

## BOOKS

[*An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*, David Frum and Richard Perle, Random House, 304 pages]

# Invade the World

By Leon Hadar

SOME OP-ED PIECES are destined to become books. You read 800 words of commentary in the *New York Times* and it whets your intellectual appetite. If you happen to be in the book-publishing business, your We-Have-A-Bestseller bulb lights up. A few phone calls later, trees are being cut down, and 30,000 more words are shaking up the intellectual universe and helping a struggling academic purchase a (used) Jaguar.

Like Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations," which originally appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, there is a genre of articles that should be expanded and reincarnated as hardbacks and paperbacks. There is conversely that other kind of book—the average presidential candidate's Deep Thoughts or Andrew Sullivan's musings on how to prosper as a Conservative Gay Catholic—that should have been condensed into a very brief op-ed. On second thought, wouldn't that great masterpiece *The War Over Iraq*, by neoconservative propagandists William Kristol and Lawrence Kaplan, have come across better if its pages were left in tree form?

Now following in the tiny intellectual footsteps of the Kristol-Kaplan duo is the Perle-Frum pair of neocon pamphleteers, setting even lower standards for this genre of non-fiction writing. The page upon page of sloppy text that is *An End to Evil*, with its crude style, arrogant tone, and collection of half-truths and lies, could have certainly been reduced into a few paragraphs fit

for the *Wall Street Journal*. But no self-respecting neocon would miss an opportunity to publish a book, get on television, and collect generous royalties.

*Evil* was written "at high speed through high summer" as the authors put it. Michael Ledeen graciously read the manuscript "and through his own important work, helped [Frum and Perle] understand the terror masters." Comments came from neocon luminaries such as Ahmad Chalabi's friend in the Pentagon, Harold Rhode, and conspiracy kook Laurie ("Saddam Hussein is responsible for 9/11, anthrax, AIDS, and erectile dysfunction") Mylroie. The result is an embarrassing cut-and-paste job that pretends to be scholarly analysis but includes no index, no bibliography, and just a few footnotes.

But in our post-9/11 world, dominated by the Kristol-Podhoretz *famiglia's* incestuous tentacles, is it really surprising that every con man is a king? That the *Evil* that Frum and Perle have produced was reviewed in the *Washington Post's* prestigious "Book World" by none other than Lawrence Kaplan, who praised the authors for taking up the "good fight" and promoting Wilsonian liberalism "with very sharp teeth"? Or that Perle and Frum have been spending the weeks since the publication of *Evil* being interviewed as though they were the successors to George Kennan and Henry Kissinger?

"We have wanted to fight," our two macho men state in a bombastic introduction entitled "What Now?," contrasting themselves with "soft-liners" who do

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not want to fight. (Retired generals Colin Powell and Anthony Zinni?) Their book is nothing less than a "manual for victory"—which means that the Guys Who Brought You Iraq are now ready to send you to new wars here, there and everywhere. You name the country, they want to end it. Not that they are going to do it personally. After all, someone has to make big bucks in defense consulting fees

(Perle) and book contracts (Frum). And let's not forget the "war of ideas," to which our commanders devote an important chapter. Someone has to fight on the *National Review* blog or protect the nation from the trenches of the American Enterprise Institute.

So fasten your seatbelts. Dick and Dave want to take us on a long and rough ride that would make the invasion of Iraq look like a *Weekly Standard* picnic on the shores of the Euphrates.

We'll start with North Korea, which we are going to blockade and force to get rid of its nuclear weapons, just like we did to Cuba, but this time we might actually end up bombing the commies. They might retaliate and destroy Seoul, which explains why those softies in the South "favor a policy of appeasement of the North." But we are going to act whether the South Koreans like it or not and attack the North's nuclear facilities. Actually "we don't know where all these facilities are ...." But don't get too depressed. Our Drs. Strangelove "hope" that it will be possible to avoid full-blown war if the "credible buildup to an American strike" persuades the Chinese to force Kim Jong Il to cry uncle. If not? Well, the Americans will re-deploy their troops so that only the natives will perish. The Korean Peninsula would eventually be unified under a pro-American democratic government, with the American Empire winning another round.

Then (or is it at the same time that we eradicate North Korea?) we go after the mullahs in Tehran. That might not make sense to many readers, since the Iranians provided support to our allies in the

Northern Alliance and applauded our victory against secular Saddam because they can't wait for us to make Iraq democratic and let their co-religionists into power. But, you see, the mullahs are building a nuclear bomb, and they are not secular or democratic and are harboring al-Qaeda terrorists. Readers might wonder, doesn't that mean that Iran looks like our ally Pakistan, which also

is not secular and not democratic and already has a bomb—and where Osama bin Laden and his gang are probably hiding? Our authors are not about to resolve this cognitive dissonance. Notwithstanding the pose they adopt as master strategists, they are not able to deal with the nuances of Realpolitik. Americans, they proclaim, need to make clear that “we regard Iran’s current government as illegitimate and intolerable and that we support the brave souls who are struggling to topple it.” Never mind that those “brave souls” are not asking for our help and that if they come to power they will continue developing a nuclear program.

Next on the target list is the Ba’ath regime in Syria. According to the CIA, the Syrians have been providing us with valuable assistance in fighting terrorism. Perle and Frum, who believe Americans “may be so eager to protect the right to dissent that we lose sight of the difference between dissent and subversion,” would probably feel at home in Syria, where you first torture a suspect and then ask questions. Moreover, the Syrians have a weak regime, a bankrupted economy, want to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties with the U.S., and are pleading for us to help them make peace with Israel. Any sensible student of for-

eign policy (a.k.a. “appeaser”) would probably propose that we try to exploit these conditions to improve ties with Damascus. But not our Dirty Two. After our great victory in Iraq, we are on a roll, and so we should present President Assad with several ultimatums and make clear to him that “the consequences of refusing will be considerably greater for him than the consequences of acquiescing.”

The next target, Saudi Arabia, is an interesting case. America went to war in 1991 to protect the royal family and its gas station from an Iraqi invasion. Yet the Saudis provide a large source of money and men for al-Qaeda and continue to control an Islamic anti-Western network. Perhaps it is time to bid farewell to the Saudis and create incentives for the Europeans and Japanese—who, unlike the Americans, are dependent for their economic survival on the energy resources in the Persian Gulf—to start taking care of their own interests. Instead, Perle and Frum are promoting a strategy that would not only bring about the collapse of the Saudi regime, but would also lead to the creation of a Shi’ite state and U.S. military occupation of the regional oil fields.

Preparing readers for America’s Manifest Destiny in the Arab world, our

experts provide a brief introduction to the Middle East in which the United States and Israel are depicted as playing a benign and enlightened, if not altruistic role in the region. “Light touch” is the way the authors refer to U.S. policy in the Middle East since 1945.

But there wasn’t anything “light” about the U.S. move in 1953 to depose Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and install Mohammad Reza Shah to the Peacock Throne in Iran or about the U.S. alliance with corrupt Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf and Egypt or our massive military and economic assistance to the Israeli state. After all, this extensive U.S. intervention in the Middle East ignited the Arab oil embargo in 1973, led to a dangerous nuclear standoff with the Soviets during the Yom Kippur War, helped create the conditions for the 1979 revolution in Iran, and served as a backdrop to a list of Middle Eastern wars and acts of anti-American terrorism, not to mention the two Gulf Wars with Saddam. Add the U.S. partnership with the anti-Soviet Mujaheddin in Afghanistan, which helped give birth to Osama & Co., and one can start grasping the reasons for anti-American sentiments in the Middle East.

Thanks to Perle, Frum, and the rest of the architects of the war in Iraq, it is all getting even deadlier through a process by which Iraq is starting to look like what the West Bank and southern Lebanon have been to Israel—a bloody quagmire. But that seems to fit with the agendas of the neocons. *Evil* tries to place these developments in a framework that suggests the United States and Israel are allies in the war on terrorism, sharing common interests and values against a bloc of anti-Western Arabs and Muslims backed by European Arabists, liberals, and anti-Semites. *Evil* provides a storyline in which the Oslo peace process, which was promoted by elected Israeli governments and the majority of the Israeli public, is depicted as part of an anti-Israeli scheme advanced by Arabists in the State Department. In this account, the neocons are a “tiny minority” that “dares propose” an effective strategy. If one

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“dares propose” that the neocons are crusading for a democratic empire in the Middle East, the critic is then disparaged by the authors as harboring defeatist and anti-Semitic attitudes.

Indeed, the *Evil* narrative—with its evocation of the themes of anti-Semitism, the British-American alliance, and French defeatism—creates a sense that it is the Second World War all over again. “It’s victory or holocaust,” declare our armchair strategists as they call on Americans to follow them to “dark places” where the foundations for a Global American Democratic Empire would be set up in preparation for the final great battle against ... France-led Europe? Russia? China? Who knows?

A skeptical reader observing the mess in post-war Iraq might “dare propose” that the defeatists got it right and Perle and Frum were wrong. Did they not predict that we were going to discover nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons in Iraq? That Americans would be greeted as “liberators”? That we would find evidence of links between Saddam and bin Laden? That the French, Germans, and Russians would eventually have no choice but to follow American “leadership”? That oil production in Iraq would generate so much wealth as to make its economy self-sufficient in a few months? That we would not need to maintain large numbers of American troops in Iraq? That a democratic Iraq would serve as a model to the entire Middle East?

*Evil*, giving *chutzpah* a very bad name, contends that all of the above have happened, that “even in the absence of stockpiles of weapons Saddam was known to have created, the threat from his programs was undeniable.” They compare the anti-American insurgency in Iraq to post-Appomattox attacks by former Confederate soldiers, the Ku Klux Klan, and Jesse James against Union soldiers. And they comfort us by explaining that even if we do not get a Jeffersonian democracy in Iraq, the American occupation will prove to be a valuable exercise whose lessons can be applied in the next stages

of empire-building. If we are facing problems in Iraq, the ones who should be blamed are those “faint hearts” who refused to listen to Perle’s advice and impose Ahmed Chalabi on the Iraqis as their democratic leader.

As the neocons’ grand designs are proving nothing more than intellectual fantasies, some speculate that their ideas are being marginalized. Escalating attacks against U.S. troops have forced the Bush administration to accelerate the timetable for ending the occupation, and the White House seems to be adopting now policies that run contrary to the guidelines proposed by Perle and Frum. Bush rolled out the red carpet for Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao and warned Taiwan to refrain from antagonizing Beijing by challenging the “One China” policy. China, together with Japan and South Korea, has also played a leading role in a multilateral effort to defuse the North Korean nuclear crisis. And a similar multilateral strategy has been advanced for dealing with Iran’s nuclear ambitions. When it comes to the other two members of the “Axis of Evil,” President Bush has rejected the neoconservative approach.

Some have compared the planners of the Iraq debacle to the architects of the war in Vietnam, the “best and the brightest,” as David Halberstam described them. But if you really want to get a sense of the mighty brainpower that produced *Evil*, read the authors’ recommendations about Libya. “Libya should be regarded and treated as what it is: an implacably hostile regime. The illusion that Mohammed al-Qaddafi is ‘moderating’ should be treated as what *it is*: a symptom of the seemingly incurable wishful delusions that afflicts the accommodationists in the foreign policy establishment.” *Evil* was published the same week we learned Qaddafi was moderating his policies and getting rid of his WMD. ■

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*The Two Americas: Our Current Political Deadlock and How to Break It, Stanley B. Greenberg, Thomas Dunne Books, 288 pages*

## Blue State Blueprint

By Martin Sieff

STANLEY GREENBERG, longtime pollmeister/political guru to President Bill Clinton, has produced a well-written, copiously researched, and genuinely important book on the current state of American politics. But it is most important in the ways he least intended.

Greenberg contends that the United States has been deadlocked and drifts aimlessly in an era dominated by divisive Republican “wedge” politics, and that the only way the Democrats can regain both power and control over the national agenda is to produce an “inclusive” vision that harks back to before the party fell victim to a host of suicidally obsessive interest groups.

The author’s analysis of the growth and nature of the divided, Red versus Blue America that showed up on the charts of the November 2000 presidential election results is indeed comprehensive, witty, and succinct: the best of its kind. And he also shows exceptional, albeit not unexpected prescience in recommending exactly the kind of neo-populist, “broad tent” strategy that Howard Dean pioneered and John Kerry has now smoothly purloined from him for the Democrats’ fall campaign against President Bush.

Greenberg even argues persuasively that the Democrats can co-opt the spirit of renewed national unity and common purpose that gave Bush such a prolonged boost after the terror attacks of 9/11. Feedback from sampling groups in Tampa, Florida, the high-tech East Coast, and Heartland Iowa, he writes, “reflected the crisis and spirit of unity following 9/11, including an increased confidence in government’s capacity to address the