

# Homeland Security

## Defending America First

by Edward A. Olsen

American national security is a fundamental responsibility of the U.S. government. Throughout the history of the United States, from the founding of the republic to the 21st century, Americans have debated the best way to meet this responsibility. For much of that history, the sound advice of President Washington to “steer clear of permanent alliances” and of President Jefferson to avoid “entangling alliances” guided the United States on a path of geopolitical independence that provided a solid foundation for her national security.

In the course of the 20th century, U.S. involvement in global coalitions against common adversaries shifted that emphasis in ways that provoked a long-term debate between liberal internationalists and conservative “isolationists.” During World War II and the Cold War, that debate was largely won by Wilsonian and Stimsonian internationalists whose approach to world affairs coopted many conservatives. Nonetheless, principled conservatives remained committed to noninterventionism and advocated U.S. strategic independence.

After the Cold War, that debate was rekindled as a result of conservative opposition to the Clinton administration’s multilateralist U.S. commitment to armed humanitarian intervention on behalf of a globalist international community. During the 2000 campaign, candidate George W. Bush appeared to be deeply skeptical of the Clinton brand of interventionism and cynical about the merits of postconflict nation-building. Coupled with candidate Bush’s apparent inclinations toward unilateralism, this raised hopes among more traditional and libertarian conservatives that the United States might soon return to her neglected roots.

Since September 11, 2001, those hopes have been abandoned. This raises a crucial question: Why are the self-declared conservatives of the Bush administration, who were hypercritical of the Clinton administration’s pursuit of armed humanitarian interventionism, doing essentially the same thing? Despite criticism of the Bush administration’s handling of the Kyoto accord and reluctant dealing with the United Nations, the Bush approach to the “War on Terrorism” and the Iraq war has been predicated on international coalitions.

The Iraq war, in particular, underscored the Bush administration’s brand of internationalism. As the administration’s most steadfast and influential foreign supporter, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, put it in a speech late in the Clinton administration: “We are all internationalists now, whether we like it or

not.” While the Bush administration’s conservative reputation is well known, circumstances have allowed its domestic predilection for “compassionate conservatism” to spill over into its foreign policy in ways that confirm Blair’s assertion. Although the ostensible goal of the Iraq war was to achieve regime change in order to preempt Saddam Hussein’s ability to use weapons of mass destruction, as the war evolved in ways that demonstrated Iraq did not have WMD’s, the Pentagon’s label for the war—“Operation Iraqi Freedom”—was transformed from a bureaucratic veneer into geopolitical substance. Supported by wartime polls that indicated almost 70 percent of Americans believed the war was justified because of the horrific evidence portrayed in the media of Saddam Hussein’s atrocities against the Iraqi people, the Iraq war became a profound example of armed humanitarian interventionism.

In short, the Bush administration’s policies of coalition-based, U.S.-controlled armed humanitarian interventionism are remarkably similar to those of the Clinton administration. The ostensible difference is the context of the “War on Terrorism.” Waging war in the name of regime change in Baghdad based on a strategic paradigm of preemptive interventionism that promises to expand that model to other rogue states and centers of terrorism—either by direct action in the form of further wars or as a result of geopolitical intimidation of existing or potential adversaries—amounts to a variation on the Clintonian theme. Applying the Bush brand of compassionate conservatism to U.S. foreign and security policy demonstrates that this form of conservatism is equally committed to the entrenched principles of Wilsonian liberal internationalism and the globalist policy practices of Stimsonian interventionism. Despite the evident differences between the Clinton-era devotion to a U.N.-based vision of a global world order and Bush-era aspirations for a world order imposed by U.S. benevolent hegemonism with its overtones of an American imperium, these two visions for the United States as the sole superpower leading the world are based on essentially the same liberal internationalist commitment to armed humanitarian intervention.

Is the Bush administration’s implementation of U.S. foreign and security policy truly conservative? This question centers on the core theme of noninterventionist “neoisolationism” regarding what kinds of wars are truly necessary for U.S. national defense. Do wars predicated on armed humanitarian interventionism qualify as necessary for U.S. national security? In keeping with the “America first” precepts of traditional conservatism, they do not. By no means should this be interpreted to mean that the logic behind armed humanitarian interventionism is invalid in principle. There is ample reason for the United Nations or other regional international organizations to create a standing armed force capable of carrying out such missions on behalf of any members of the international community who wish to volunteer for such activities. Individual Americans

---

*Edward A. Olsen is a professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and the author of U.S. National Defense for the Twenty-First Century: The Grand Exit Strategy (Frank Cass) and Toward Normalizing U.S.-Korea Relations: In Due Course? (Lynne Rienner). The views expressed are personal and do not represent those of the U.S. government.*

should feel completely free to volunteer for any such organization. Constitutionally, however, that responsibility does not belong to the U.S. Armed Forces.

While most Americans who, for the sake of global stability, advocate a U.S. role in armed humanitarian intervention, understandably do not make their case in terms of a U.S. imperial obligation, others do so—and in a proactive manner. A subset of neoconservative policy pundits openly urges that the United States should perceive her international duties as an imperial mandate that will benefit both the United States and the global community, but most neoconservatives avoid such rhetoric—knowing that their opponents will use it against them. Nonetheless, this perspective does substantially reflect the neoconservative rejection of America-first foreign-policy values and urges extensive military engagement in far-flung corners of the world, with the help of regional deputies, in the name of fostering a *Pax Americana*. An influential early example of this was Eliot Cohen's advocacy of an American "imperial strategy" because "The United States at the end of the twentieth century is a global empire."

Gradually, the policies created by the Bush administration are spawning national debate over the most appropriate approach to U.S. national defense. After September 11, the debate evolved despite President Bush striking a responsive chord with most of the American people thanks to his unpretentious leadership style and authentic emotional rapport. This enabled President Bush to be widely perceived as remarkably effective in the terrorist-induced crisis. Despite the controversy surrounding U.S. policy toward the "Axis of Evil"—especially the logic of waging a war in Iraq and the inconsistencies in U.S. treatment of Iraq and North Korea—popular support for President Bush remains strong. Public frustration with the Iraq occupation could adversely affect that support, however. It remains to be seen whether the American people's desires for authentic homeland security will be fully met by these policies.

Mindful of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Americans today are acutely sensitive to the need for a greater defense of our sovereign territory. The American public's patriotic fervor remains high, motivated by deep-seated fears of additional attacks on U.S. soil. Throughout the decades following World War II, Americans had grown complacent about the seemingly remote dangers posed by external threats to U.S. territory.

That complacency was severely shaken by the ability of terrorists to carry out horrendous destruction without recourse to the sort of military weapons on which the United States has relied. Because of understandable anxieties on the part of the American people, the Bush administration's desires—in conjunction with like-minded congressional leaders—to bolster our homeland defenses warrant support. The efforts to reconfigure an array of U.S. government agencies tasked with various aspects of internal and border security into an overarching Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security generally make a lot of sense, and a very strong case can be made that this should have been done several decades ago.

However, an even stronger case can be made that the ongoing bureaucratic experiment in enhanced homeland security does not go far enough. The new Cabinet department is tasked with myriad responsibilities for domestic security on the federal level that include some coastal- and border-security issues. These

involve the functions of the Border Patrol, Coast Guard, Secret Service, transportation security, customs, immigration, emergency services, and antiterrorist technical and scientific capabilities. Other facets of territorial military security are now the responsibility of one command within the Department of Defense—the "Northern Command." This is the first time that this has been done since the United States began her worldwide system of regional unified commands during the Cold War. Despite that move, the lion's share of the Defense Department's missions remains what it was throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War years: the military defenses of other countries' homelands *via* forward-deployed U.S. Armed Forces, rather than the defense of U.S. sovereign territory.

Homeland defense would be far better served were the Department of Defense to be relabeled the "Department of National Defense," with the U.S. Armed Forces primarily tasked with the territorial air, ground, and maritime defense of the United States instead of acting as a global police force. As September 11 demonstrated, those forces were better positioned to defend other countries' military headquarters and urban centers than to defend the Pentagon and New York City. The U.S. military's mandate should be to defend the territorial homeland while retaining the unilateral offensive capabilities—based in the United States—necessary to ensure nuclear and conventional deterrence, to prevent the use of other weapons of mass destruction, and to retaliate decisively against any state or nonstate adversary that dares to test the willpower of U.S. deterrence. If the proposed Department of National Defense were to deal with all facets of U.S. security through more effective use of the four branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps), as well as the Coast Guard, in defending all aspects of U.S. sovereign territory from external attack, then the domestic parameters of defending the homeland should be dealt with by the new composite department—renamed the "Department of Internal Security." This agency should not be organized or conduct its affairs in ways that violate the Reconstruction-era Posse Comitatus Act separating military functions from policing and civil-regulatory functions. Making this adjustment on the homefront would require sound and more conservative modifications of the Bush administration's plans for the evolving agency.

This integration effort would require a significant reappraisal of U.S. national-defense priorities. Does U.S. national defense mean defending the United States, or does it mean defending the entire world? The answer to that question should be obvious; for many Americans, however, the logic of rampant globalism prevents them from admitting that U.S. territorial defense should be the first and predominant mandate of the U.S. government. The U.S. body politic, engulfed as it is in a wave of patriotic ardor to defend the United States from any future attacks, should rally around the core logic of defending America first.

The level of U.S. success in the Iraq war and the desire of the American people to show their support for the U.S. Armed Forces complicated the national debate over U.S. national-security policy. Despite cautionary speculation about the prospective war's nature, it turned out to be a major demonstration of U.S. strategic capabilities and sophistication. Even critics of the war had to acknowledge that it reinforced the message behind the Bush administration's preemption doctrine: to warn adversaries and potential adversaries about the risks of alienating the United States. For obvious reasons, neoconservative advo-

cates of such an approach felt vindicated, and their clout within the administration was widely acknowledged. The pendulum appeared to be swinging toward the neoconservative brand of liberal internationalism and armed humanitarian interventionism. However, the public's fundamental motive for supporting the war and the troops who put their lives on the line remained centered on the post-September 11 desire to defend the United States against attacks from foreign threats. The reality is that there has been no credible risk that any of the "Axis" states possessed the wherewithal to invade—much less conquer—the United States.

The genuine threat to our national security remains foreign terrorists who are motivated by their perceptions of our roles in their regions of the world and who seek opportunities to strike out at the areas where we are most vulnerable—on U.S. soil. In this regard, a comment made by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld shortly after September 11, as the United States was retaliating rapidly against Taliban supporters of Al Qaeda, was telling: "We're not running out of targets, Afghanistan is." While completely accurate in terms of the air campaign in Operation Enduring Freedom, it also was perversely ironic in terms of the larger U.S. struggle against international terrorists, among whom there always has been, and always will be, a relative paucity of tangible terrorist targets when compared with an overwhelming abundance of vulnerable targets within an open and free society like the United States. This reality underscores the necessity of reordering American national-security priorities.

U.S. citizens should convey to their government that defense of the homeland is best accomplished by keeping U.S. strategic priorities focused on territorial security rather than on preemptive military actions overseas. The United States should pursue an authentic brand of national-security realism and refuse to be led astray by advocates of a flawed "realism" designed to serve the needs of an abstract international community.

Were the United States to pursue this conservative approach, there would be major budgetary advantages that would greatly ease the financial burden of U.S. national defense. The Pentagon's budget request for 2004 is \$380 billion, and there is widespread speculation that uncertain costs of the war in Iraq and years of postwar nation-building will boost the overall figures tremendously. Concurrently, the budget request for the fledgling Department of Homeland Security is \$36 billion. If the projected funding of other agencies that deal with domestic security is factored in, that figure grows to roughly \$41 billion. Many critics from across the political spectrum have raised valid questions about the adequacy of these funding levels for homeland security. Amid the pressures of waging the war in Iraq, Congress passed a war bill supplement for national security authorizing almost \$80 billion more. Of that amount, about five billion dollars was allocated to homeland security. These figures are truly daunting, especially if these prospective costs are part of the Bush administration's penchant for deficit spending and willingness to sanction the United States' massive national debt.

Americans need to know how much of the U.S. national-defense budget is actually allocated for territorial defense of the U.S. homeland *versus* expenditures for the defense of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, *etc.* It is virtually impossible to determine such allocations today because of the criteria used within the budget. Advocates of U.S. internationalist commitments

do not want to differentiate between U.S. national and international defense costs. Yet there is ample reason to question this reluctance.

Given the population base, economic assets, and strategic incentives of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, each of these areas should provide its own regional multilateral self-defense and should be expected to pay for all of it.

Were the United States sharply to reduce her budgetary commitments to global security, Washington could reallocate a sizable portion of the money to genuine homeland defense by the U.S. Armed Forces and to providing the funds required by first responders at the national, state, and local levels for internal antiterrorist security. It is very likely that the United States could provide such levels of authentic national security for far less than is currently projected. In so doing, Washington would act in a fiscally conservative manner—not exacerbating budgetary deficits and the national debt. We would be far safer while spending far less money.

If American leaders shift course and start crafting policy based on genuine *national*-security priorities, all of the rationales for defending the international community in search of a New World Order led by the United States would be weakened. In time, these rationales will be replaced by a more traditionally conservative understanding of the United States' proper role in international affairs. To get to that stage, Americans who support that option will need to persist in a vigorous national debate, exposing the flaws in existing policies and explaining the virtues of a truly conservative approach to U.S. national security in a manner that can draw upon a broad spectrum of society. Neoconservative hawks bent on establishing U.S. dominance in a globalized security system are not "conservatives" in the traditional sense of the word. On the contrary, being hawkish in pursuit of genuine U.S. *national* security and the deglobalization of American homeland defense constitutes authentic conservatism. ◀

### For Christmas, give the gift of *knowledge*.

Become a correspondence student of the TRI Academy! Join Dr. Thomas Fleming as he provides a survey of Egypt and Mesopotamia before embarking on an in-depth examination of the history and literature of Greece and Rome.

#### The History and Literature of the Ancient World

Readings will include works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch, Livy, and Tacitus, among others. Correspondence students will receive in the mail each week an audiotaped lecture and any relevant course materials. The course consists of 34 lectures and will run through May 2004.

**\$200.00 per semester; \$375.00 per year**

Sign up now. Once the course is complete, the cost of course materials will increase.

*For more information or to sign up, please call Jan Kooistra at (815) 964-5811.*



# Sociology of the Gods

by Massimo Introvigne

*"The eternal gods do not lightly change their minds."*

—Homer, *Odyssey*

**For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery**  
by Rodney Stark  
Princeton: Princeton University Press;  
488 pp., \$35.00

Rodney Stark is considered by many to be the greatest living sociologist of religion. Generations of English-speaking students have used his textbook *Sociology*, now in its eighth edition. Stark was one of the founders of the theory of religious economy, which replaced the earlier theory of secularization as the sociological model for interpreting the status of religion in the West; for several years, however, he has devoted his efforts to a sociological interpretation of the history of religions.

His essay on the origins of Christianity, "The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History" (1996), was translated into 12 languages and has been given a surprisingly favorable reception by experts in ancient Christianity, though he cast doubt on more than one of their interpretations. With *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (2001), Stark embarked upon a full investigation of monotheism, putting to the test the hypothesis that regards the general principles of religious economy as valid not only for the contemporary world but for the ancient and medieval peri-

*Massimo Introvigne is the founder of the Center for the Study on New Religions (CESNUR). This article is an abbreviated translation of a review that appeared in the May-June issue of Cristianità.*



Jacques Callot

ods. This theory postulates, among other things, that the "demand" for religion tends to remain constant over time, so that the variations in the ratio of religiosity—that is, in the percentage of persons who say that they are religious or practicing religion—depend on the quality and quantity of the religion available. Unless the religious market is distorted by coercive interventions of the state, it behaves like other markets: Monopoly, as time goes by, produces indolence and a lack of enthusiasm among the monopolists and depresses the market, which subsequently is revived and reinvigorated by active and bracing competition.

The most typical comparative case on which the theory of religious economy has been based is the contrast between the monopoly held by the state churches of Scandinavia, which have reduced the number of practicing Chris-

tians to a minimum, and the vigorous competition among Christian denominations in America, which has transformed the United States into a country where the number of practicing Christians is three-times higher than the average within the European Union. This result, Stark declares, holds also for antiquity. The success of religions protected by the state against competitors was, at first, brilliant; yet, in the long run, triumph proved ephemeral, after the official clergy grew lazy and lost missionary zeal. Another aspect of the theory of religious economy holds that monotheism, postulating a personal god, has a greater success than polytheistic religions as well as those that venerate an abstract "essence" unconcerned with the problems of human beings. A unique god who takes care of every aspect of human life is infinitely more attractive.

Naturally, Stark approaches these problems from the sociological point of view, which, on principle, excludes value judgments concerning which theology is "true." Yet his perspective is far from indifferent to questions of theology and doctrine since, for him, the doctrinal aspects help to explain why one religion is successful and another disappears.

Although monotheism, by its nature, has difficulty coexisting with other faiths, Stark emphasizes that, in practice, this intolerance is expressed in violent acts only when an external threat makes a reaffirmation of identity seem necessary. Thus, the face-off between Christianity and Islam determines for each a harsher repression of both Jews and heretics.

*For the Glory of God*, the second volume of Stark's study of monotheism, examines four episodes in the history of Western Christianity: medieval here-