

# The Unintended Consequences of War

Rarely do wars, once begun, work out as anticipated. As 1898 began, William McKinley could not have dreamed the year would end with America annexing

the Philippines. Yet, by December, the United States, having routed Spain, had launched a three-year war to crush Filipino resistance to U.S. imperial rule.

By 1900, with his "Open Door" policy, McKinley had embroiled us for a century in the politics of Asia. All this was a consequence of a war begun because a U.S. battleship blew up in Havana harbor, almost certainly an accident for which Spain bore no responsibility.

When Wilson took us into the Great War "to make the world safe for democracy," he could not have known America's victory would lead to a Communist Russia, a Fascist Italy, a Nazi Germany, a bloated British Empire, and a second war far bloodier and more destructive than the first.

When he hailed Neville Chamberlain for risking war with Nazi Germany over Poland in 1939, Churchill could not have known that Poland and nine other Christian countries—as well as China—would end up in Stalin's grip as a result of the war he had urged on the British people. "We killed the wrong pig," he is said to have muttered in belated regret.

But if wars won can leave nations with ashes in their mouths, the opposite is also true. America fought to a draw in Korea. Yet, because of our resistance to Stalinist aggression, South Korea became a pillar of Free Asia, and Japan stayed in the Western camp until victory in the Cold War.

South Vietnam fell in 1975, a defeat for U.S. policy if not American arms. But

that heroic struggle in which 58,000 Americans died bought for Southeast Asia ten years of time in which freedom took root.

When President Bush's father was about to launch his war to liberate Kuwait, this writer predicted it would be the first, but not the last, Arab-American war. The second is at hand.

No one knows for certain how it will play out. Europeans, Arabs, and many Americans fear a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq will lead to a Middle East upheaval in which Islamists, hell-bent on a war of civilizations with the West, could come to power.

Neoconservatives, wild for war, predict a "cakewalk" that liberates the people of Iraq from a bloody tyrant and begins the democratization of the Islamic world.

Militarily, Iraq does not appear formidable. An Iraqi air defense, unable to shoot down a single U.S. plane in 40,000 sorties in ten years, cannot long withstand U.S. air power that can deliver 1,000 smart bombs and cruise missiles on target each day. And Iraqi ground forces cannot long resist Abrams tanks that can guarantee the kill of an Iraqi armored vehicle with every shell fired. Thus the great question: What comes next?

The War Party sees the occupation of Iraq, like the occupation of Germany and Japan, as an opportunity to covert hostile Arab nations into peace-loving, pro-Western societies. Faced with U.S. military supremacy, the Arabs, they

believe, will, at last, accept our benevolent hegemony and the permanent presence of Sharonist Israel in the heart of the Middle East.

The antiwar camp fears that the result of a U.S. invasion of Iraq could be a Middle East that more resembles the Europe of the 1930s than the Europe of the 1950s. Impose democracy on the Arab world, and what is to prevent the new regimes from reflecting the resentment and hatred of U.S. power and Israel now pandemic among these peoples.

In the final analysis, the divide is over how best to prevent another 9/11, how to keep America secure in a world where we are not loved, and, by some, no longer feared.

Was 9/11 the result of non-intervention in the Islamic world? Or did terrorists come over here to massacre us in our homeland because we were over there intruding massively in their part of the world?

One camp, call it the Wilsonians, believes that only when the world recognizes the United States is the preeminent world power, and that any who defy us will be crushed, can we be truly secure.

The other camp believes the way to keep America free and secure is to stay out of quarrels that do not affect vital U.S. interests and let alien societies work out their own destinies.

As time was our ally in the war against communism, which did not work, so, time is our ally in the war against Islamism, which also does not work.

But Bush has decided to go with the Wilsonians, and he is taking us with him. ■

[pith helmets in vogue]

## The Madness of Empire

The War Party's militarized strategy will unite the world against us.

By Scott McConnell

RECENTLY THE NOVELIST John le Carré wrote in the *Times* of London that the United States has entered a "period of madness" that dwarfs McCarthyism or the Vietnam intervention in intensity. One generally would not pay much attention to the cynical British spy-tale weaver, never especially friendly to America. But concern about America's mental health is more broadly in the air, spreading well beyond the usual professional anti-Americans. It is now pervasive in Europe, and growing in Asia, and when Matt Drudge posted le Carré's piece prominently on his website, it got passed around and talked about here in ways it never would have five years ago.

The proximate cause of le Carré's diagnosis is Washington's plan for a pre-emptive war against Iraq, a nation whose weapons pose no threat to the United States and that has no substantial links to al-Qaeda or 9/11. The U.S. would fight this war virtually without allies, though a few countries might be dragged into the fray against the will of their populations. But mad or not, this drive toward war is not mania of sudden onset but ratification of a neo-imperialist strategy that has been germinating

in neoconservative circles since the end of the Cold War.

A new war against Iraq was a gleam in the eye of a small but influential group long before 9/11. In 1998, the newly established Project for a New American Century (PNAC), an advocacy group chaired by *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol, began sending open letters from prominent foreign policy hawks. First, it wrote to the Clinton administration calling upon the United States to "remove Saddam's regime." When its advice was ignored, PNAC asked Republican Congressional leaders to push for war. The signatories included Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz (now number two at the Pentagon), Elliott Abrams (recently appointed to the National Security Council as a director of Mid-East policy), William Bennett, John Bolton (now Undersecretary of State), and the ubiquitous Richard Perle, chairman of the Defense Policy Board and often considered the central figure the interlocking web of neoconservative think tanks.

PNAC's ambitions go well beyond Saddam's overthrow. Immediately after 9/11, the group began pushing to expand

the war against other Muslim states, calling for the U.S. to target Hezbollah and its sponsors, Iran and Syria. PNAC also wants the U.S. to stop trying to foster a peace between Israel and the Palestinians, advocating withdrawal of the small amount of aid the U.S. gives the Palestinian Authority and granting full support to Israel's right wing Likud government.

These tactical measures are elements within a broader vision of a more militarized U.S. foreign policy, carried out without allies if necessary. In the final year of the first Bush administration, Paul Wolfowitz penned a memo under the aegis of then Secretary of Defense Cheney, calling for the United States to ramp up its defense spending in order to deter any other country from "even aspiring to a larger regional or global role." China, Russia, Germany, and Japan were to be intimidated from seeking more power in their own regions. After the Wolfowitz draft was leaked to the press, it received widespread ridicule, and the Bush I diplomats rushed to reassure allies that Wolfowitz's views did not truly reflect American foreign policy.