation of the U.S. and Israel in the Middle East, in Europe, and around the world. Is it surprising that Israelis are asking: if we have a pro-Israeli administration in Washington, how would an anti-Israeli one look?

These Israeli sentiments have become more prevalent in the aftermath of the recent war in Lebanon in which the high costs of the Israeli-American “strategic alliance” became quite evident to both sides. Washington had given Israel a green light to attack Hezbollah in Lebanon as a way of punishing its patrons, Iran and Syria. But Israel proved to be more of a strategic burden than asset, hurting the interests of a pro-American government in Beirut and eroding what remains of U.S. credibility in the Middle East. “Hezbollah’s unprovoked attack on July 12 provided Israel the extraordinary opportunity to demonstrate its utility by making a major contribution to America’s war on terrorism,” wrote Charles Krauthammer, insisting that America “has been disappointed” by Israeli failure to defeat Hezbollah.

But if Americans have realized that Israel might not be a strategic asset, some Israelis have maintained that they are uninterested in playing that prescribed pro-U.S. role. After all, Israel, as

Ha’aretz columnist Doron Rosenblum put it, “was not established in order to be a spearhead against global Islam, or in order to serve as an alert squad for the Western world.” But that is exactly the role that the neocons have assigned to Israel, which has led Daniel Levy, a former aide to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, to propose that “disentangling Israeli interests from the rubble of neocon ‘creative destruction’ in the Middle East has become an urgent challenge for Israeli policy-makers.” An America that seeks to reshape the region “through an unsophisticated mixture of bombs and ballots, devoid of local contextual understanding, alliance-building or redressing of grievances, ultimately undermines both itself and Israel,” Levy wrote.

Moreover, the neoconservative paradigm is bound to make Israel a modern-day crusader state, an outlet of a global power whose political, economic, and military headquarters are on the other side of the world. America’s commitment to the security of the Israeli province would always remain uncertain and fragile, reflecting changes in the balance of power in Washington and the shifting dynamics of U.S. politics.

Therefore, if Israel is limited in its ability to provide security services to the United States, American hegemony cannot make the Middle East safe for Israel. Perhaps it is not too late for the Israelis to figure out how to take a path that leads to peaceful coexistence with the Palestinians and their other neighbors in generations to come. A U.S. administration promoting that goal would be pursuing a policy that is both pro-American and pro-Israel and would find an ally in a realist Israeli leadership. ■

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The End of History

Richard Hofstadter made his career distorting the past for the sake of the present.

By Chilton Williamson Jr.

CHESTERTON SAID that people will miss anything provided that thing is big enough. He might have added that this seems especially the case when the fact of its existence is explicitly stated, explicit statements being as easily ignored as looming objects are readily overlooked.

I was reminded of this not long ago when I read the epigraph of an excellent intellectual biography by David S. Brown of the late American historian Richard Hofstadter, who died in 1970. This epigraph, by a former student of Hofstadter's, reads in part:

My model of the historian engaged in the controversies of the day appears in many varieties. In his own day, and his own way, Richard Hofstadter was an exemplar of the engaged historian. Hofstadter was intensely concerned with the political issues of his time and wrote history as a contribution to contemporary political discussion. ... He wanted to recover the past but that was only part of what he considered the historian's larger job: to explore how we in the present should think about the past and present and to persuasively convey those critical reflections to his readers.

As a trained historian myself, alert to a hoary historical controversy when I meet it, I set Brown's biography aside and took down a slim volume ignored since my graduate school days: *The Whig Interpretation of History* by Herbert Butterfield, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, published first in 1931.

"I should like to feel," Sir Harold Nicolson wrote, "that all teachers and pupils of history would purchase and ponder this intelligent essay." As with so many other of Sir Harold's hopes for civilization, this one appears to have gone unfulfilled. *The Whig Interpretation* is an eminently civilized plea on behalf of a proper understanding of history that has gone widely unheeded by professional historians in the past three-quarters of a century. Butterfield was concerned with countering what he described as

the tendency in many historians to write on the side of the Protestants and Whigs, to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasize certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present.

Against this impulse which, he acknowledges, represents "an unexamined habit of mind that any historian may fall into," he urged "the love of the past for the sake of the past," the "fervour that was awakened in Gibbon and Gregorovius by the sight of the ruins of ancient Rome." "By imaginative sympathy," Butterfield proposed, the historian

makes the past intelligible to the present. He translates its conditioning circumstances into terms which we today can understand. It is in this sense that history must always be written from the point of view of the present. It is in this sense that every age will have to write its history over again.

At issue, really, is the question of whether the historian should strive to be a literary artist or a *parti pris* journalist eager to promote a more or less ephemeral agendum.

Hofstadter is best remembered for *The American Political Tradition* and *The Age of Reform*. The theme of the first book is the radical discontinuity between the rural, Protestant, individualist, and property-rights tradition that was eclipsed with the Hoover administration and the urban, pluralistic, liberal-socialist, urban, and collectivist regime that replaced it. The burden of the second is the fundamentally un-Progressive nature of Populist-Progressivism, understood by Hofstadter as an essentially reactionary movement created and directed by old-stock Americans for the purpose of containing the recently-arrived ethnic immigrants and restraining the captains of industry who, between them, threatened to destroy the old Yankee civilization. In working up the second thesis, the author kept the immediate present very much in mind. The Old America, he sensed, was dead. The WASP establishment was passing, and its passage was not just the great event of the 20th century but of American history since colonial times, of greater significance than the drafting of the Constitution by a capitalist-dominated Convention, the closing of the critically formative frontier, and the rise of the Midwestern Reform movement in the second half of the 19th century, events described by Charles Beard, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Merle Curti—three giants of the immediately previous generation of American