

fatal flaw. It does not follow from the fact that a radical embraced republican values that he rejected individual rights. Why cannot someone embrace both rights and republicanism? No doubt in some cases, individualist and republican beliefs can conflict. Some, but not all republicans, e.g., supported a military draft; and this is obviously inconsistent with a robust belief in self-ownership. But this is a special case: there seems no general inconsistency between the two sets of values.

Wollstonecraft, our author shows, was both a republican and a radical. Her adherence to natural rights did not at all impede her vigorous defense of civic virtue. Perhaps oddly for a feminist, she praised republics as virile and masculine, contrasting them with effeminate aristocracies (pp. 117–18; Modugno notes that Wollstonecraft by speaking in these terms did not abandon feminism. She merely adopted the prevailing language of her time). Once more Modugno has undermined a dichotomy. Just as Wollstonecraft could be both a defender of rights and a proponent of gradualism, so she could also be both a republican and an individualist.⁴

Modugno's thoughtful analysis leads to a question that Rothbardians

need to answer. Rothbard rejected Hayek's claim that reform must be gradual: "true" individualism, for Rothbard, entailed a much more radical posture than Hayek countenanced. Does this mean that Rothbard was a constructivist who abused reason in Cartesian fashion?

I think that Rothbard could accept much of Hayek's argument, while retaining his radicalism. He might plausibly say that the radical changes he favors are those that remove coercive restraints. His libertarianism does not impose a Cartesian plan on society: it instead, through its forthright rejection of coercion, allows individuals to form the spontaneous orders that Hayek has described. ■ MR

Be Very Afraid

An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror

DAVID FRUM AND RICHARD PERLE
Random House, 2004
284 pgs.

⁴Modugno's contention that one can be both an individualist and a republican parallels the argument of Ronald Hamowy that Trenchard and Gordon's *Cato's Letters* is both republican and radically Lockean. See Ronald Hamowy, "Cato's Letters, John Locke, and the Republican Paradigm," *History of Political Thought XI* (1990): 273–94.

In the days following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, many Americans reacted with panic. Were the attacks the beginning of a war that would imperil the lives of millions in our country? It soon transpired that no such outcome was in the offing. The

terrorists proved unable to follow up their assault; and despite the best efforts of the Bush administration, panic subsided. The authors of *An End to Evil* were not so fortunate as the American public. September 11 in their case aggravated a preexisting condition of severe anxiety. Now, if supporters of Thomas Szasz will excuse me, Messrs. Frum and Perle have entered Cloud Cuckoo land. To combat a few terrorists, they maintain, we must wage war on a good part of the world and strike at one of the world's major religions.

Our authors, fairly early in their own book, undermine the principal justification for the war on terror they are at pains to advocate. As they rightly point out, "Yet the United States may be a tougher target than it looks. . . . The nation entrusts the first responsibility for the safety of each nuclear power plant, each chemical factory, each petroleum refinery, and each natural gas pipeline to those who know that plant, that factory, that refinery, and that pipeline best: its owners and employees. If the terrorists want to try to blow up a nuclear power plant, they must match their wits against people who have devoted their lives to the problem of nuclear safety. Ditto for chemicals, ditto for refineries, ditto for pipelines. In the movies, terrorists are skilled specialists; in real life, most of them are amateurs who do boneheaded things. . . . The terrorists' most important advantage was our complacency, and after 9/11 that advantage was lost for good" (p. 62).

Had our authors contemplated the wisdom of their own paragraph, they would have strangled at birth their monstrous book. Neither the Bush administration nor this pair of bellicose authors has been able to establish the existence of a continuing terrorist danger to the United States. For the reasons just stated, we have an excellent chance to block whatever destruction a few fanatics may have in store for us. Frum and Perle, for all their frenzied efforts, cannot defeat the logic of their own argument to the contrary.

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If we do not face a substantial terrorist threat, why engage in a war on terror? Our panicky authors are nothing if not resourceful, and they suggest a three-pronged response to our query. We must, they say, interdict not only terrorism directed against America, but also assaults on other countries, most especially Arab terrorism directed against Israel. Next, we must act decisively against various countries that, to some degree or other, lend aid to terrorist groups. Frum and Perle very

helpfully offer a list of regimes that must, if possible, be replaced with “democracies” that will obey without question their American masters. We must, finally, realize that fanatical believers in one of the world’s major religions aid and abet the terrorists. The version of Islam that these fanatics profess, promoted by Saudi Arabia’s immense wealth, poses a dire threat to the United States. We thus ought to undermine the Saudi government, so

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long as it refuses to embrace the democratic reforms Frum and Perle have in store for it.

One of the few facts of Middle East politics that is not controversial is Arab enmity toward Israel. The Palestinians believe that the land of Israel is rightly theirs, and they bitterly resist Israeli policy in the occupied territories. Hamas and Hezbollah, among other groups, have struck at the Israelis

through terrorist bombings, and the Israelis have responded in a way that not even Frum and Perle can fault for undue moderation. By contrast with our own situation, terrorism is for Israel a mortal danger.

What should the United States do about this? One answer appeals to the traditional American foreign policy of nonintervention, best encapsulated in Washington’s *Farewell Address*. The political problems of the Middle East do not directly concern the United States: the nations and peoples of that region must resolve them for themselves. No doubt our authors would suggest that nonintervention, if applied to the Middle East, would unduly favor Israel’s Arab foes; but I do not think this can be sustained. Israel seems well able to look after itself. If the United States were to remain aloof from foreign entanglements that do not directly concern us, why would terrorist groups with regional grievances threaten us?

Frum and Perle think that this question is irrelevant. To them, an act of terrorism against one nation is a threat to everyone. “Worse, the ideology that justifies the terrible crimes of Hamas and Hezbollah is the same ideology that justifies the crimes of al-Qaeda. If it’s okay to blow up civilians in a holy war against Israel, it is equally okay to blow them up in a holy war against India, or Russia, or us . . . we won’t get very far against the ideology of global jihad as long as we suggest that some terrorist jihads are acceptable forms of ‘resistance’ while others are not” (p. 125).

The authors' argument rests on a gross fallacy. They maintain, and I shall not here challenge them, that an influential interpretation of Islam mandates violent action against enemies of that religion. It does not follow from this premise that those who, basing themselves on this doctrine, wage war on Israel, view all other non-Islamic countries as fit targets for terror. Would not the posture of radical

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Islamists of this stripe toward a nation depend, by the very terms of the doctrine itself, on whether that nation acted against Islamic interests?

Our authors, if I have understood them, deny this. They think that Islam would pose a threat, regardless of our policy in the Middle East, and we shall later on examine what they have to say to support this. Meanwhile, suppose we accept their premise and view all terrorist groups, not only those who

attack our country, as enemies. What then follows?

As Frum and Perle see matters, we must overturn all governments that aid terrorist groups. They enthusiastically applaud the recent invasion of Iraq as a perfect example of what needs to be done.

But what is the evidence that the government of Saddam Hussein supported terrorist groups that threatened the United States? Their case is flimsy: the Iraqi foreign minister "offered an extraordinary nondenial denial [sic]" of a meeting between the hijacker Mohammed Atta and an Iraqi intelligence officer in Prague, some months before 9/11 (p. 46). But, they say, so what if there is no evidence linking Saddam to the attacks against us: are not "clues and hints" enough (p. 45)?

The reasoning appears bizarre, but things at once fall into place if one remembers our authors' fundamental premise. For them, terrorism that does not have America in its sights still threatens us; and Saddam undoubtedly aided Palestinian groups hostile to Israel. Hence the imperative need to remove him.

To defend the Bush administration's invasion, Frum and Perle evoke without apparent embarrassment the specter of weapons of mass destruction. They know full well that no such weapons have been discovered, but this does not faze them. Did not Saddam have in mind programs to build such weapons? Why should the mere matter of his failure to possess them affect our decision to dispatch his regime? Critics of the invasion say that the threat

“wasn’t ‘imminent’.” It was never quite clear how ‘imminent’ would have been imminent enough to suit these critics. Should we have waited until one month before Saddam got a nuclear bomb or weaponized smallpox? One week? Until the stuff actually rolled out of the lab? Until we knew he was preparing to use it” (p. 34)?

One answer that suggests itself is “until solid evidence indicated he had weapons with which he intended to attack America,” but for our authors, this is of course pacifist nonsense. He might have developed such weapons: what more justification for war could any reasonable person want?

The conquest of Iraq is an excellent beginning to the world war against terror, but we must be careful lest bureaucracies in the military and State Department cause our crusade to stumble. A number of other countries require a regime change. Iran is no democracy: voters can select only which Islamic extremist they wish to represent them. What is worse, Iran supports terrorism: “Iran foments Palestinian terrorism against Israel, using terror to undermine every attempt to encourage an Israel-Palestine peace” (p. 105).

Why not then get rid of a government so hostile to our interests? “Above all, Iran’s dissidents need . . . us 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” (p. 112).

And why stop there? Syria must also replace its government with one

more to our liking. But we must be fair: we should first present the present regime with demands for change. Only if the government rejects these should we take action. I venture to suggest that acceptance is unlikely. The requirements include this: “We expect Syria to cease its campaign of incitement against Israel, which only nourishes the culture of suicide bombing” (p. 115). Can Frum and Perle really think that a Syrian government that ceased to be anti-Israel could maintain

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itself in power? Their list of demands recalls the Sudeten German leader Konrad Henlein’s summary of Hitler’s instructions for negotiations with the Czech authorities: “We must always demand so much that we can never be satisfied.”

Our authors foresee an objection to their plans. They wish to replace various Arab governments. But will not doing so require permanent American military occupation of the countries

concerned? Frum and Perle oppose “radical Islam.” Well and good; but what if the people in the occupied countries favor it?

Their response staggers belief. When the Arab populations see the wonders that democracy has brought a “free” Iraq, they will embrace with ardor the policies that we want. “[W]e have given Iraqis a chance to lead the Arab and Muslim world to democracy and liberty.” Fortunately, “Iraq does not have to attain perfection to challenge the region with the power of a better alternative” (p. 168). The Communists, by their own declaration, did not invade Hungary in 1956, or Czechoslovakia in 1968; they “liberated” these countries from evil. Frum and Perle have learned their lessons well.

But I must not give a misleading picture of the book. Frum and Perle have much more in mind than changes in various Arab governments. North Korea, along with Iran and Iraq, is part of the axis of evil. It too gets the treatment: demands almost certain to be rejected followed by military action. If North Korea does not immediately surrender all its nuclear material and close its missile bases, then “decisive action” follows. This “would begin with a comprehensive air and naval blockade” (p. 103). Such action would prepare the way for “a preemptive strike against North Korea’s nuclear facilities” (p. 104). If we are fortunate, China will finish the job for us by forcibly replacing the North Korean government.

But China should not be complacent. Frum and Perle have plans for the Chinese as well. France, by the way, has not been behaving in a fashion appropriate to a subservient ally. While military action is not yet on our author’s agenda, France must be punished for disobedience. I shall leave the details of these schemes to readers of the book. Their policy can be summarized in the slogan “Shout, and swing a very big stick.”

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I have left for last a part of the book’s argument. Frum and Perle have a response to my main objection to their plans. I have suggested that if the United States were to follow a policy of neutrality and nonintervention, then terrorism would pose no major threat to us. Our authors counter that this view overlooks the menace of militant Islam. They would dismiss as naïve my earlier claim that unless we strike at

Islamic interests, militants will not view us as enemies.

Quite the contrary, the Wahhabi Islam sponsored by Saudi Arabia teaches hatred of all who do not embrace that religion. Muslims throughout the world, influenced by this extremist sect, refuse to condemn Osama bin Laden. In the eyes of these fanatic believers, neutrality will not save us; we must convert or face destruction.

Readers will not be surprised by the solution our authors propose. "Warn the Saudis that anything less than their utmost cooperation in the war on terror will have the severest consequences for the Saudi state" (p. 140). It is hardly likely that the Saudis will accede to one of our author's requirements for cooperation, the demand to cease financial aid for Wahhabi missionary activity abroad. The sect, like it or not, gives essential support to the ruling dynasty.

You can guess the rest. If the Saudis decline our terms, then independence for the Eastern Province, where the oil is located, "might be a very good outcome for the United States" (p. 141).

I am no expert in Islamic theology and, in any case, have no wish to defend Wahhabi Islam. But before we take action against the religion of millions of people, ought we not to be cautious? Surely belief in fundamentalist Islam does not always lead to anti-American violence. It has after all not prevented Saudi Arabia from entering into an alliance with us. I suggest that watchful waiting is a wiser course of action than a quixotic attempt to cram

neoconservatism down the throats of the world's Muslims.

I close on a positive note. Frum and Perle have identified with great clarity a system of belief that threatens the world. This system requires all governments to conform to the policies of a single power. Those that refuse face violent overthrow. The ensuing military occupation by the dominant power is styled democracy; and, once people grasp its benefits, it is claimed that democracy of this sort will conquer the world. The authors' depiction of this ideology cannot be bettered. It is the ideology they themselves defend. ■ MR

The New Jacobins

*America the Virtuous:
The Crisis of Democracy
and the Quest for Empire*

CLAES G. RYN

Transaction Publishers, 2003

xiii + 221 pgs.

Claes Ryn's thoughtful book might have been written as a brilliant counter to *An End to Evil*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. The book exactly diagnoses the cast of mind on display in that blueprint for perpetual war. I should like, though, to approach Professor Ryn's central thesis somewhat obliquely, through an