

# The post-Cold War neoconservative views on the United Nations

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MA Thesis

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2016/2/16/11022104/iraq-war-neoconservatives> retrieved 11-06-20.

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## Introduction

### Research topic and research question

This thesis focuses on the influence of the neoconservative movement on the US-UN relationship in the post-Cold War era, and particularly on the arguments provided by the most influential neoconservatives in favor of American global leadership circumventing the UN. While the post-Cold War period covers almost thirty years, and thus cannot be defined or summarized by using any one characterizing term, there has been a general development in US foreign policy towards unilateralism, and an increasing rejection of multilateral institutions like the United Nations. This unilateral trend has been identified in much of the literature as being directly connected to the rise of the neoconservative movement in the United States political system.<sup>2</sup> Neoconservative interest groups were able to exert influence at the highest level of policy determination, resulting in the adoption the values of American exceptionalism, unipolarity and unilateralism by the White House.<sup>3</sup> While the rise of the neoconservative movement has constituted significant developments in all kinds of domestic and international arenas, this thesis will center specifically on developments concerning the relationship between the United States and the United Nations. After all: while the United Nations does not represent multilateralism as a whole, the organization does constitute the highest form of international law and it represents an authority above the nation state.

This thesis will research the arguments behind the rejection of the UN as security provider after the Cold War, advocated by the leading members of the neoconservative movement. In other words, we will look at why the main actors belonging to the neoconservative movement, who are commonly seen as responsible for the unilateral shift, believed the UN was not up to the task of security provider after the Cold War. The research question is as follows; *What were the arguments of the main neoconservative actors advocating for a rejection of a central role for the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era?* The ‘main neoconservative actors’ around whom the question in centered, constitute what is termed

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<sup>2</sup> As set out in Steven Halper & Jonathan Clarke: *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*. (2004), Gary Dorrien: *Imperial Designs* (2010), Muhammad Idrees Ahmad: *The Road to Iraq: The Making of a Neoconservative War* (2014), Kubilay Yado Arin: *Think Tanks, The Brain Trusts of US Foreign Policy*, (2014), Maria Ryan: *Neoconservatism and the New American Century* (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Kubilay Yado Arin, *Think Tanks, The Brain Trusts of US Foreign Policy*, (2014).

the ‘neoconservative core’.<sup>4</sup> This core is made up of several highly influential neoconservative figures who were able to influence US policy at the highest level through their role in Republican administrations as well as through their role as publicists. While neoconservatism in general, and the people behind the shift in foreign policy will be set out extensively later on in this thesis, the figures involved are primarily Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, John Bolton, Richard Cheney\* and Donald Rumsfeld\*.<sup>5</sup>

This thesis will look at what arguments were provided by the neoconservative core against a role for the UN as security provider after the Cold War. My interest in this question was triggered by the fact that on the face of it their opposition to the UN in this era seemed illogical. The criticism of the UN on the part of the earlier neocons had been based on the fact that the organization, and particularly the Security Council, had been paralyzed by sabotage on the part of the Soviet-Union and its allies. That argument was no longer valid after 1991. So why did the neocons not see the UN as an attractive instrument for American foreign policy after the demise of the Soviet-Union?

### ***Relevance***

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that the current wave of explicit unilateralism, the ‘America First’ policy under President Trump over the last three years has become a major disruptive factor that seems to end a period of American engagement with multilateral institutions going back to the days of President Roosevelt. I believe that studying how the US-UN relationship has developed in the period 1991-2008 may provide historical context to this unilateral shift and help us understand where it comes from. “*The future does not belong to globalists; the future belongs to patriots,*”<sup>6</sup> This remark made by president Trump while speaking at the United Nations general assembly in September 2019, is illustrative of the current relationship between the United States and the United Nations, at least while Donald Trump occupies the White House. During the Trump administration the policy is clear; America will come first, and United States interests will be pursued unilaterally. Trump has openly

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<sup>4</sup> This terminology and the identification of the neocon core has been set out in, among others, *Shadow Elite* by Janine Wedel (2009).

<sup>5</sup> While Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld did not formally belong to the neoconservative movement, they did share most relevant viewpoints, which is why they will be treated as belonging to the ‘neocon core’.

<sup>6</sup><https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1047252> retrieved 24-02-20.

voiced his criticism of multilateral institutions like the UN.<sup>7</sup> The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreements and the Iran nuclear deal framework (not a UN instrument but one in which the members of its Security Council had played a central role) are illustrative of a larger trend where the US refuses to lend sovereignty to multilateral organizations such as the UN. A recent highpoint in the strained relationship was when Donald Trump stopped all US funding to the World Health Organization and withdrew from the UN organization in July 2020.<sup>8</sup> When this unilateralist trend in American policy is discussed in the media, it is often contrasted with an earlier multilateral phase, and particularly with the period when the United States helped found the United Nations during the Second World War. Readers are reminded that as early as 1941, the United States President, Franklin Roosevelt, and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had issued what was called the 'Atlantic Charter', which consisted of eight principles that were meant to ensure a future where all nations would be able to live in peace; and that a few months later, in January 1942, a United Nations declaration was signed by 26 nations. This is then contrasted with the current American rejection of the UN, but, as we shall see, this black-and-white distinction between a multilateralist and a unilateralist phase in modern American history is quite debatable.

### ***Methodology***

Fundamentally, the methodology used in this thesis is that of a text analysis of primary sources. These sources consist of a representative body of texts produced in the post-Cold War era by prominent neoconservatives that have the foreign relations of the US as their primary topic. They are primary sources in the context of this thesis, because they present the words of the neocons themselves. These texts are scoured for references to the role of the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council.

To determine the corpus of texts that form the basis for my analysis I have first established – on the basis of a reading of the relevant academic literature – which actors made up the neoconservative “core”, in the sense that they played an active role in the overlapping network of think tanks and government institutions in which neocon policy was shaped. I then conducted a search to identify the most important texts on foreign policy that could be directly linked to at least one member of this neoconservative core. I have included these texts in my

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<sup>7</sup><https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/10/09/donald-trump-dismisses-united-nations-deficits-says-others-should-pay/3917554002/> retrieved 26-02-20.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/29/us-withdrawing-from-who-289799>, retrieved 10-06-20.

analysis if they were produced between the end of the Cold War (1991) and the end of the second George W. Bush administration (2008).

Some of the texts have been published in journal articles and books by individual neoconservatives, while others have been produced by the US administration or by think tanks. The character of these texts varies. The Defense Planning Guidance was a document produced within the administration of President H.W. Bush. During the Clinton years neoconservatives were not close to power and therefore sought to influence public opinion through publications. This could take the shape of academic articles, but the “Open Letter” of the Project for a New American Century also fits in this category. During the G.W. Bush administration, when the neoconservatives were at the heart of government, the publications and statements were aimed at defending the foreign policy of the government.

All of these texts are now either in the public domain or available in open access and therefore relatively easily traced. The body of texts on which the thesis is based, has been collected primarily through an internet search. It has subsequently been checked and supplemented through references in the literature.

As the aim of the thesis is to analyse the arguments of the neocons with respect to the role of the United Nations, I have first carefully read the sources, collected the arguments in chronological order, analyzed them and then (in the conclusion of the thesis) categorized them thematically.

It should be pointed out that the result of this method is an overview and analysis of arguments on the issue by leading neocons (as the texts have all been written by people who are recognized by members of the neoconservative core in the literature) but they are texts produced by individuals and therefore not necessarily representative of the neoconservative viewpoint, if such a thing exists. The neocons were never a party or a single organization with an official point of view.

The analysis will contribute towards answering the research question, i.e. what were the neocon arguments against a prominent role for the UN as a global security provider in the post-Cold War era. In this sense it is very much a piece of historical research, written by a historian. It is ultimately an empirical investigation of primary sources to answer the research question and to get a clearer picture of the (recent) past, in which concepts derived from different theories are used. It is not a study rooted in theories of international relations or one that intends to use empirical data to confirm or falsify a theoretical perspective.

## *Historiography*

The influence of the neoconservatives has been recognized as important for quite some time and as a result there exists a substantial academic literature on the subject. The academic literature regarding neoconservatism after the Cold War mostly focuses on two major issues. First, how exactly did some members of the neoconservative movement manage to influence foreign policy to such a high degree after the Cold War, and which figures were part of this influential core. Authors have written extensively on the role of think tanks and on the role of influential neocons such as John Bolton and Paul Wolfowitz. In Janine Wedel's book: *Shadow Elite: How the World's New Power Brokers Undermine Democracy, Government, and the Free Market* (2009), the author sets out her extensive research on how several neoconservative figures, most notably Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, have occupied influential positions, rotating between think tanks and political office since the 1980s. A more recent, but similar study on this topic is *Think Tanks, The Brain Trusts of US Foreign Policy* (2014), in which author Kubilay Yado Arin discusses how several neoconservative think tanks have been able to influence US policy at the highest level. Furthermore, Arin set out exactly which neoconservatives were part of these think tanks. Another title in which the neoconservative core is set out is *The Road to Iraq: The Making of a Neoconservative War* (2014) by Muhammad Idrees Ahmad. Ahmad has identified the same set of people as Wedel and Arin, but focuses on one particular outcome of their policies, the second Iraq war. Other notable works that set out who was part of the neoconservative core include the articles *Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War* (2017)<sup>9</sup> and *Liberalism and Empire Logics of Order in the American Unipolar Age* (2004)<sup>10</sup> by author John Ikenberry and the book *America Alone, The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (2014) by authors Halper & Clarke.<sup>11</sup> The central concern of all of these studies is the *political influence* exerted by the neoconservatives.

The second major issue in the literature is the question as to what exactly were the principles of neoconservatism after the Cold War. In other words, what was their vision for the post-Cold War era. These studies center mostly around the neocon principles of American unipolarity and military dominance. The US should use their unrivalled military supremacy in order to expand their influence around the world and protect American interests. In doing this,

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Deudney & John Ikenberry, *Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War*. *Survival*, 59(4), (2017) 7-26.

<sup>10</sup> John Ikenberry, *Liberalism and Empire logics of order in the American unipolar age*. *Review of International Studies*, 30(4), (2004) 609-630.

<sup>11</sup> Steven Halper & Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*. (2004).

the US should not be held back by international laws or agreements, specifically the United Nations. Neocons believe that America is exceptional compared to all other nations, this is the ideological foundation that shaped their worldview. It is exactly this ideological underpinning that is used in prominent literature on post-Cold War neoconservatism to explain their ambivalence towards a role for the UN as security provider; the US is exceptional and dominant thus it should not be restricted by international laws in shaping international affairs to their interests. Gary Dorrien in *Imperial Designs* (2004) sets out the neoconservative movement after the Cold War. He has done extensive research on the neocon case for unilateralism and American hegemony and argues that the post-Cold War American foreign policy that seeks to maintain American hegemony and unipolarity is caused by the fundamental ideological foundation of neoconservatism of neo-imperialism. Dorrien argues that the neocons primarily rejected the UN role as security provider because it would hamper their ambition to expand the American empire and hegemony. Neocons wanted to act unilaterally, and not be restricted by international law in order to be able to design the Middle East and the world to their liking. Especially their case for invading Iraq provided fuel for their criticism of the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era, as they viewed Saddam Hussein as an obstacle to their imperial designs, Dorrien argues.

Maria Ryan in her book *Neoconservatism and the New American Century* (2010) sets out the post-Cold War development of neoconservative ideology concerning American unipolarity. The book, like most prominent publications on neoconservatism after the Cold War focuses on the neoconservative case for American unipolarity and the maintaining of American pre-eminence. Like most authors on the subject she seems to equate unipolarity with unilateralism. Ryan does briefly discuss the post-Cold War neocon viewpoints on the UN, at least how they are stated in the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance.<sup>12</sup> Ryan states that the DPG argued that future alliances will be ad-hoc, and mostly stresses the neocon viewpoint that the US should be able to act unilaterally when it suits their needs. While Ryan does discuss this subject, she only scratches the surface of the wide range of arguments made by the neocons regarding why they believed the UN should not have a main role as security provider. Ryan does briefly discuss the cases of the interventions in Somalia and Bosnia (which, as we will see, played an important role in defining the neocon position) but focuses on the debate between neoconservatives on when American intervention is warranted.

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<sup>12</sup> The 1992 Defense Planning Guidance was a policy outline in which the neoconservative vision for foreign policy after the Cold War was set out. The document will be analyzed in chapter 2.

In his book *the Rise of Neoconservatism – Intellectuals and Foreign affairs 1945-1994*, John Ehrman focuses on the historical developments in neoconservatism. Because the book has been published in 1994, he devotes little attention to the post-Cold War era. However, Ehrman does briefly discuss the first two years of the Clinton presidency, specifically its foreign policy. Ehrman discusses how the neoconservatives at the outset were supporters of Clinton, but after the debacle in Somalia they started to voice their criticism. He cites the failed interventions as the reason why neoconservative rejected Clinton's concept of assertive multilateralism, which encompassed a role for the UN as security provider. Ehrman does expand on the practical arguments provided by the neocons against the UN, but as his book was published in 1994, he catches only the start of the development.

In his article *Why Neoconservatism Still Matters* (2010), Justin Vaisse discusses the neocon case for unilateralism and the rejection of the United Nations. Again, Vaisse argues that the main neocon motive for UN-rejection was the fact that they felt that the United States should be unrestrained in their ability to protect and expand their interests. Vaisse also discusses some practical arguments against the UN. He states that the neocons believed that the UN was undemocratic and that authoritarian states like China and Russia had no place to judge the US on when and when not to use force. However, Vaisse does not discuss the effect of the failed intervention in Somalia and Bosnia on the neoconservative opinion on the UN as main security provider after the Cold War.

To summarize there is a substantial literature on the neocon involvement with United States foreign policy. It falls broadly into two categories: the studies of authors who are more interested in the way the neocon network exerted political influence; and the studies of those who are more interested in their ideology. The authors in the second category do discuss the neocon criticisms of the United Nations, but as part of a larger story and, because they are primarily interested in the ideological angle, they foreground the ideological arguments against the UN.

This is where I think my thesis, which is based on a close reading of the neocons' writings on the UN can make an original contribution, both because of its focus on the US-UN relationship and because of its readiness to look at *all* arguments made by the neocons.

The neoconservatives did not only reject this role for the UN because of their ideological underpinnings. Members of the neoconservative core also had practical issues with the United Nations, based on events that transpired during the 1990s, but also during the Cold War. I believe that not enough attention has been devoted to this side of the UN-critique in the literature on the post-Cold War neoconservatives. This thesis will collect writings by prominent

neoconservatives in which they argue against a prominent role for the UN as security provider after the Cold War. We will subsequently analyse the publications and gather all useful information that will help is to determine exactly what types of arguments (both practical and ideological) against the UN were formulated by these prominent neocons.

### *Structure of the thesis*

Before going into an analysis of the motives of the neocons, I will set the scene through a largely descriptive chapter. Chapter 1 will set out the history of neoconservatism in the United States and the developments in the ideology that have defined the movement over time. The goal of this chapter is to provide the reader with a certain level of historical context and to identify the values and ideological positions that are characteristic of the people who are identified as “neoconservatives.” These values would also lead to the first neocon confrontation with the UN in the nineteen seventies, which we will discuss as well.

The second chapter of this thesis look at how neoconservative ideology adjusted to the post-Cold War world, as the ideology had been largely built around the existence of a communist threat. Moreover, the figures associated with the neocon core in the post-Cold War era - the group of influential neoconservatives who have been identified as being responsible for the unilateral shift in US foreign policy who are central to the research in this thesis - will be identified in the beginning of the chapter. Furthermore, we will set out how the US-UN relationship developed in the post-Cold War era, eventually culminating in the unilateral shift. The main focus will be to discuss the presidencies of respectively George H. W. Bush (Bush 41), Bill Clinton and George W. Bush (Bush 43), in regard to their policy on cooperation within the UN, and how they balanced between unilateralism/multilateralism.

The third chapter will be used to research the arguments behind the rejection of the United Nations by the neocons after the Cold War, based on primary source material. In this chapter, we present publications (co)-authored by members of the neocon core, in which they provide their arguments as to why the UN should not perform the role of security provider in the post-Cold War era. The source material used can range from interviews and articles to documents in which neoconservative think tanks set out their principles as well as policy statement by neocons who had attained positions in the administration. The material is widely available, as many of these figures have actively written on these issues. By using their own statements as primary source material, we will be able to get a first-hand glimpse of what exactly were their arguments. Thus, we can hope to discover what arguments they use to promote this UN-rejection, and more specifically what practical arguments they provided.

The conclusion will provide a classification of the different types of argument and an evaluation of their importance.

## Chapter 1: The neoconservative movement

This chapter will set out the origins and the rise of neoconservatism from the nineteen sixties to the nineteen eighties, as context for the discussion of post-Cold War neoconservatism, which forms the core of this thesis. We will look at how the first generation of neocons were characterized and what principles united them. Moreover, we will look at how the neoconservative movement grew from an ideology that was mostly centred in academics to a politically influential movement in later decades.

### *1.1 Neoconservatism, a brief introduction*

Neoconservatism appeared in the United States for the first time in the 1960s. The term was first used during that period to loosely identify a group of former liberals who had turned away from the Democratic Party for its allegedly too soft a stance against the Soviet Union. Additionally, neoconservatives were characterized as a countermovement against the New Left,<sup>13</sup> whom the neocons believed to be anti-American. While these two characteristics were often used to define neocons, journalists did have a hard time exactly pinpointing who was a neocon and what constituted their ideology. This problem stemmed from the fact that the first generation of neoconservatives consisted of a collection of intellectuals that focused on a wide array of issues in American society and in international affairs. Neoconservatives themselves considered the term to be derogative, avoiding the use of it. With the benefit of fifty years if hindsight we can say that the first generation of neoconservatives consisted of figures like Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel Bell, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Midge Decter, Michael Novak, Gertrude Himmelfarb and Peter Berger.<sup>14</sup> These early neoconservatives formed a circle around Irving Kristol, who is often labelled the godfather of neoconservatism. Kristol himself described neocons as '*Liberals who have been mugged by reality*'. Kristol and his acolytes mostly moved in academic circles, publishing extensively in journals centered around politics, but not attaining any actual political positions.<sup>15</sup> Neoconservatives wrote about all kinds of social issues like segregation, the welfare state, supply-side economics and capitalism in general.

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<sup>13</sup> The New Left was a political movement that rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, campaigning for progressive social issues and organizing anti-war protests.

<sup>14</sup> *America Alone*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Some did obtain high ranking political positions. Patrick Moynihan for example became US ambassador to the UN. However, compared to later neocons, the first generation mostly kept to academics.

The term neoconservative may insinuate a certain connection to ‘regular’ conservatism, however, the first neocons had in fact nothing to do with the traditional conservative right-wing of American politics. Because neocons originated on the Democratic left, they still held many liberal principles that fiercely opposed old-school conservative values. First-generation neoconservatives accepted the existence of a (limited) welfare state, they supported the civil rights movement and acknowledged the existence of many social issues in American society. Additionally, neoconservatives originated from northern urban intellectual circles, like those in New York City, whereas most conservatives resided in the southern states. Moreover, conservatism was often associated with anti-Semitism and racial prejudice, and as many neocons were Jewish or sympathetic to Judaism, they had little understanding of, or respect for American conservative ethics, which were strongly rooted in Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

Early neoconservative thinking covered a wide spectrum;

*“In his autobiographical collection of selected essays and publications from almost half a century of writing, Irving Kristol discusses interrelated and separate questions of welfare, race, sex, socialism, nihilism, social reform, corporate capitalism in America, the definitions of social justice, Adam Smith, the moral sources of capitalism, urban civilization plus its discontents, Christianity, Judaism, and the role of religious orthodoxy within society.”*

(Halper & Clarke, 42).

While the first generation of neocons focused on a wide array of issues, this focus narrowed under subsequent generations. The generations following Irving Kristol increasingly made neoconservatism center around issues of foreign policy. Additionally, the values and principles embodied by neocons gradually became formulated as black and white issues, expressed in terms of good versus evil. Thus, later neocons disregarded the tendency of the 1960s neoconservatives to discuss matters other than international relations and geopolitics, and to put them into a larger interpretative framework. Halper & Clarke attribute this development to the fact that the first generation of neoconservatives were formed by their encounters throughout life with all kinds of ideas and ideologies. Kristol for example was part of a socialist league during the 1940s.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs Neoconservatism and the New Pax Americana*. (2004), 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> *America Alone*, 40-45.

The increased emphasis on foreign policy and the threat of communism arose during the 1970s. The aftermath of the Vietnam war had caused an aversion in the Democratic party from military interventionist policy in the context of the Cold War. This aversion was shown when the Democratic Party selected George McGovern as their nominee for the 1972 election, a war hero from World War II but also an isolationist and staunch advocate of a withdrawal of US forces in Vietnam. Neoconservatives, who advocated a tough stance against the Soviet Union and an interventionist foreign policy, loathed the fact that McGovern was running for office and saw it as a sign that the Democratic Party was now in the hands of the New Left. As a result, foreign policy and US strategy in regard to communism and the Soviet 'Empire' became the focal point of neoconservative writing.<sup>18</sup> This marked the beginning of the neoconservatives' shift towards the Republican Party. This would continue during the presidency of Democrat Jimmy Carter, who maintained a policy of détente, and of Republican Ronald Reagan.

### ***1.2 Think Tanks***

The first generation of neoconservatives, who were active during the 1960s and 70s, focused their efforts on writing publications in which they expressed their neoconservative views. Magazines in which prominent neoconservatives conveyed their opinion, like for example *Commentary*, which could be considered the most prominent neoconservative magazine, became widespread in American political and intellectual circles. However, while the writing of these neocons certainly reached a broad audience, their political influence was limited, as few neoconservatives held any actual political positions in the pre-Reagan-era. With the onset of the second generation, which we will turn to now, neoconservatives began to move away from academics and turn to work in policy research and advocacy centers, usually called "think tanks" and political positions, which increased their ability to influence policy.

Over the course of the 1970s, neoconservatives began to organize themselves in advocacy think tanks. Over the years these think tanks would grow into well-funded and well-heard institutes from which neoconservative interests could be proliferated. Think tanks like the Heritage Foundation (founded in 1973) and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) (founded in 1943), which originally had a more traditionally conservative profile developed in opposition to the "big state" policies of the Democrats, now also became centers where neoconservatives mobilized in order to counter what they believed were harmful developments

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<sup>18</sup> *America Alone*, 50-56.

in American society, most notably the proliferation of far-left liberal values and appeasement of world communism. Thus, think tanks would serve as a way to promote an alternative to the New Left and isolationist foreign policy. Nevertheless, while these think tanks became neoconservative strongholds, they should not be seen as independent intellectual institutes. Neocon think tanks became increasingly interwoven with their major sponsors, who provided the think tanks with funding, but expected their interests to be promoted in turn. As a result of the influence of these sponsors, the think tanks became less scientifically grounded, and more politically oriented.<sup>19</sup>

The involvement of the neoconservatives with think tanks that had originally been created to promote laissez-faire economics, a small state and a rejection of the welfare state meant that over time the neocons who had, in their first generation of the sixties, often held liberal views in the field of domestic policies, drifted towards the right and became more closely affiliated with the Republican Party, adopting views that originated in traditional American conservatism. However, because this thesis is centred around foreign policy affairs and more specifically the relationship with the UN, we will not delve much further in the social or economic principles of neoconservative ideology.

### ***1.3 Neoconservatism, Israel and US-UN conflict***

A key characteristic of the neoconservative ideology as it emerged in the seventies is the support and primacy given to the state of Israel. Neoconservatives believe that Israel is an essential ally to the United States in the Middle East, one of the few. Additionally, as it is one of the few democracies in the region, neocons argue that the United States should take all measures to ensure the state of Israel is upheld. Consequently, the fact that Israel was being targeted by the Soviet-Arab bloc in the United Nations (with a lot of support from recently decolonized countries) from the 1970s onwards, resulted in neoconservatives denouncing the UN and the way it offered a platform for attacks directed at Israel. When Jeane Kirkpatrick, a staunch neoconservative, became ambassador to the United Nations under President Reagan, the US issued countless vetoes regarding these matters. The neoconservatives were able to thrive during the Reagan-period, as their views on foreign policy often coincided with those of the hawkish president.<sup>20</sup> However, it was in the decade before Reagan became president that

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<sup>19</sup> In *Think Tanks, The Brain Trusts of US Foreign Policy* (2014), Kubilay Yado Arin delves deeper into who sponsored these think tanks.

<sup>20</sup> *Think Tanks*, 69-76.

we see the first conflict arise in the context of the United Nations, neocons and the state of Israel. While the United Nations enjoyed a prominent position in the way the United States conducted foreign policy during the first decades after its founding, as the character of the United Nations transformed, so did the United States' views on the organization. Decolonization, Soviet influence and anti-Israeli sentiments all contributed to a deteriorating US-UN relationship.

Throughout the 1950s, the United Nations saw a limited number of new members being added to its ranks. While there were plenty of applicants during that period, the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States made it difficult for any country to be allowed to join, as Cold War dynamics made it so that any potential new member was seen as being part of either the East or the West bloc. This meant that members were not selected on the basis of whether or not they qualified for the United Nations, but on whether or not they would balance the number of countries belonging to either bloc. During the 1960s however, a significant number of European colonies became independent during a wave of decolonization. By 1968 the number of members had risen to 119. These newly independent countries became part of the United Nations, and many of them established themselves as non-aligned in terms of the East-West division. But while many of these countries officially presented themselves as being non-aligned, in practice many third world countries who had just become independent, joined the Soviet sphere of influence. The anti-colonial ideals inherent in the communist ideology attracted many post-colonial states, which were of course fiercely anti-colonial. Furthermore, American capitalism, and especially American efforts in Vietnam to maintain the French colonial state, served as ammunition for anti-American sentiment in the United Nations. Altogether, the period of decolonization during the 1960s caused a significant change in the dynamic of the general assembly, as many newly independent nations collectively turned on the United States. Moreover, because all states in the general assembly have an equal vote, the relative influence of the United States diminished during this period.<sup>21 22 23</sup>

In the years since the UN was founded, the Soviet Union had become notorious for blocking virtually any resolution put forward by the United States in the Security Council. This had earned the SU ambassador to the UN the nickname 'Mr. Veto'. Up until the 1970s, the

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<sup>21</sup> *A Very Short Introduction*, 20-24.

<sup>22</sup> Fereydoun Hoveyda, *The United States and the United Nations: From Close Relationship to Estrangement. American Foreign Policy Interests*, 28(4), (2006) 333-336. Why is this not in the literature survey?

<sup>23</sup> Gil Troy, *Moyinhan's Moment: America's Fight Against Zionism As Racism*. (2012), 20-40.

United States had not yet used their right to veto on anything put forward in the UN Security Council whatsoever. This dynamic was turned around from the 1970s onwards, as the United States began to utilize its veto right frequently. We have seen how the decolonization of many third world countries changed balance of power in the UN general assembly. Many of these countries positioned themselves against the United States and aligned themselves with the Soviet Union. Further developments during the 1970s contributed to an even larger shift in the balance of power in the UN. First, while the Republic of China had been able to keep its spot in the Security Council longer than expected, mostly because of strong US support, in 1971 the Republic of China was replaced with the People's Republic of China. This was a tremendous blow to the capitalist-oriented countries, as two powerful communist states were now permanent members of the Security Council. Second, beginning in 1970, Arab states began attacking Israel in the UN using a new terminology, accusing the Jewish state of racism. Furthermore, the Arab states started to promote the idea that the Palestinian Liberation Organization was the rightful representative of the Palestinian people, and not a terrorist organization, as it was considered at that time in the West.<sup>24</sup> Overall, the United Nations General Assembly had become characterized by bloc-forming. The United States often found itself on the receiving end of international criticism, directed at its foreign policies, especially during and after the Vietnam War. As a result of the US not being able to promote its foreign policy interests through the UN, the multilateral institution gradually lost its prominent position in American international policy. This estrangement between the US and the UN reached its highpoint in 1975 during the 'Zionism is a form of racism' conflict.

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 3379, defining Zionism as a form of racism, with a large majority. The passing of the resolution was a major victory for the Soviet bloc, which had grown tremendously due to the addition of many third-world countries over the last decade.<sup>25</sup> Both Israel and the United States would strongly oppose the resolution, and it would severely damage the US-UN relationship. The US ambassador to the United Nations, a neoconservative named Patrick Moynihan, delivered a strongly worded speech in which he denounced the resolution and argued that the United States would not uphold the decision by the General Assembly. Moreover, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger further denounced the resolution in a speech two days later, while also arguing that

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<sup>24</sup> Moynihan's *Moment*, 20-40.

<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967-1989*. (2016), 288-290.

‘we must not swing to the extreme’, as he believed that the United Nations was not a total lost cause, and that the US should still remain in the organization. The United States congress was less forgiving than Kissinger, and it was heavily debated whether or not the US should remain in the General Assembly. While it eventually did not reach the point of a US withdrawal from the General Assembly, the conflict had a tremendous effect on the relationship between the US and the UN. While the UN had already been degraded to a secondary position in US foreign policy, the Zionism debate also proved detrimental for the public opinion in the United states, in regard to the use of the UN for proliferating American interests.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, as we will see later on in this thesis when we analyze post-Cold War publications by the neocon core on the UN, many would hold a grudge against the UN because of the Zionism is Racism resolution. In other words, the Zionism is racism affair can be seen as an example of experiences in regard to the UN that formed later neoconservative argumentation as to why the UN should not be given a central role as security provider in the post-Cold War era.

#### ***1.4 Reagan presidency***

When Ronald Reagan became president, the neoconservatives (initially) found in him a sympathetic ear to their foreign policy ideals.<sup>27</sup> While Reagan was not a neoconservative himself, and had a different position on many domestic issues, he did share neoconservative views on foreign policy. Just like Reagan, the neoconservative movement was highly critical of the policy of détente conducted by Reagan's predecessor, Jimmy Carter, instead arguing that the United States should use its superior military strength to intervene and promote and protect American interests around the globe, making more of an effort to stop and push back communism. According to neoconservatives, the United States owed it to its allies to do this, as it was the only one able to compete with the Soviet Union. Significant issues that motivated both Reagan and the neocons were the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and even more, the suppression of the pro-democracy movement in Poland from December 1981. This strengthened the conviction both of a conservative like Reagan and of the neocons that foreign policy ultimately was about values. Reagan launched the concept of the “Evil Empire” (for the Soviet-Union) in a 1983 speech to a very traditionally conservative audience of evangelical

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<sup>26</sup> Edward Luck, *The Impact of the Zionism-Racism Resolution on the Standing of the United Nations in the United States*. *Israel Yearbook on Human Rights*, 17(1), (1987), 95-113.

<sup>27</sup> As we will see, Reagan changed his stance towards the Soviet Union during his second term in office.

Christians, but it chimed exactly with the neocon view of the Soviets as an aggressive force that had to be countered pro-actively.

The most significant cooperation between neoconservatives and the Reagan administration was when president Reagan appointed neoconservative Jeanne Kirkpatrick as US ambassador to the UN. While Kirkpatrick held the position, the US would continue the recently acquired tendency to frequently veto UN resolutions, especially those concerning the state of Israel.<sup>28</sup>

While neoconservatives and Reagan were able to cooperate on foreign policy issues, and while some neoconservatives such as Kirkpatrick were part of the administration, the influence of neoconservatives on the Reagan administration remained limited. Reagan was an old-fashioned conservative, placing great importance on Christian values and tradition in determining policy. Thus, in areas other than foreign policy, neoconservatives had little in common with Reagan.<sup>29</sup>

While Ronald Reagan had taken a hard stance towards the Soviet Union during his first term in office, his second term would be characterized by rapprochement. When Mikhail Gorbachov was appointed Secretary General of the Soviet Union in 1985, he implemented reforms that sought to warm relations with the West. Reagan responded well to these reforms and the relationship between the two heads of state resulted in several treaties that relaxed Cold War tensions. While Reagan changed his attitude towards what he previously had dubbed the 'Evil Empire', the neoconservative narrative remained the same. Neocon writers remained overtly negative towards the Soviet Union in their publications, most notably in *Commentary Magazine*, arguing that the communist threat to the US remained the same. This would eventually lead to the neoconservatives losing their prominence and credibility in the foreign policy debate for the duration of the Cold War. Seeing as the rapprochement between the US and the SU eventually lead to the end of the Cold War, the neoconservative writings proved outdated and anachronistic. The neoconservatives themselves argued that it was the measures taken by Reagan in his first term that secured the demise of the SU, not the softer stance during his second term. This explains why to this day they see the Reagan presidency as the embodiment of their principles. The neoconservatives would, of course, later return to the

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<sup>28</sup> *Think Tanks*, 69-76.

<sup>29</sup> *America Alone*, 68-73.

center stage when they had adjusted their principles to the post-Cold war era.<sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> Which we will discuss in the following chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism – Intellectuals and Foreign affairs 1945-1994*, 172-176.

<sup>31</sup> *America Alone*, 74-76.

## Chapter 2: Neoconservatism and US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era

When in 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed, and the Cold War suddenly ended, almost everyone was caught off-guard. While the Soviet Union had been struggling for some time, no one expected it to implode so swiftly, and most importantly, so peacefully. The end of the Cold War brought with it the question as to how a new world order would be given shape. The Cold War had had almost all international politics in its grip for over fifty years. All significant international developments during that fifty-year period were affected by the Cold War dynamic one way or another. The United Nations was no exception to this rule. The Security Council had been characterized by the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, and this had put it in gridlock. Both superpowers were permanent members of the Security Council, and thus, both were equipped with a right to veto any resolution put forward in the council. Because the goals and aims of the US and the SU rarely coincided, in practice anything put forward was blocked by the other power.<sup>32</sup> With the Soviet Union gone, the United States had suddenly become the only superpower in the world, far outweighing any other nation in terms of both soft and hard power. This situation brought with it the question as to what the role of the United States in this new global order should be. Should the US use the dominant position now acquired to act as a global policeman, exerting its influence worldwide in order to proliferate American interests? Or should the United States partially retreat from global affairs, as they are no longer facing the communist threat, by what was dubbed retrenchment?<sup>33</sup> In theory, the end of the Cold War had provided both the United States and the United Nations with the possibility of achieving much more than they had been able to do during the Cold War period.

The end of the Cold War also meant that neoconservatives needed to re-evaluate the core principles of their ideology, seeing as that ideology had centred around foreign policy in the context of the Cold War. For over twenty years neoconservatives had argued for an assertive and proactive policy against Soviet-led communism. They had come to regard the United Nations as an institution dominated by anti-American and anti-Israeli forces allied to the Soviet Union (in the General Assembly) and as one whose peace keeping functions were paralyzed by Soviet vetoes (in the Security Council). Theoretically, therefore, the end of the Cold War and

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<sup>32</sup> A rare exception to this rule was the Suez Crisis.

<sup>33</sup> Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order*. (2016), 320-325.

the collapse of the Soviet “empire” could have led to a positive re-evaluation of the role of the UN. Yet this proved not to be the case. We will learn how leading neoconservatives (the ones defined in the literature as belonging to the neocon core)<sup>34</sup> adjusted to this new era. Moreover, this chapter will look at how each administration envisioned the role for the United Nations in US foreign policy.<sup>35</sup>

### ***2.1 Neoconservatism in the post-Cold War era***

Neoconservatism can be partially defined by its views on foreign policy, as we have read in chapter 1. Neocons wanted the United States to take a hard stance against the communist threat, maintain a high defence budget and intervene in global conflicts to promote and defend American interests. From the 1970s onwards, foreign policy in the context of the Cold War became the focal point of neoconservative ideology, where the ideology had covered a wider spectrum of issues before. Thus, the end of the Cold War automatically meant that neoconservatives needed to evaluate what this development meant for their ideology, seeing as there was no longer any communist threat to the US. As the Soviet threat had subsided, so had the arguments on which they built their case for their vision of a foreign policy, which was ultimately based on a black-and-white distinction between good and evil forces at work on a global scale. Neoconservatism would survive the transition, as their foreign policy standpoints were adjusted to the post-Cold War era, focusing on new threats and a new role for the United States in global affairs. This part of the chapter will be used to set out the characteristics of the post-Cold War neoconservative movement, as defined in prominent literature on the subject. Halper & Clarke, who have published a well-received piece on the neoconservative movement, set out a clear overview of neoconservative principles in their introduction, from which I will use excerpts.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, we will set out the contents of the 1992 Defence Planning Guidance,<sup>37</sup> which provided the blueprint for neoconservatism after the Cold War.

According to Halper & Clarke, today’s neoconservatives centre around three central themes: *(1): A belief deriving from religious conviction that the human condition is defined as a choice between good and evil and that the true measure of political character is to be found*

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<sup>34</sup> Janine Wedel, *Shadow elite* (2009).

<sup>35</sup> The post-Cold War administrations that will be set out are respectively George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

<sup>36</sup> *America Alone*.

<sup>37</sup> Defense Planning Guidance (1992).

*in the willingness by the former (themselves) to confront the latter. (2): An assertion that the fundamental determinant of the relationship between states rests on military power and the willingness to use it. (3): A primary focus on the Middle East and global Islam as the principal theatre for American overseas interests.*<sup>38</sup> These themes are subsequently elaborated into neoconservative policy proposals and guidelines. Furthermore, neoconservatives stress the importance of American hegemony and unipolarity.<sup>39</sup> This principle goes hand in hand with the conviction that military force should not be shunned when conducting foreign policy, but that it should always be considered as a viable option. This means that neoconservatives are inherently contemptuous towards multilateral institutions, international treaties and agreements that exclude any military option. Lastly, they look back at the Reagan administration as the embodiment of all these principles.<sup>40</sup> As we have seen earlier, this view is based on the notion that it was Reagan's military build-up that ultimately broke the Soviet Union's back.

The moral and ideological principles of neoconservatism which are set out in the above paragraph are explained by Halper & Clarke as the cause for neoconservative ambivalence towards the United Nations. As discussed, most publications which discuss this subject are centred around these moral principles which characterized neoconservative foreign policy ideals after the Cold War.<sup>41</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to look in much greater detail at what leading neoconservatives (the neocon "core") have actually said about the United Nations in the post-Cold War era to gain a better understanding of the relative weight of ideological and pragmatic arguments. In order to do that we first have to establish who were the core members of the neoconservative movement after the end of the Cold War.

## ***2.2 The neocon core***

The following part of the chapter will be used to discuss who exactly were the most influential figures in the movement. The identification of the neoconservative core will be based on publications in which this topic has been researched. The authors of these publications have been able to confidently determine which figures were part of the neocon core, as they all have

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<sup>38</sup> *America Alone*, 9-15.

<sup>39</sup> Unipolarity in international politics is a distribution of power in which one state exercises most of the cultural, economic, and military influence.

<sup>40</sup> *America Alone*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ryan, Dorrien, Ahmad all focus on the realist aspects of neoconservative ideology.

occupied prominent positions in political office. Because multiple prominent publications like those by Dorrien, Ahmad and Wedel all have identified the same set of people, we can confidently assume the selection to be founded. Furthermore, the members of the neocon core were prolific writers, publishing in their own name, and influencing both policy and public opinion indirectly through the think tanks they were a part of. In other words, they did not shun the limelight, making them fairly easy to identify.<sup>42</sup> The reason for identifying the most prominent neoconservative figures is that we will use their publications to research their stated motives behind the rejection of a main role for the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era. Their statements have the most value, as they were representative of the neoconservative movement after the Cold War.

The post-Cold War neocon core consisted of the following figures: Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, Elliott Abrams and James Woolsey. While they were more nationalists than neoconservatives, Richard Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld do belong in this list, as they shared most neoconservative principles concerning foreign policy.<sup>43</sup> These figures have occupied high ranking political offices since the 1980s, and have been part of influential neoconservative think tanks like the Project for a New American Century, the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. The people in the neocon core formed an intertwined network, all belonging to the same set of organizations.<sup>44</sup> The following figures taken from Janine Wedels' *Shadow Elite* (2009) illustrate the level of interwovenness, and the amount of influential positions these figures occupied. We will set out a few of the most influential and prolific writers in the neocon core, as we will analyze several of their publications.

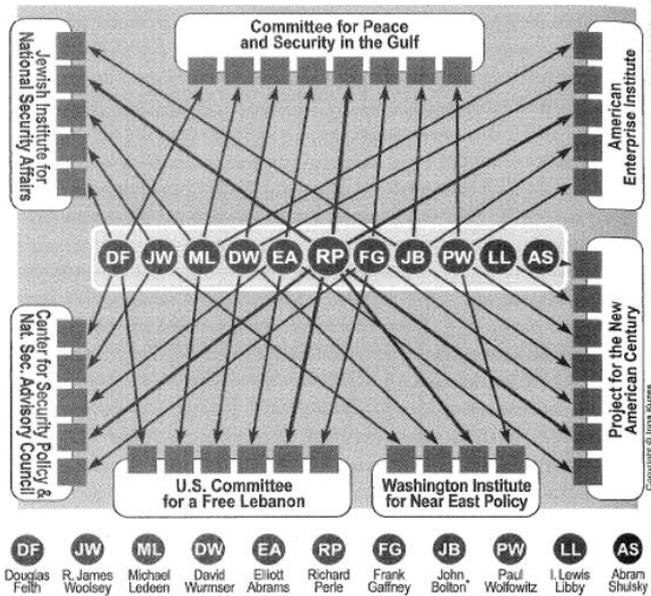
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<sup>42</sup> *America Alone*, 14.

<sup>43</sup> *America Alone, The Road to Iraq, Imperial Designs*.

<sup>44</sup> *Shadow Elite*, 172-173.

NEOCON CORE<sup>1</sup>  
 Players' Interconnections Through Organizations:  
 (Ideological and Think-Tank Only)



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*Richard Perle*

Considered one of the most influential neoconservatives, Richard Perle held several highly influential positions in multiple administrations. Perle served as Undersecretary of Defense under president Reagan. Moreover, he was a member of the Defense Policy Board, an influential committee, until March 2003.<sup>46</sup> When studying the figure above (left) it becomes clear that Perle was an intrinsic part of the neocon core. We see that he was a member of several prominent think tanks, like the PNAC and the American Enterprise Institute. Moreover, the figure on the right shows that he was part of the neoconservative group that held positions in the George W. Bush administration.

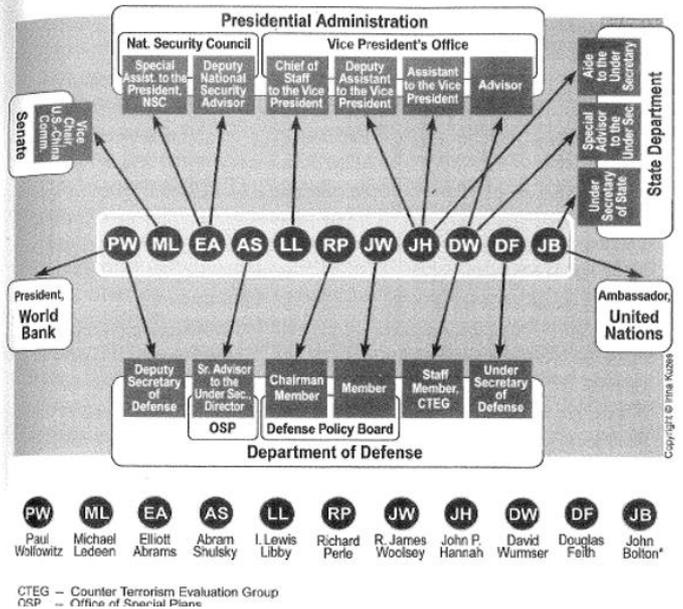
*Paul Wolfowitz*

Paul Wolfowitz was Undersecretary of State during the George H.W. Bush administration and ordered the development of the Defense Planning Guidance of 1992 discussed below (2.3). Just like Perle, Wolfowitz was part of several highly influential neoconservative think tanks, like the Project for a New American Century. Additionally, the figure illustrates how he held important positions in the George W. Bush administration, most notably as Undersecretary of

<sup>45</sup> *Shadow Elite*, 172-173.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Perle, Expect a Split with Europe Over Iran. *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 22(2), (2005) 62-65.

NEOCON CORE  
 Official Positions in Government and Governmental Boards/Commissions  
 (Administration of George W. Bush)



Defense. Together with Rumsfeld and Cheney he is seen as the architect of American foreign policy in this administration.

### *John Bolton*

Bolton might be the currently most widely known member of the neocon core, having briefly served under the Trump administration as National Security Adviser and for his part in the impeachment scandal. He has had a very long career in US politics, occupying several high-ranking positions since the 1980s. Bolton was an outspoken opponent of the United Nations and multilateral cooperation. In 2005, Bolton was appointed US ambassador to the United Nations by George W. Bush. Looking at the figures above, we see that Wedel has identified Bolton as being one of the core members in the neoconservative movement.

### *Richard Cheney*

Dick Cheney is often not counted among the neoconservatives who surrounded Bush Jnr. However, he is part of the narrative as Cheney shared the same foreign policy principles as the neoconservatives. He was also a member of the Project for a New American Century, and the American Enterprise Institute, two neoconservative think tanks. Cheney served as Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush, before serving as Vice-President under his son, George W. Bush. Halper & Clarke argue that Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld would be better described as ‘American Nationalists’ than as neoconservatives, but that they did co-author important neoconservative documents as members of the PNAC, so in regard to foreign policy they should be considered among the neocon core.<sup>47</sup>

### *Donald Rumsfeld*

Just as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld is considered an American Nationalist, not a neoconservative. However, as a member of the PNAC, and serving as Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush, he did share neoconservative principles on foreign policy, and co-authored neoconservative documents, like the PNAC *Statement of Principles*.

## **2.3 Defense Planning Guidance of 1992**

The earlier quote from Halper and Clarke has given us an idea of what the ideological underpinnings of the post-Cold War neoconservative movement entailed. Unilateralism and a

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<sup>47</sup> *America Alone*, 14.

rejection of non-military multilateral organizations (such as the UN) are mentioned as being central to neoconservative ideology. These principles were explicitly translated into policy for the first time in a document called the Defence Planning Guidance of 1992. Paul Wolfowitz, the Undersecretary of State, and a prominent neoconservative, had ordered the development of this blueprint-like document outlining the defence strategy for the coming years. The DPG would turn out to be as controversial as it was influential. The DPG is considered the most important strategic outline since NSC-68 (1950), which provided the blueprint for the defence strategy in the Cold War. While the document was being reviewed in the Pentagon, it was leaked to the New York Times, and when the Times subsequently published parts of the DPG in an article soon thereafter, it sparked public outrage. Critics argued that it blatantly stated that America should use its dominance for American imperialism.<sup>48</sup> This part of the chapter will be dedicated to discussing the contents of the 1992 DPG, as it is illustrative of the policy envisioned by the neoconservatives in the post-Cold War era.

The DPG was produced in the light of the end of the Cold War. It *'addresses the fundamentally new situation which has been created by the collapse of the Soviet Union --the disintegration of the internal as well as the external empire, and the discrediting of Communism as an ideology with global pretensions and influence.'*<sup>49</sup> This meant the United States was on a crossroad in terms of foreign policy for the foreseeable future; *'Our fundamental strategic position and choices are therefore very different from those we have faced in the past. The policies that we adopt in this new situation will set the nation's direction for the next century.'*<sup>50</sup>

The DPG then goes on by stating the central objectives to the United States. Which are to *'preserve the freedom of the United States, while avoiding war if possible. Helping other countries preserve or obtain freedom and peace is in part a means to this objective, and in part an end in itself. The extent of our assistance to others is partly specified by our alliance commitments, and partly a matter of prudent response to circumstances; but neither our principles nor our abilities permit us to defend our interests alone.'* These objectives are to be accomplished by *'detering military attacks against the United States, its allies, and other important countries and. to ensure the defeat of such attack should deterrence fail.* Moreover, in light of the stated objectives the authors argue it is paramount *'to increase our influence around the world, to further an atmosphere conducive to democratic progress, and to protect*

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<sup>48</sup> Eric Edelman, *The Strange Career of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance*. (2011), 1-16.

<sup>49</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 1.

*free commerce and ensure US access to world markets, associated critical resources, the oceans, and space.*<sup>51</sup> The objectives stated above might be expected in most security strategy outlines. The objectives of preserving US freedom and security are of course not new to the 1992 DPG. However, the DPG does state that US influence around the world is to be increased, which signals an active role in the world as opposed to a form of isolationism or retrenchment.

In the following part of the DPG, two strategy goals are set out, which are worth discussing. The first stated goal is *'to avoid the re-emergence of a new rival posing a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This dominant consideration underlies the new regional defence strategy and requires us to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources could, under consolidated control, generate global power. These regions include Western Europe, Northeast Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union, and Southwest Asia. We focus attention on these regions because they represent the principal sources of global power which could challenge US interests and security, but we remain aware that there are other regions where US military power could be required.'*<sup>52</sup> This first strategy goal is striking, as it blatantly states that the US should actively prevent a new rival from emerging. Even regions like Western Europe are mentioned as sources of global power that could challenge US interests. Thus, US unipolarity and hegemony is not only acknowledged, maintaining that status quo is one of the central points of the DPG. The second goal, which is to *'address sources of regional instability in ways that promote international law, limit international violence, and encourage the spread of democratic governments and open economic systems. (.....) While we cannot assume responsibility for righting every wrong, we must be able to address selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies'*<sup>53</sup>, is salient, as it states the conviction that the United States has the right to choose to intervene whenever it feels its interests are threatened. In other words, the United States does not have to wait for permission from other countries or the United Nations in order to take action. Thus, we see here that the authors promote the idea of unilateral American action, inexplicitly disregarding the authority of international law and institutions like the UN.

The DPG was meant to shape the future of regional defence strategy. Just like there had been such a strategy during the Cold War. The authors argue that *'The containment strategy we pursued for the past 40 years successfully shaped the world we see today. Our willingness to*

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<sup>51</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 1-2.

<sup>52</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 2.

*match the build-up in Soviet military power during the Cold War and our deployment of forces forward in Europe and the Pacific that allowed democracy to develop and flourish in those areas contributed to the very substantial peaceful changes that we see occurring today in the world.*’ Furthermore, similarly in the post-Cold War era the authors felt that *‘Future peace and stability will continue to depend in large measure upon our willingness to maintain forward presence and to retain high-quality forces that enable response to crises that threaten our interests. The future may also come to depend on others’ perceptions of our will and capability to reconstitute forces and to deter or defend against strategic attack, should that prove necessary.’* It is clear from the excerpts that the authors are convinced that the active role the US played in the world during the Cold War ensured peace and democratization. Furthermore, they argue that America needs to continue that active role in the post-Cold War era. American leadership and exceptionalism are the underlying principles evident in these statements.

An important passage of the DPG from the point of view of our research question is where the future policy in regard to alliances is set out. As discussed, neoconservative ideology stresses the importance of unilateralism, which is also embodied in the following excerpts. The passage starts by stating the importance of alliances *‘Maintaining our alliances will continue to be an essential part of the regional defence strategy. The US will maintain and nurture its alliance commitments in Europe, the Far East, and Latin America.’* However, the role of the US will be different than during the Cold War; *‘the US will play a qualitatively new role--that of leader and galvanizer of the world community, but not always greatest contributor of manpower, materiel, or financial resources. As alliance partners acquire more responsibility for their own defence, the US will be able to reduce its military commitments overseas without incurring significant risks. These changes, however, must be managed carefully to ensure that they are not mistakenly perceived as a withdrawal of US commitment.’*

Again, we see that a leading role is envisioned for the US. US leadership however does not mean that the US should carry all the burden. This is an important point: while the DPG clearly foresees (and prefers) a *unipolar* world in which the US holds a unique position of power, it does not advocate *unilateralism* per se. When possible, responsibilities are to be shared by allies. These shared responsibilities can take the form of alliances, according to the authors of the memorandum. When interests line up, alliances can be formed to deal with a specific development. Again, American leadership should characterize these alliances. As stated in the DPG; *‘Coalitions hold considerable promise for promoting collective action to regional or local aggression, as in the Gulf War. Like that coalition, we should expect future coalitions to be ad hoc assemblies in many cases carrying only general agreement over the*

*objectives to be accomplished. Nevertheless, the sense that the world order is ultimately backed by the US will be an important factor in assembling coalitions and stabilizing crisis situations. American leadership in security issues will be a key element in fostering a democratic and peaceful international security system.*’ It becomes clear from these excerpts that there is no place envisioned for permanent multilateral organizations like the UN, which do not fit the description of an ad hoc assembly, carrying only general agreement over the objectives to be accomplished. Thus, while the UN is not specifically named here, its structure does not resemble the alliances described in the excerpt. The authors do acknowledge that *‘leadership, in some cases, will be taken by others, such as international or regional organizations, and we must accept and encourage this.’* However, when US interests are threatened *‘the United States should be postured to act independently when collective action cannot be orchestrated or when an immediate response is a necessary presage to a larger or more formal collective response. This requirement will affect the type and level of presence we maintain in key areas of the world.’*<sup>54</sup> The excerpt above signals that the authors did not reject the use of multilateral institutions and international law altogether. Responsibility should not be carried solely by the United States but should be shared with allies. Nevertheless, American interests should be protected no matter what. Consequently, when international mechanisms (like the UN) prove ineffective or counterproductive for American interests, they should be avoided, and the US should act independently. This in practice means that the US does not respect international law to a full extent. It means that it is only willing to acknowledge international restraints when it suits their needs.

A central point to the DPG is the call for the maintaining of a strong defence. The end of the Cold War reasonably raised the question as to what was to be done with the massive defence budget, as it had been largely based on the military build-up during the Cold War. The DPG argues that the end of the Soviet-US competition in no way means that the US should drastically reduce the size of its military. According to the authors the end of the Cold War should not lead to the impression that there are no longer any threats to America; *‘At the end of World War I, and again to a lesser extent at the end of World War II, the United States as a nation made the mistake of believing that we had achieved a kind of permanent security, that a transformation of the security order achieved through extraordinary & American sacrifice*

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<sup>54</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 5.

*could be sustained without our leadership and significant American forces. Today a great challenge has passed but other threats endure, and new ones will arise.*<sup>55</sup>

As discussed, the DPG sparked public outrage after it was leaked. Contributing to this, was the fact that the DPG was unusually un-diplomatic in its use of language. The White House argued that the views were not shared by everyone in the administration and that the president had had no part in its development or its approval. Eventually, the controversy surrounding the document led to a revised version, which had been stripped of many of its central points pertaining to unipolarity and unilateralism. In other words, the DPG in its original form was retracted by the George H.W. Bush administration. It would however, certainly not mean the end of the DPG altogether. The message embedded in the DPG would resurface in the George W. Bush administration, when neoconservatives like Paul Wolfowitz were able to gather themselves around the president, becoming highly influential.<sup>56</sup> The DPG is illustrative of the post-Cold War neoconservative movement. The idea that America is exceptional in its moral superiority, and that it has an obligation to itself and to its allies to protect its interests around the world is central to the movement. Moreover, we constantly see the authors frame geopolitical issues in ethical black & white terms. The United States is ‘good’ and rogue states like Iraq are ‘evil’. The Defence Planning Guidance of 1992 tells us little about any practical issues that the neoconservatives (Wolfowitz) had with the United Nations. The UN is never mentioned explicitly. The arguments against multilateral institutions serving as the main security provider after the Cold War are ideological in nature, e.g. American exceptionalism. The Defense Planning Guidance of 1992 has been studied and analyzed in other publications that focus on post-Cold War neoconservatism, for example by Maria Ryan in her book *Neoconservatism and the New American Century* (2010). In the context of our discussion of the neoconservative arguments on the UN its importance is that it is a precursor of later neocon writings and gives an insight into the context in which their discussion of the UN takes place.

#### ***2.4 The Bush administration’s vision for a post-Cold War era foreign policy***

George H.W. Bush (Bush 41) was aware of the fact that he was facing a new era after the Cold War. This new era came with an opportunity to outline the new security strategy for the United States, which Bush dubbed: ‘the New World Order’. While the Bush 41 administration did not occupy the White House long enough after the Cold War for its policies

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<sup>55</sup> Defense Planning Guidance, 3.

<sup>56</sup> *The Strange Career*, 1-16.

to be implemented, its vision for the post-Cold War era is still worth taking a look at. The New World Order constituted a unipolar world, in which the United States would take on a leading role. Unipolar however, did not mean unilateral. George H.W. Bush, a former US ambassador to the UN, had successfully worked through the United Nations during the First Gulf War, in what became an impressive display of American military power, and which also showed their preparedness to lead via multilateral institutions.<sup>57</sup> Bush was prepared to continue working multilaterally in the post-Cold War era, as long as United States power remained unchallenged. While the Soviet threat had been the main motive for most of the United States security activity during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the dissolution of the communist state was no reason for the administration to make the United States retreat into isolationism. The United States was to become even more involved in geopolitical affairs, taking a leading role as the world's sole superpower. As the Bush administration saw it, the United States had been provided with a unique opportunity to advance American interests around the globe. The fact that the US was no longer competing with the communist system was not the only factor which signalled that Americas future was bright. Democracies and free markets were spreading and multiplying around the globe, and US soft power was growing as well.<sup>58</sup> However, the post-Cold War era was still full of security threats and potential sources of conflict. The collapse of the communist system in the Eastern Block was sure to lead to instability in the region. The glue that held the different ethnicities and nationalities together was now gone, which led to armed conflict, like the one in Yugoslavia in 1991. Moreover, states led by authoritarian figures with the ability to do serious damage to regional stability, like Saddam Hussein, were becoming more prevalent and more aggressive. These threats, combined with the rise of Islamic extremism, made the Bush administration realize that the end of the Soviet threat was in no way and end to security risks altogether.<sup>59</sup> In short, the end of the Cold War provided the Bush administration with a unique opportunity to advance Americans interests around the globe. Unchallenged American power, however, would still be accompanied with a willingness to work together and form alliances. Unipolarity did not mean the end of multilateralism for the George H.W. Bush administration.

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<sup>57</sup> George H.W. Bush was US ambassador to the UN himself under president Nixon.

<sup>58</sup> The idea that the combination of liberal democracy and a market economy was destined to triumph globally was popularized by Francis Fukuyama, in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992).

<sup>59</sup> *Making the Unipolar movement*, 315-330.

## ***2.5 The Clinton administration***

In the year before his election, Bill Clinton and his campaign team strongly criticized the Defence Planning Guidance of 1992, arguing that the United States should not become the world's policeman, intervening in every possible conflict around the globe. After Clinton became president himself in 1993, he stated that his predecessor, Bush 41, had devoted too much attention to foreign affairs. Clinton believed that foreign policy had little priority when he entered the White House, and his campaign had largely centred around domestic affairs. Even though Clinton believed foreign policy wasn't really important compared to other issues, there still needed to be a foreign policy strategy that would be enacted by the administration. This foreign policy strategy, how it developed through the Clinton presidency, and how it specifically pertained to the United Nations, will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The relevance of discussing the foreign policy enacted during the Clinton administration to the research of this thesis lies in the fact that, as we will see, neoconservative figures used the experiences during the 1990s in regard to the UN to build their arguments as to why the UN should not be given a central role as security provider after the Cold War.

The central theme or catchphrase chosen by the Clinton administration in 1993, to describe its foreign policy strategy was "Assertive Multilateralism." This phrase was coined by Madeleine Albright, the United States ambassador to the UN under Clinton. Assertive Multilateralism basically meant that the United States would work with multilateral institutions, most importantly the UN, in order to solve international crises. Albright believed that the United States should not become the world's policeman, but that it should make an effort to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations, so that they would be able to fulfil that role. According to Albright; "To do this, the United States should work energetically to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations and other multilateral organizations to conduct peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peace-enforcement, humanitarian security, and similar operations." Specifically, Albright called for "a substantial enlargement and reorganization of the peace-keeping headquarters' staff" at the United Nations.<sup>60</sup> The United States would build large alliances and assume leadership of them, and this approach was not meant to reduce American influence on international affairs. Assertive multilateralism was a way for the United States to have an impact on international conflicts, while also reducing expenditures. Working through the UN and building large alliances, meant that the costs would be more divided. A reduction of costs was preferable, as the US was not prepared to carry most of the financial burdens, as it

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<sup>60</sup> Chris Hemmer, *American Pendulum*. (2015), 115-125.

has done during the Cold War. President Clinton voiced his support for Albright's plans when giving a speech at the UN General Assembly, stating that the UN should be prepared for a larger peacekeeping role.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Clinton preferred to use the budget surplus that would be created on domestic issues, like public health. The fact that Clinton saw potential in the UN was already apparent during his campaign in 1992, when he endorsed the creation of a UN rapid-reaction force that would be deployed to ensure the wellbeing of civilians at risk in unstable regions. Overall, president Clinton was decisively supportive of the multilateralist approach when he entered the White House. Acknowledging the potential of the United Nations, and its benefits to the United States.<sup>62</sup>

The positive stance on multilateral commitments through the United Nations, expressed by the Clinton administration, was short-lived, however. The administration had inherited an ongoing UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia from the Bush 41 administration. On December 9, 1992, United States troops had landed in Somalia under the authority of Security Council Resolution 794, as United Task Force (UNITAF), codenamed Operation Restore Hope.<sup>63</sup> This meant that when Clinton entered the White House, he was saddled with a large number of United States troops in a region which was of no vital interest to the administration. Clinton was advised to withdraw all American troops, as there was no thought-out strategy to deal with the situation. The decision was made however, to only partially withdraw American troops from Somalia. Under Security Council resolution 814, the United States handed over command of the operation to the United Nations. However, while in reality the operation was now being led by the United Nations secretary general, the American military presence and earlier commitments ensured that, to the public back in the United States, all outcomes were still being associated with the Clinton administration. In June 1993, once American troops had been largely withdrawn from Somalia, the UN peacekeeping force was attacked by soldiers led by the Somali warlord Mohammed Aideed, which resulted in a substantial number of casualties. As a result, the Clinton administration decided to redeploy troops to Somalia in order to prevent any more substantial losses to the UN peacekeeping force. These American troops, once again embroiled in the Somali conflict, were subsequently detached in an operation to capture Mohammed Aideed, which resulted in a catastrophic failure during which 18 American troops were killed. The bodies of these soldier were dragged to the streets of Mogadishu, and the

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<sup>61</sup> *American Pendulum*, 111-120.

<sup>62</sup> *American Pendulum*, 111-120.

<sup>63</sup> James Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy: US Foreign Policy in a Post-Cold War World*. (2015), 55.

gruesome picture was broadcast directly on US media.<sup>64</sup> The debacle in Somalia had a tremendous effect on the US – UN relation. The optimistic view the Clinton administration had before, expressing trust in the United Nations and its ability and potential to make a difference, had been swept away when those US soldier where killed. The US military blamed the United Nations for the failure, and from that moment on, the idea that US troop would be used in UN peacekeeping mission became controversial, and any instance where the administration debated on joining UN peacekeeping forces would be met with congressional backlash reminding them of the Somali debacle. American casualties in regions of the world that had no vital importance to the American people, were no longer tolerated as they were during the Cold War. This change was almost instantly perceptible, when the Clinton administration did not commit troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia in 1994. Furthermore, the same year, Secretary-General Madeleine Albright vetoed the deployment of a UN force to stop the Rwandan genocide, delaying the response. Although the Clinton administration argued that it had vetoed the motion because it was not widely supported by other countries, it was clear that for the time being, politically, multilateral intervention for the US had become impossible after Somalia.<sup>65</sup>

## ***2.6 Changes in foreign policy under the Clinton administration***

We have discussed how president Clinton viewed foreign policy as a secondary concern when he entered the White House in 1993. He intended to reap the “peace dividend” by diminishing, military expenses from Cold War levels so as to use that money for domestic issues. Part of reducing military expenditures would be achieved by building towards assertive multilateralism, which would place a greater part of the financial burden on allies and the United Nations. As we have seen, assertive multilateralism was not long lived. The death of almost twenty American soldiers caused American interventionist policy to be discarded and cooperation with UN peacekeeping forces became controversial. Foreign policy, as Clinton had predicted, only caused his presidency extra concern, without providing any gains. That is why he had wanted to focus on domestic issues. However, in the years to come, Clinton would eventually raise defense spending and make foreign policy one of his priorities.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 55-60.

<sup>65</sup> *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 55-60.

<sup>66</sup> *Think Tanks*, 77-80.

The neoconservatives never had direct influence on the policies of the Clinton administration, but in the 1994 mid-term elections, the Republican Party achieved majorities in both chambers of congress. Moreover it did so on the basis of an election manifesto called '*Contract With America*'<sup>67</sup>, which was written with the help of neoconservative think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. One of the promises in the Contract was fulfilled when the National Security Revitalization Act was passed by Congress in 1995. Among other things this imposed restrictions on American participation in, and funding for, UN peace keeping operations. It has been argued that the neoconservatives therefore exerted an indirect influence of the foreign policy of the Clinton administration.<sup>68</sup>

Whatever the reasons, it is a fact that during Clinton's second term, starting in 1997, the defense budget was raised, commitment to international organizations like the UN was limited, the US sought to maintain and enlarge military alliances, with emphasis on the NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe, and to conduct an aggressive sanctions policy, not only towards Iraq but also towards other "rogue" nations like Iran, Libya, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the Republican-dominated Senate refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test ban Treaty in October 1999.<sup>70</sup> The most significant military operation circumventing the UN came when in 1999 the United States together with NATO commenced a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia to force it to relinquish Kosovo. The campaign drew heavy international criticism as it was not sanctioned by the UN Security Council and heavy civilian casualties were reported, but it had bipartisan support.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Contract with America, a document signed Sept. 27, 1994, on the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C., by members of the Republican minority before the Republican Party gained control of Congress in 1994. The "Contract with America" outlined legislation to be enacted by the House of Representatives within the first 100 days of the 104th Congress (1995–96). Among the proposals were tax cuts, a permanent line-item veto, measures to reduce crime and provide middle-class tax relief, and constitutional amendments requiring term limits and a balanced budget. With the exception of the constitutional amendment for term limits, all parts of the "Contract with America" were passed by the House, under the leadership of the speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. Source: Excerpt taken from "Contract with America." 2020, pp. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2020–07-02.

<sup>68</sup> For further reading on the neoconservative influence on the Clinton administration read Maria Ryan: *Neoconservatism and the New American Century* (2010) and Kubilay Yado Arin: *Think Tanks: The Brain Trusts of US Foreign Policy* (2014).

<sup>69</sup> *Think Tanks*, 77-80.

<sup>70</sup> *Think Tanks*, 77-80.

<sup>71</sup> Stephen Badsey & Paul Latawski, *Britain, NATO and the Lessons of the Balkan Conflicts, 1991 -1999*. (2003). 153.

## ***2.7 The George W. Bush administration***

Neoconservative influence and access to policy decisions would become far greater during the presidency of George W. Bush as prominent neoconservatives were able to obtain high ranking position in the administration. Moreover, president Bush, inexperienced as he was in foreign relations, counted on influential neoconservative think tanks like the PNAC for policy advice, which the administration took to heart. Additionally, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney (who were not members of the neoconservative core but shared many of their views) were given key positions in the administration. The following paragraph will be dedicated towards discussing the ways in which the unilateral shift continued and proliferated under the Bush 43 administration and affected the US relationship with the United Nations.<sup>72</sup>

Before his election, Bush 43 had campaigned against close United States involvement with the United Nations, arguing that there would be large budget cuts to UN funding. Furthermore, multilateral organizations in general were in his view, unnecessary obstructions to American hegemony, a view that coincided with the neoconservative viewpoint. The unipolarity of the post-Cold War world, which had been the underlying principle both of Bush 41's "New World Order" and Clinton's "Assertive Multilateralism" was now taken a step further, leading in many cases to a rejection of multilateralist approaches. Once he entered the White House, the Bush administration demonstrated its unilateralist intentions; it opposed ratification of a number of high profile UN sponsored treaties, about which a large degree of international consensus had been reached: the Climate Change Convention, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Biodiversity Convention, the Law of the Sea Convention, the Landmines Convention, and the International Criminal Court.<sup>73</sup> The rejection of these international treaties should of course be seen as the embodiment of the unilateralist intentions of the Bush administration. However, it is important to apply some nuance these 'unilateral decisions', as George W. Bush also showed some willingness towards working with the United Nations during that period. In the spring of 2002, for example, president Bush requested that the US be put back on the UN Human Rights Committee. Furthermore, several months later, President Bush announced that the United States would rejoin the UN Educational, Scientific

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<sup>72</sup> *Think Tanks*, 77-95.

<sup>73</sup> Lise Morje Howard, Sources of Change in United States-United Nations Relations. *Global Governance*, 16(4), (2010) 485-503.

and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), after having left the organization in 1984, during Reagans presidency.<sup>74</sup>

The – very limited - multilateralist tendencies shown by the Bush 43 administration were completely overshadowed by the unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2003. The United States had sought the approval of the United Nations for the invasion. However, after Secretary of State Colin Powell had made the case<sup>75</sup> for the US, the UN was presented with a dilemma. Either they approved and would appear to be under the influence of the US, or they disapproved, and the US would invade Iraq anyway, which would make the UN appear just as weak. The United Nations Security Council decided to postpone their judgment, which meant that they did not sanction the invasion at that time. The United States and its allies (the UK, Spain, Poland and Australia) subsequently launched the invasion without UN approval, marking a highpoint in United States' rejection of UN authority.<sup>76</sup>

The neoconservative movement was directly responsible for the unilateral actions taken by the Bush 43 administration. As illustrated by the figures on page 36, several influential neoconservatives occupied positions in the Bush administration. The neoconservative principles, which reject international law and multilateral cooperation were applied during Bush his terms.<sup>77</sup>

Looking at the period between the end of the Cold War and the end of the G.W. Bush administration, we see that the influence of the neoconservatives grew over time. Under the elder Bush their influence was curbed. The DPG was a clear expression of neoconservative viewpoints, but it was retracted by the Bush administration. Bush's "New World Order" was based on the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism, but it did not explicitly reject multilateralism. Anyway, Bush was voted out of office within two years of the end of the Cold War.

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<sup>74</sup> *Sources of Change in United States-United Nations Relations*, 485-503.

<sup>75</sup> Powell had been able to persuade Bush to make an effort of obtaining a UN sanction. While Powell initially opposed an invasion, he eventually pleader the US case for the war to the Security Council. He argued that the fact that Saddam had breached the earlier UN resolution 1441 made military action legitimate. He also presented arguments based on known falsehoods such as the existence of chemical and nuclear weapons. From: Powell, Secretary Colin L. (February 5, 2003). "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council". New York City: U.S. Department of State. Retrieved July 29<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>76</sup> *Sources of Change in United States-United Nations Relations*, 485-503.

<sup>77</sup> As researched in *Shadow Elite* (2009), *America Alone* (2004), *Think Tanks* (2014).

Clinton was elected on domestic policies to address the economic crisis. Foreign policy had a low priority, but under Secretary Albright it was based on the idea of the US taking a leading role but working through multilateral frameworks. After the 1994 midterm elections gave the Republicans control of both houses of congress, neoconservative views on foreign relations became more influential, as the Republican program was written primarily by thinktanks to which they were attached.

It was under the G.W. Bush administration, however, that neoconservatives gained control of foreign policy, with members of the neocon core entering the administration itself. One of the ways their control of policy expressed itself was in the rejection of a host of UN-sponsored international agreements and, of course, in the invasion of Iraq without UN approval.

To understand the reasons why growing neoconservative influence should lead to this unilateralist turn, it is important to understand how the neoconservatives viewed the United Nations and the relationship between the UN and the US in the post-Cold War era. The next chapter will offer an analysis of their arguments as they were expressed in their own writings on the subject.

### **Chapter 3: The neocon view of the United Nations as expressed in their publications**

Where chapter 2 mainly looked at developments in US foreign policy after the Cold War and the developments in neoconservative ideology in the post-Cold War era, this chapter will be used to set out neoconservative publications in which they set out their stated arguments against a main role for the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era.

#### ***3.1. Neoconservative writings during the Clinton administration***

The policy of assertive multilateralism of the Clinton administration and the disillusionment brought about by the events in Somalia and Rwanda, as well as the relative success of the interventions of the Clinton administration outside the United Nations framework in Bosnia and Kosovo caused leading neoconservatives to criticize the policies of the government quite fiercely from their position as public intellectuals attached to think tanks. This also allowed them to sharpen and define more clearly their foreign policy doctrine, and, as part of it, their view of the US-UN relationship. Among the documents produced in this era (1992-1998) the most remarkable are the individual contributions by John Bolton and Richard Perle, as well as that of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) which brought together many leading neoconservatives from 1997 onwards.

The arguments put forward by the neocons during the Clinton era will be discussed in detail in this chapter because they are an important precursor to the period after 2000 when the leading neocons were closely associated with the Bush 43 administration and, therefore, in a position to execute the policies they advocated.

##### **3.1.1. John Bolton**

The Somalia debacle provided a window of opportunity for neoconservatives to re-enter the foreign policy debate under the Democratic administration. In his article *Wrong Turn in Somalia* (1994),<sup>78</sup> John Bolton criticizes the handling of the intervention in Somalia by the Clinton administration. According to Bolton, the Clinton administration made the mistake of outlining a ‘peace enforcement’ role for the UN, rather than the traditional peacekeeping role. Bolton argues that it is very much the question whether or not the UN was ready to take on such a role. The United States expanded the role of the UN and tasked it with peace enforcement but forgot that the US, which would have to serve as the ‘principal military muscle’, was unable

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<sup>78</sup> John Bolton, *Wrong Turn in Somalia*. *Foreign Affairs*, 73(1), (1994).

politically to sustain the risks and casualties that peace enforcement necessarily entails. This led to the US being on the verge of withdrawing while the UN had not yet reached its objectives. For Bolton, the events in Somalia demonstrate a hard truth. Namely that the United Nations is ineffective when the United States does not assume leadership and sees through operations to their conclusion. According to Bolton there is no multilateral system with 'a life and will of its own'. Bolton argues that only leadership by one or more like-minded nations that persuades other UN members to follow is effectual. Moreover, Bolton states the US congress only wishes to see American leadership, either through the UN or not, where clear American interests are at stake. Finally, Bolton questions whether or not a US-led coalition can afford to hand over an operation to the UN and subsequently withdraw. Bolton argues that because of the complex military and political consequences of such an intervention, long term involvement must be accepted.<sup>79</sup>

In his article, John Bolton sets out the lessons he argues can be taken from the Somali intervention of 1993. Furthermore, he uses the failure of the operation to make a larger point about the effectiveness of the United Nations. According to Bolton, the UN needs American leadership to function properly. Additionally, Bolton argues that congress wants US leadership in international conflicts, but not necessarily through the UN. The article makes clear that Bolton does not have much trust in the functioning of the UN. Bolton believes the US does not have to work via the UN to lead and secure its interests, which is in line with neoconservative principles.

In his article *The United Nations and Ethnic Conflicts* (1998),<sup>80</sup> John Bolton discusses the involvement of the United States in UN-based post-Cold War ethnic conflicts. Bolton begins his article by discussing how the Cold War affected the effectiveness of the Security Council and how its end increased the room for humanitarian interventions. Bolton acknowledges the fact that during the Cold War, '*political involvement in ethnic (and religious) conflicts by international organizations was minimal or non-existent.*' Bolton argues that this stemmed from two factors related to the Cold War. First, the regions where several ethnic conflicts arose during the 1990s (Central and Eastern Europe) were suppressed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, which prevented these types of conflicts from erupting. Second, the gridlock of the UN Security Council during the Cold War meant that it was a '*sideline*

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<sup>79</sup> *Wrong Turn in Somalia.*

<sup>80</sup> John Bolton, *The United Nations and Ethnic Conflicts.* *Global Economic Review*, 27(4), (1998) 82-94.

*observer*' during conflicts.<sup>81</sup> Bolton acknowledges that, when the Cold War ended, the possibility for UN involvement in ethnic conflicts expanded tremendously. However, while Bolton agrees that UN involvement was now possible, he argues that the United Nations is not well suited for intervening in ethnic conflicts. In order to be effective in ethnic conflicts, international organizations must have strong and consistent leadership. For Bolton, the UN can hardly be blamed for any collective international failure, as the UN has no independent life of its own and acts in line with its member states. Thus, Bolton claims that the UN can't be expected to act any differently from its member states, as the UN does not 'exist' in that sense. This in turn means that successful UN operations like the First Gulf War should in fact be considered a success for the member states that took part, not for the UN in general. According to Bolton, US leadership in these types of operations is a necessary condition for success as no other permanent member of the Security Council can provide any comparable form of leadership.<sup>82</sup>

Another reason that American leadership is essential to an effective UN is to avoid the tendency to '*reach agreement at the lowest-common denominator*', Bolton states. Bolton argues that there is a culture of negotiation in the UN, which has to be resisted in order to implement American policy. American policy in turn is needed to make the UN effective. Bolton attributes diplomatic pressure to negotiate in the UN to the '*continuing hangover of Third World ideology*'. Bolton maintains that '*Beneath the surface, continuing anti-Western, anti-American feelings still run strong, ready to disrupt any American leadership effort, even in the context of ethnic conflicts.*' While it is not explicitly stated, it is likely that Bolton refers to the development in the UN during the 1960s when decolonization and bloc-forming in the context of the Cold War caused anti-American sentiments in the UN, as discussed in chapter 1.

Bolton believes that international organizations should be used as '*instruments of policy*' and not as elements in a '*Wilsonian theology*'. The Clinton administration was guilty of the latter when they endorsed their policy of assertive multilateralism, Bolton maintains. It was only after the death of eighteen American soldier that the Clinton administration realized their blunder. What Bolton means when he argues that the UN should only serve as instruments of policy is that he believes that the US should only work with the UN on specific issues, when it suits their interests. The UN should not be the body around which US foreign policy is centered.

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<sup>81</sup> *The United Nations and Ethnic Conflicts*, 82-94.

<sup>82</sup> *The United Nations and Ethnic Conflicts*, 82-94.

Bolton argues that only regional organizations, operating below the universalist level of the UN, are fit to resolve ethnic and interstate conflicts.<sup>83</sup>

In his article *Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?* (2000),<sup>84</sup> John Bolton discusses the themes central to Globalists and the global governance they advocate. Bolton expresses doubts about the arguments they provide to make their case. For Bolton, globalism is an attempt to achieve a ‘*worldwide cartelization of governments and interest groups.*’ According to Bolton these globalists have been largely successful under president Clinton in pushing their agenda. This advancement of globalist ideology should be stopped sooner rather than later, according to Bolton, since if it is not stopped, the cost to the United States will be reduced constitutional autonomy, impaired popular sovereignty, reduction of its international power, and limitations on domestic and foreign policy options and solutions. Bolton argues that the debate around global governance is *the* decisive issue facing the United States internationally.<sup>85</sup>

In regard to the legitimacy and authority surrounding the use of force, Bolton states that globalists want to restrain the use of force among nations states, by constraining and limiting the states themselves. Bolton argues that decisions surrounding using military force are the most important any nation state faces. As a result, constraining a state in its ability to make these decisions is central to the loss of sovereignty. Bolton continues by discussing a statement by secretary general Kofi Annan where he commented on the unsanctioned military campaign in Kosovo, arguing that ‘*actions such as Kosovo, undertaken without Council authorization, constitute threats to the very core of the international security system.... Only the Charter provides a universally legal basis for the use of force.*’ Bolton refutes the statements made by Annan, maintaining that they are ‘*unsupported either by the language and background of the UN Charter, or by over fifty years of experience with the Charter's operation.*’ Bolton states that the near future will bring conflicts where the US must decide whether or not to act unilaterally, without first obtaining approval from the UN Security Council. This will determine whether or not the statements by the Secretary General are true or if the US upholds the ability to act unilaterally.

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<sup>83</sup> *The United Nations and Ethnic Conflicts*, 82-94.

<sup>84</sup> John Bolton, *Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?* *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 1(2), (2000) 1-19.

<sup>85</sup> *Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?* 1-19.

Further attempts to limit the sovereignty of nation-states by the UN come in the form of the International Criminal Court, Weapons-Ban Treaties and international laws concerning human rights. For Bolton, any of these supranational attempts to decide over a nation are illegitimate. An example put forward by Bolton is the existence of the death penalty in the United States, which is a democratic choice made by Americans. The fact that UN commissioners would have any authority over this democratic decision is nonsense to Bolton. In regard to treaties banning the use of certain weapons, Bolton maintains that the banning of for example landmines and chemical weapons may set a precedent for the restriction of the use of all kinds of conventional weapon systems, which may very well affect the United States and the level of effectiveness in military operations.

Another argument Bolton puts forward against the existence of an international society is the fact that, in democratic nations, certain political interest groups compete for power. When one interest group subsequently achieves victory, they will propagate their vision. However, the other parties or groups that have lost the election are still able to voice criticism and exert influence on a national level, but when the elected party is allowed to represent the whole democratic nation in the UN, a large part of the population is voiceless.<sup>86</sup>

A key element in all of these statements and writings by John Bolton on the United Nations seems to be that he fundamentally rejects the idea that the UN as a multilateral organization as an independent existence apart from the member states. He seems to see the UN only as a transactional space in which nation-states negotiate and struggle for influence. This shows the centrality of the democratically controlled nation state to the thinking of the neocons.

### 3.1.2. Paul Wolfowitz

In his article *Clinton's First Year* (1994),<sup>87</sup> Paul Wolfowitz examines some significant events during the first year of the Clinton administration, and how it handled these events. Also, Wolfowitz debates the concept of multilateralism in the post-Cold War era and misconceptions about the Gulf War.

While the Bush administration did make the right decision to not make the US retreat into isolationism after the Cold War, Wolfowitz argues that Clinton has so far failed in making the right decision as to when and how to commit American military force. In the case of

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<sup>86</sup> *Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?* 1-19.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, *Clinton's First Year*. *Foreign Affairs*, 73(1), (1994).

Somalia, few American interests were involved. Thus, the deaths of American soldiers were unwarranted. According to Wolfowitz, the original intervention under George H.W. Bush was the right decision. Operation Restore Hope meant that thousands of lives were saved with minimal risk to American forces. The mistake was to give the United Nations the responsibility of nation-building, while they had less military capability than the United States intervention force. The task of nation-building was practically impossible to complete, Wolfowitz maintains. The US subsequently expanded on that mistake by executing a high-risk mission to capture General Aideed. The United States should have withdrawn from Somalia by early 1993, when the situation had been stabilized, Wolfowitz argues.<sup>88</sup>

In regard to foreign policy, the Clinton administration needed to use more caution with two mechanisms according to Wolfowitz: multilateralism and peacekeeping. Wolfowitz cites Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff, who stated that, after the Cold War, the US could no longer afford to act except multilaterally. Wolfowitz finds this statement odd, arguing that the United States is unchallenged in its military strength since the end of the Cold War. Even though the defense budget had been significantly lowered, the US was still the largest military power, as well as the largest economy. Moreover, the strongest countries after the US were its allies. Wolfowitz acknowledges that the United States should make an effort of sharing the responsibilities with these strong allies. Multilateralism is to be rejected, however, as it entails cooperation on a much looser basis, for example in the United Nations. This type of multilateralism includes nations with completely different interests than the United States, and alliances with these types of countries force the US to pursue international interests instead of solely national interests.<sup>89</sup>

Wolfowitz states that the end of the Cold War has made cooperative action through the UN more feasible by eliminating the threat of a Soviet Veto. He uses the Gulf War as an example of a successful operation via the UN (de facto) after the Cold War. Nevertheless, Wolfowitz maintains, the Gulf War coalition was made up of a small number of states whose vital interests were threatened, and they were able to persuade other countries to support their objective. Thus, the Gulf War should not be seen as the future standard of multilateral cooperation. True multilateralism would be determined by vote in an international body or by judgement of the secretary-general of the United Nations.<sup>90</sup> While Wolfowitz concedes that it

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<sup>88</sup> *Clinton's First Year*, 1-16.

<sup>89</sup> *Clinton's First Year*, 1-16.

<sup>90</sup> *Clinton's First Year*, 1-16.

is possible that there are circumstances where nations might put international interests before national concerns, but only when no significant conflicts are involved and the required effort is minimal. When there are significant national interests at stake, as was the case in the First Gulf War, the US, according to Wolfowitz, needs to ‘*Shape a consensus that supports American interests consistent with fundamental international principles (...) and be prepared to act, if necessary, with only those partners that share its purposes. In fact, the United States’ determination to act independently and its ability to do so will increase the chances of creating the consensus it desires.*’<sup>91</sup> This excerpt shows strong similarities to the Defense Planning Guidance of 1992, which Wolfowitz had commissioned. The above statement embodies a rejection of multilateral institutions like the UN, instead pleading for ad hoc coalitions that serve only American interests. Another argument against multilateral cooperation given by Wolfowitz is that putting the lives of American military personnel in danger when national interests are not at risk, constitutes a ‘*violation of the contract with the men and women who volunteer for the armed forces.*’ This was the case in Somalia, Wolfowitz maintains.

It is interesting to see that Wolfowitz acknowledges that the end of the Cold War meant that much more was possible for the UN, as we have discussed as well. Nevertheless, Wolfowitz maintains that the United Nations in itself is not the right way for United States interests to be served. The United Nations is full of countries with completely different interests than the US.

### 3.1.3 Richard Perle

Richard Perle’s advocacy of unilateral military action by the United States predates the presidency of Clinton and even the 1992 DPG. In fact, he already rejected the idea that working through the UN always was preferable at the end of 1990 after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August. In his article *How America Could Lose* (1990),<sup>92</sup> Richard Perle discusses the use of multilateral diplomacy. According to Perle, it is wrong to assume that diplomacy is always preferred over military action, and multilateral diplomacy through the UN is the best form of diplomacy. Only when the international coalition has a common objective and a clear goal, can multilateral cooperation work. Thus, when one member lacks resolve, the whole coalition can become a hindering factor, according to Perle. The idea that the US should receive international permission to take offensive action is wrong, Perle states. For Perle ‘*Massive air strikes to destroy Iraq’s chemical and nuclear facilities and its missiles and aircraft would be an*

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<sup>91</sup> Clinton’s *First Year*, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Richard Perle, *How America Could Lose*. *U.S. News & World Report*, 109(12), (1990) 45.

*appropriate response to Hussein's threats to use weapons of mass destruction. In short, we should feel free to strike when and where we choose.*<sup>93</sup>

In the end the issue of unilateral action lost its importance as President H.W. Bush managed to bring together a very broad political and military coalition for the liberation of Kuwait. In the Clinton years Perle reverted to the theme.

In his article *Is the United States Turning Inwards?* (1999),<sup>94</sup> Richard Perle criticizes the structure and efficiency of the United Nations. Perle argues that the skepticism surrounding the United Nations is well founded for several reasons. First, there is a sharp discrepancy between the voting power and the political power of individual member states, especially in the General Assembly.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the General Assembly has no actual influence to deal with crisis situations, not even when a majority of members find common ground. Furthermore, the Security Council too is characterized by a gap between power and authority, Perle argues. Because France and Britain are granted a veto right, despite the fact that their power is dwarfed by that of the United States.

According to Perle, multilateral organizations like the UN are unable to act without the help and leadership of the United States. In spite of this, the US has been seeking UN Security Council approval in recent times. According to Perle, this has paralyzed the US at a time when the international community needs its leadership and activism the most. The United Nations will always have profound limitations, Perle maintains. It is therefore worrisome to Perle that the UN has become an obstruction for the US. Denouncing the UN does not make someone an isolationist, Perle argues, as the UN is more inclined to block American internationalist efforts. Moreover, the US is responsible for a large part of the financial burden in the UN, which UN officials spend inefficiently.<sup>96</sup>

#### 3.1.4. Project for a New American Century

The 2003 decision to undertake unilateral action to remove Saddam Hussein after attempts to get UN approval had failed, clearly mark the low point of US-UN relations, but it also marks the triumph of neoconservative influence of neocon influence on foreign policy

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<sup>93</sup> *How America Could Lose*, 45.

<sup>94</sup> Richard Perle, *Is the United States Turning Inwards?* *International Journal*, 54(1), (1999) 1-8.

<sup>95</sup> The discrepancy Perle is referring to is the fact that all members in the General Assembly have an even vote. This means that countries such as China and Brazil have the same amount of voting power as tiny island states in French Polynesia, with a population of under 50.000.

<sup>96</sup> *Is the United States Turning Inwards?* 1-8.

because the idea of regime change in Iraq was not a recent one, triggered by the attacks on Nine Eleven. Neoconservatives had been calling for it for at least five years.

In 1998, the Project for a New American Century sent an open letter to president Clinton.<sup>97</sup> The PNAC was a prominent neoconservative think tank with notable members such as Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. In the letter they call on Clinton to take military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The Project for a New American Century contained the most prominent members of the post-Cold War neoconservative movement. Publications from the PNAC are valuable for the research in this thesis, as their statements and publications embody neoconservative arguments as to why the UN should not be given a central role as security provider in the post-Cold war era.

The letter begins by stating that the current US policy towards Iraq is unsuccessful and that the United States could be facing its largest threat since the end of the Cold War. Thus, there is a need to draw up a new strategy pertaining to Iraq, according to the authors. A strategy that is better equipped to protect US interests and those of its allies. The authors argue that it is essential the Saddam Hussein is removed from power. The great risk to the United States is the possibility that Hussein will get his hands on WMDs, which according to the authors is only a matter of time if the present course is continued. UN inspections of Iraqi-weapon sites have not been successful. They have not been granted full access, and Hussein has sabotaged their investigation at every step. For the authors it is unlikely that these UN inspectors will be able to sufficiently determine whether or not such weapons are present. Moreover, the United States can no longer depend on its Gulf War allies to enforce the sanctions imposed on Iraq, or to prevent Hussein from evading UN inspections (they do not elaborate as to why). The authors state that if nothing is done, Hussein will acquire the capability to deliver WMDs, which will jeopardize the safety of the world's oil supply, the state of Israel, American troops and moderate Arab states. According to the authors '*the security of the world in the first part of the 21st century will be determined largely by how we handle this threat.*' As diplomacy is failing, the right course of action is to take military action and remove Saddam from power, the authors maintain. This is the only way the US will eliminate the possibility of Iraq using WMDs. The authors state that they are convinced that the US has the authority under existing UN resolutions to take this action. Nevertheless, they continue by declaring that '*in any case, American policy*

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<sup>97</sup> PNAC, *Open Letter to President Clinton*, (1998).

*cannot continue to be crippled by a misguided insistence on unanimity in the UN Security Council.*<sup>98</sup>

This open letter to president Clinton is representative of the overall neoconservative foreign policy principles. The authors argue that the US is facing a threat to its interests, in the form of the Saddam Hussein regime, then they state that the US should take action to protect its interests as the UN is ineffectual in doing so. Moreover, they argue that the US has the right to take military actions regardless of formal UN approval. In short, the US should be able to do what is necessary, without regard to formal international approval.<sup>99</sup> The underlying assumption (which underpins much of the neoconservatives' work) that defense of American interests automatically benefits the world (Israel, moderate Arabs, the world's oil supply) because of its nature as a moral, democratic state, is made explicit here.

The largest publication by the PNAC is a document titled *Rebuilding America's Defenses* (2000). The 90-page document sets out the neoconservative vision for a post-Cold War American hegemony. Like the Defense Planning Guidance of 1992, the RAD is a prelude to the foreign policy conducted after 9/11 by the Bush 43 administration.<sup>100</sup> It calls for a stronger American military, pre-emptive strikes on possible threats to American interests, and a rejection of multilateralism and international law. We will now analyze some major elements in the document, particularly those pertaining to unilateralism and the United Nations.

The document starts by introducing the PNAC, and its *raison d'être*. The authors inform us that the PNAC is a non-profit, educational organization whose goal is to promote American global leadership. The RAD is then continued by citing the PNAC's *Statement of Principles*;

*'As the 20th century draws to a close, the United States stands as the world's most preeminent power. Having led the West to victory in the Cold War, America faces an opportunity and a challenge: Does the United States have the vision to build upon the achievement of past decades? Does the United States have the resolve to shape a new century favorable to American principles and interests?'*

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<sup>98</sup> *Open Letter to President Clinton.*

<sup>99</sup> *Open Letter to President Clinton.*

<sup>100</sup> The DPG (1992) is mentioned in the RAD's introduction, as the inspiration for the latter.

*‘What we require is a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States’ global responsibilities.’*

*‘Of course, the United States must be prudent in how it exercises its power. But we cannot safely avoid the responsibilities of global leadership or the costs that are associated with its exercise. America has a vital role in maintaining peace and security in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. If we shirk our responsibilities, we invite challenges to our fundamental interests. The history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century should have taught us that it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire. The history of the past century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership.’*

Immediately we see strong similarities between the above excerpts from RAD, and the 1992 DPG (which in the end had been rejected by the Bush 41 administration). Both documents center around the premise that the end of the Cold War has provided an opportunity for the United States to use its relative power to secure American interests and usher in an era of American hegemony. The last paragraph is striking as it states that threats have to be met before they emerge. In other words, the US needs to adapt a policy of pre-emptive strikes against what they believe are future threats to American interests. The idea of pre-emptive strikes stands of course diametrically opposite to the principles of international law and the monopoly on legitimizing the use of force by the UN Security Council.

According to the authors, four vital missions are connected to American global leadership. They are 1. Homeland Defense, 2. The ability to conduct large wars, 3. Constabulary duties, which are military missions in vital regions and 4. Transforming the US armed forces. In order to be able to conduct these missions, the US needs to invest in its military, as it is currently not in sufficient state, the authors maintain. In regard to what is dubbed constabulary missions, the RAD denounces UN authority arguing that *‘these constabulary missions are far more complex and likely to generate violence than traditional ‘peacekeeping’ missions. For one, they demand American political leadership rather than that of the United Nations, as the failure of the UN mission in the Balkans and the relative success of NATO operations there attests. Nor can the United States assume a UN-like stance of neutrality; the preponderance of American power is so great and its global interests so wide that it cannot pretend to be indifferent to the political outcome in the Balkans, the Persian Gulf or even when it deploys forces in Africa. Finally, these missions demand forces basically configured for combat. While*

*they also demand personnel with special language, logistics and other support skills, the first order of business in missions such as in the Balkans is to establish security, stability and order. American troops, in particular, must be regarded as part of an overwhelmingly powerful force.'*

We see that the RAD argues that the United Nations is unfit to lead missions like in the Balkan, and that American leadership is necessary. Another interesting aspect in the statement is that the authors do not pretend to believe that the United States would be a better neutral arbitrator than the UN, they argue that American power is so great that political outcomes in all corners of the world affect the US, therefore intervention is desirable. Moreover, we see that the UN failure in the Balkan throughout the 1990s is a recurring theme for neoconservatives in denouncing the organization. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, the failed UN interventions during the Clinton administration form a central argument for the neoconservatives in denouncing a central role for the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era. While positioned as opposition during Clintons period in office the neocons further defined their views on the UN, based on experiences during the 1990s. These views are significant as they are a prelude to when several neoconservatives became part of the executive power and were able to implement these ideas.

### ***3.2 Neoconservative publications under the first administration of George W. Bush***

From the start of 2001 onwards, a new American administration was in power, that of G.W. Bush, in which, as we have seen in chapter 2, neoconservatives could exert direct influence (through people like Paul Wolfowitz and John Bolton) as well as indirect influence (through people like Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, who were sympathetic to their views). In this new situation they continued to write, but the nature of their writings changed from an academic critique to advocacy of existing policy.

#### **3.2.1 Richard Perle**

In the article *United They Fall* (2003),<sup>101</sup> Richard Perle expands on his point about how he believes there are several reasons why the United Nations should have no legitimacy in determining when the use of force is acceptable. Perle starts his argument by stating that the pending invasion of Iraq and the subsequent fall of the Hussein regime, will take the United Nations down with it. Not the entire UN, Perle continues, but the liberal idea of the United

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<sup>101</sup> Richard Perle, *United They Fall*. *The Spectator*, 291(9111), (2003) 22–24.

Nations as the foundation of the new world order. According to Perle, the US intervention in Iraq will remind people that it was not the international community which caused regime change but the coalition of the willing, which took action against a “rogue” state that threatened that so-called new world order. Perle explains that the voices that speak out against the invasion of Iraq argue that they have not been sanctioned by the UN, which they believe is the only institution that can legitimize force. According to Perle, opponents of regime change believe that ‘*A willing coalition of liberal democracies isn't good enough. If any institution or coalition other than the UN Security Council uses force, even as a last resort, 'anarchy', rather than international law, would prevail, destroying any hope for world order.*’<sup>102</sup> Perle refutes this premise, arguing that it would place too much moral authority on states like Syria, Cameroon and China, which have no right to judge these matters because they themselves are morally questionable.

In his article, *Is the UN the Only Institution That Can Legitimise Force?* (2003),<sup>103</sup> Richard Perle debates the premise that the United Nations is the only body that can legitimise the use of force. Why would the UN, Perle argues, be better equipped to legitimise the use of force than a coalition of liberal democracies? When you take away the democracies in the UN, what remains are the dictatorships and the totalitarian regimes, Perle maintains. Why would those regimes have any legitimacy in determining when to use force? Perle would rather see institutions like the European Union or NATO, which are made up of nations who share common interests and democratic values, decide of when the use of force is legitimate.<sup>104</sup>

Perle continues his argument by discussing the history of the United Nations, which according to him, shows that it is not the ‘*institution most capable of ensuring order and saving us from anarchy.*’ Perle maintains that the Security Council experienced a gridlock during the Cold War because of the Soviet abuse of the veto. The notion that the council would collectivize security matters after the Second World War was therefore refuted. Aside from during the Korean War, which was only made possible because the Soviets boycotted the Council, the Security Council played no part in any security conflicts during the Cold War. Perle extends this argument about the inability of the UN to act beyond the end of the Cold War. ‘*Facing Milosevic's multiple aggressions, the UN could not stop the Balkan wars or even*

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<sup>102</sup> *United They Fall*, 22-24.

<sup>103</sup> Richard Perle, *Is the UN the Only Institution That Can Legitimize Force?* *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 20(1), (2003) 69-70.

<sup>104</sup> *Is the UN the Only Institution That Can Legitimize Force?* 69-70.

*protect its victims. Remember Sarajevo? Remember Srebrenica? It took a coalition of the willing to save Bosnia from extinction. And when the war was over, peace was made in Dayton, Ohio, not in the United Nations. The rescue of Muslims in Kosovo was not a UN action: their cause never gained Security Council approval.” Thus, arguing that the best hope in the future for defeating the terrorists and rogue states lies in coalitions of the willing: ‘We are left with coalitions of the willing. Far from disparaging them as a threat to a new world order, we should recognise that they are, by default, the best hope for that order, and the true alternative to the anarchy of the abject failure of the United Nations.’<sup>105</sup>*

Another article from the same year in which Perle criticizes the UN Security Council is *Reluctant Empire: In Time of Great Consequence* (2003).<sup>106</sup> Perle explains that the structure of the Security Council was determined just after World War II. The allied forces were each given a permanent seat in the council and equipped with a veto right. While France might have been a larger power in that time, in current times it makes little sense to have a country the size of France in the council while much larger and more powerful nations are excluded. Moreover, Perle states that the goal of the council was to respond to acts of aggression across national borders. Thus, while the Security Council was not very influential during the Cold War, that kind of response in theory was its main objective. Now however, Perle argues, the threats facing the United States are entirely of a different nature. The main concern is that the wrong person is going to get hold of a weapon of mass destruction and use it to kill Americans. This will not involve an act of aggression across national borders. Hence, the structure of the United Nations is not tailored to deal with 21<sup>st</sup> century threats, Perle contends. Until the United Nations is reformed so that it can deal with terrorist threats, the United States is obligated to act on its own initiative. In regard to the Iraq War, Perle argues the following; *‘And in the case of the current war it is undeniable that the international community could not assemble the will and the courage, even after all its resolutions, even after 1441, to carry through on its own brave promise. So how can we expect it to protect us in all those situations for which the United Nations was never properly constituted.’<sup>107</sup>*

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<sup>105</sup> *United They Fall*, 22.

<sup>106</sup> Paul Kennedy & Richard Perle, *Reluctant Empire: In Time of Great Consequence*. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 10(1), (2003) 11-36.

<sup>107</sup> *Reluctant Empire*, 11-36.

### 3.2.2 David Frum and Richard Perle

In the crucial war year of 2003 Richard Perle co-authored a book together with David Frum<sup>108</sup> called *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*.<sup>109</sup> In the book, Perle & Frum set out their recommendations for the way the United States should deal with the alleged threats the country is facing. The book can be considered an extreme example of neoconservative foreign policy doctrine. The larger part of the book is used by Frum & Perle to set out why America is facing impending doom from rogue states such as Iran and North Korea. It also intends to justify the invasion of Iraq and goes into detail on why the Islamic religion is set on destroying the American way of life. The authors state their case for why the United States should not allow these dangerous states to exist, arguing in favour of military action against multiple sovereign countries. This part of the chapter will be used to analyse *An End to Evil* and set out any segments of the book pertaining to the United Nations.

Perle & Frum are critical of the way the United Nations dealt with Saddam Hussein after the First Gulf War. After the war, the UN had imposed heavy economic sanctions on Iraq, restricting Saddam's ability to sell oil and in turn buy expensive weaponry. While these sanctions were somewhat successful during the first couple of years they were imposed, by 1998 they were falling apart, Perle & Frum maintain. This meant that Saddam was able to circumvent the sanctions and sell large amounts of oil, which allowed him to acquire sophisticated weaponry. Furthermore, the sanctions were used to demonize the United States by figures such as Bin-Laden, who stated that the economic sanctions had led to suffering among the Iraqi people. An important part of the UN approach towards Iraq was the Oil-for-Food program. This allowed Saddam to sell his oil on the world market under UN control in exchange for humanitarian commodities that would serve the Iraqi people. Perle & Frum heavily criticize the failure and corruption that tainted the program. The Iraqi government abused the program and was able to use the oil revenue for their own benefit by falsely labelling their purchases as essential commodities that were destined for the Iraqi people. Saddam was able to acquire billions of dollars by abusing the program, which is why Frum & Perle argue that a better fitting name for the program would have been Oil-for-Palaces. Perle & Frum argue that it was only possible for Saddam to get away with this because of the corruption of the UN

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<sup>108</sup> David Frum was a member of the Bush 43 administration, President Bush's most important speech writer, and an advocate for the Iraq war. He later joined the American Enterprise Institute together with Richard Perle. He is not seen as a member of the neoconservative core.

<sup>109</sup> David Frum & Richard Perle, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*. (2003).

bureaucracy. The UN was given a commission of 1.5% of all transactions that went through the Oil-for-Food program, earning them hundreds of millions. According to Perle & Frum, the Oil-for-Food scandal was the result of institutionalized conflict of interest<sup>110</sup> which benefitted only the UN and the Iraqi government, and in no way the Iraqi people. When George W. Bush became president after Clinton, the administration tried to implement ‘smart sanctions’ as opposed to the failing sanctions in place. However, France and Russia (which Perle & Frum call Saddam’s mouthpieces in the UN) vetoed the smart sanctions, leaving the existing sanctions in place.<sup>111</sup>

On the subject of the right for the United States to intervene in another sovereign state, Perle & Frum discuss the following in regard to the UN. They argue that the entire system of the UN was built on the idea of the equal competence of all nations, which the authors maintain is a fiction. The assumption that a state such as Nigeria would function the same way as the Netherlands is ridiculous according to Perle & Frum. The hope that the UN charter would allow all nations to keep order together has long faded. When natural disasters destroy the poorest of countries, wealthy nations like the US and Britain step in to help. Thus, “*How are we justified in turning our backs when the country is ravaged by human wrongdoers rather than by natural disaster? And when these wrongdoers threaten us-or create opportunities for terrorists who intend to threaten us-then the moral case for intervention is reinforced by the unignorable dictates of self-interest.*”<sup>112</sup>

According to Perle & Frum it is (in 2003) still possible to set up a provisional government in Iraq that is closely tied with the United States and is able to develop towards self-rule rapidly. However, the authors maintain that it is imperative that the mistake is not made to hand over Iraq to the international community and more specifically, into a ward of the United Nations. Because once these ‘*international bureaucrats*’ are involved in a region, they continue to rule years after the conflict has ended. They continue to rule Kosovo, Cambodia, Somalia and Bosnia, Perle & Frum argue. Moreover, because Iraq’s neighbouring countries all want the new state to fail, they will do anything to sabotage its success. Perle & Frum state that ‘*many of our European friends*’ would be happy to let the UN take responsibility

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<sup>110</sup> I believe that the institutionalized conflict of interest referred to here means that the UN benefitted from the corruption in the Oil-for-Food program.

<sup>111</sup> *An End to Evil*, 20-24.

<sup>112</sup> *An End to Evil*, 120-121.

in Iraq, setting up special deals at the same time, like they did with the Oli-for-Food program. This would constitute '*a polite multilateral form of colonial rule*'.<sup>113</sup>

Perle & Frum discuss how the success of the First Gulf War formed certain expectations for the future of security conflicts. When George H.W. Bush assembled a large coalition and obtained UN Security Council permission, and subsequently rolled back the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, people seemed to assume this new world order was how future military conflicts would be conducted. Perle & Frum argue that during the 1990s, any crisis would lead Clinton to assemble a grand coalition and obtain permission from the United Nations. The authors even state that, for many people, Kofi Annan's secretariat replaced the US Congress as the body entitled to decide when the US was permitted to wage war. However, each and every one of these multilateral affairs ended in disappointment, Perle & Frum claim. The authors continue by discussing several instances where UN intervention ended in failure, such as in Rwanda, where a UN force protected only themselves and allowed the genocidal killings to continue. In Yugoslavia the UN did not allow Bosnian Muslims to acquire weapons which led to them being unable to defend themselves against attacks from well-armed Serbians.<sup>114</sup>

Perle & Frum conclude their book with segment entirely dedicated to discussing the United Nations. They begin by stating that, while Americans do not see the UN as a force in itself, for many idealistic countries the UN is seen as the parliament of the world. Perle & Frum argue that it is only something that the UN pretends to be. Nevertheless, many countries attach great worth to the resolutions passed by the Security Council, and the US itself has recognized the power of the Security Council when they asked for permission to fight in Iraq in 1991 and then again in Kosovo in 1998. Moreover, the Bush administration asked permission to invade Afghanistan and has twice asked for permission to overthrow Saddam. The fact that the United States has accepted UN authority on multiple occasions has led UN-enthusiasts to claim that the US has a selective attitude towards the UN. These countries maintain that only accepting UN authority when it suits it makes the United States hypocritical, Perle & Frum state. This would add the US to the long list of hypocritical countries, the authors claim. France for example, pretends to stand for human rights yet has a terrible track record of supporting tyrants and killers. France also supports the resolutions by the Security Council because they have a permanent seat and a veto. Perle & Frum argue that this only makes sense in a world with the UN. Without the UN, everyone would agree that the opinion of the president of France has less

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<sup>113</sup> *An End to Evil*, 166-167.

<sup>114</sup> *An End to Evil*, 236-238.

significance than, say, the prime minister of India. The authors then go on to state that the United States is a very different country than France. US claims to world leadership rely on its moral authority, thus it is necessary that it upholds its principles.<sup>115</sup>

Thus, according to Perle & Frum, the US can't say one thing and do another, "*Our word and deeds must be aligned.*" However, for the authors, the way the UN is organized at the moment makes that impossible. The United Nations was created in the time of "*Blitzkriegs and manned bombers*", a time when a breach of peace was caused by an act of aggression across national borders. The UN charter only recognizes the right of self-defence in case of an armed attack. However, the threats the US is facing are of a different sort in present time. When Pakistan shares nuclear technology with North Korea it does not constitute an armed attack to the US, yet it poses a tremendous danger. According to Perle & Frum, "*modern aggressors resort to covert operations, cyberwarfare, assassinations and state-sponsored terrorism.*"<sup>116</sup>

Another point of criticism towards the UN articulated by Perle & Frum is that the resolutions passed by the UN force countries to take a stand on issues they otherwise would not have. The authors use the following instance as an example: Chile was very close to signing a trade agreement with the United States in 2003. However, because it was coincidentally also the time when Chile occupied a temporary seat in the Security Council, they were forced to take a stand on the US-sponsored resolution on Iraq, which they voted against.<sup>117</sup>

Perle & Frum go on to compare the UN to a stage for cheap political melodrama. A play where the villains are always Israel and the United States, and the heroes are always countries like Cuba, Zimbabwe and the Palestinian authority. According to the authors "*the UN regularly broadcasts a spectacle as dishonest and morally deadening as a Stalinist show trial, a televised ritual of condemnation that inflames hatreds and sustains quarrels that might otherwise fade away.*"<sup>118</sup>

Perle & Frum suggest that before the US bring anymore security issues to the UN, they should demand a revision of the current UN system that would restore its relevance and enhances US security. This would mean altering the UN charter or specifically Article 51<sup>119</sup> so that harbouring or supporting terrorists constitutes an act of aggression just as much as an attack

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<sup>115</sup> *An End to Evil*, 266-268.

<sup>116</sup> *An End to Evil*, 268-269.

<sup>117</sup> *An End to Evil*, 270.

<sup>118</sup> *An End to Evil*, 270.

<sup>119</sup> Article 51 deals with the right to self-defense and acts of aggression.

across national borders. If this does not happen, the US should formally reject the UN's authority over the war on terror, Perle & Frum state.<sup>120</sup>

Perle & Frum end their book by stating that the US will always be prepared to present their case to the world and to rebut false charges. However, if the UN does not make an effort to change their rules that determine whether or not the United States has a right to protect the American people then “*we should unashamedly and explicitly reject the jurisdiction of this rule.*” According to Perle & Frum, the UN is not a particularly momentous achievement. It was created by people no cleverer than they are today to deal with threats in a particular time. “*Times change. Dangers change. Necessities change, institutions should change too. And if institutions like the UN cannot change, that is not an indictment of us, it is an indictment of them-and reason enough for them to be discarded.*”<sup>121</sup>

*An End to Evil* is an interesting text because it can be seen as the culmination of neoconservative thinking on the United Nations. We see that a number of arguments and views that are present in the statements of people like Bolton, Wolfowitz and Perle from the early nineties onwards ultimately lead to an outright rejection of the UN Security Council's role as provider of peace and security. The book is clearly written in the heat of the fierce arguments surrounding the invasion of Iraq. The singling out of France as the “*pars pro toto*” of everything that is wrong and outmoded about the UN reflects American perceptions at the time. Written before the insurgency in Iraq broke out that would ultimately kill nearly 5000 Americans (and over a hundred thousand Iraqis) the authors see the 2003 regime change in Iraq through unilateral action as confirmation of their view that this model is more suited to the modern age than the UN.

### 3.2.3. John Bolton

In the two years directly after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US-UN relation gradually improved. However, any multilateralist tendencies that had been shown by the Bush administration were subsequently undone when in 2005 president Bush appointed John Bolton, a firm neoconservative, as US ambassador to the UN. As we will see, Bolton rejected the basic idea of the United Nations, stating that there ‘was no United Nations, only an international community, which could only be led by the only remaining hyperpower, the United States’.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *An End to Evil*, 271.

<sup>121</sup> *An End to Evil*, 272.

<sup>122</sup> *Sources of Change in United States-United Nations Relations*, 485-503.

The fact that someone like John Bolton was appointed ambassador to the UN, even though he disapproved of the very existence of the UN, was a clear message to the organization, and it illustrates the level of influence the neoconservative ideology had in directing US foreign policy.

We will now look at the statement given by John Bolton as Nominee for Representative of the United States to the United Nations at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on April 11, 2005.<sup>123</sup> Bolton sets out what his vision for US cooperation with the UN is, and what he wants to see changed in the institution. Bolton begins his statement by arguing that the Bush administration is very committed to working with the United Nations. Bolton maintains that the United Nations is an essential component of US diplomacy, even stating that “*Now, more than ever, the U.N. must play a critical role as it strives to fulfill the dreams and hopes and aspirations of its original promise to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith and fundamental human rights and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.*” These statements by Bolton seem to contradict earlier instances where he heavily criticized the UN. This of course can be partially explained by the fact that Bolton treads lightly in his denouncement of the UN in front of the senate, as he is about to be appointed ambassador to the UN. Thus, while we need to be wary of Bolton’s sincerity while analyzing this source, it is still valuable to our research when looking for practical arguments against the United Nations. Bolton continues by stating that he believes that walking away from the United Nations is not an option, but that for a stronger, more effective United Nations, American leadership is needed. Moreover, in order for the UN to be able to effectively promote international peace and security several reforms are required, Bolton argues.

Bolton states that for the UN to effectively promote international peace and security, it is not enough to reform its internal structures. Bolton maintains that the UN needs to be reformed in order to deal with the new challenges that face the global community in the post-Cold War era. Namely, the existence of rogue states, which do not respond to the classical strategies of deterrence.

Bolton further states that while there have been successes in regard to human rights for the UN, that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNHRC) has been too often hampered in its effectiveness because of the fact that members have been serial violators of

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<sup>123</sup> Statement of the Honorable John R. Bolton, Nominee for Representative of the United States of America, to the United Nations, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 11, 2005.

human rights. In order to restore '*moral authority*' in the commission, we need to make sure that in the future human rights violators are not appointed to the commission, Bolton argues.

Bolton continues by stating that the General Assembly has been occupied with the wrong matters, which has swayed its attention from issues of real importance. Bolton uses Resolution 3379, which determined that Zionism is a form of racism, as an example of this. Evident from the statement is that Bolton truly disdains the '*odious resolution*'. The Zionism is racism resolution has always left an open wound in the mind of many neoconservatives. The fact that John Bolton mentions it in 2005 shows the importance this resolution of thirty years before had in determining long-term neoconservative perceptions of the UN.

Bolton concludes his statement to the Senate by stating how he planned to ensure that the money that was sent to the UN by the United States was spent wisely. Bolton argues that he seeks to revive the concept of a '*unitary UN*'. Member states communicate far too little amongst themselves when coordinating some key programs, Bolton maintains. This leads to inefficiency, duplication and the wasting of funds. An example of such an instance is the Oil-for Food scandal,<sup>124</sup> Bolton claims. To avoid another failure of that magnitude all member states need to re-evaluate what is realistic to achieve for the United Nations. The Oil-for Food scandal was possible because to United Nations tried to oversee the entire import and export of a country with 24 million inhabitants.

When analyzing Bolton's statement, the most striking thing is the fact that he praises the United Nations and states that it is an essential part of US diplomacy. This goes against multiple earlier statements in which he denounced the importance of the UN. Again, because the statement is given to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we can expect Bolton to refrain from denouncing the institution he is about to be ambassador to. I believe that Bolton is here simply fulfilling a necessary formality by talking nice about the UN. Moving on, the dominant elements in Bolton's statement are first of all the importance he gives to American leadership in UN functioning. American leadership is needed to make sure the United Nations can fulfil its charter. The importance of American leadership is connected to the idea of American exceptionalism, a principle inherent in neoconservative ideology. Bolton believes American leadership will automatically benefit the international community. Moreover, he believes it is only the United States, not any other country, that has the prerequisites for

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<sup>124</sup> The Oil-for-Food program was a UN program that would allow the government of Iraq to sell its oil if the revenues would be directed towards improving the lives of Iraqi citizens. The Iraqi government however, abused the program and used the money it got to buy expensive weaponry.

leadership. Secondly, he links the legitimacy of the UN to the democratic character of its member states (as in the discussion of the UNHRC and of rogue states). At the same time, Bolton also mentions several practical issues he has with the United Nations. Such as the lack of communication between member states, the wasting of funds, and the fact that some programs, like the Oil-for Food program, are too big of for the UN to handle.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis centered around researching the stated arguments by the post-Cold War neoconservative movement in regard to a rejection of the United Nations as main security provider in the post-Cold War era. The research question was as follows; *What were the arguments of the main neoconservative actors advocating for a rejection of a central role for the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era?* This part of the conclusion will be dedicated towards discussing the research findings and formally answering the research question.

This specific research topic was chosen because of several reasons. On a broader level, I've chosen to research American unilateralism after the Cold War because of its tremendous consequences on a global scale. American hegemony and military interventions have led to multiple wars. Particularly the unsanctioned invasion of Iraq in 2003, which turned out to be based on lies, has led to a collection of tragic effects. Additionally, the fact that the United States has stepped out of multilateral treaties like the Paris Agreement and the Iran Nuclear Deal meant that years of progress in both halting climate change and relaxing Middle East tensions have been undone. In short, American post-Cold War foreign policy has been worrying on several accounts, and with Trump in the White House this trend is unlikely to be reversed. When contrasted to the period directly after WWII, when the US practically founded the UN, the difference is striking.

Another reason for researching the unilateral trend in US foreign policy is the fact that the end of the Cold War could have provided the environment for quite the opposite to happen. The Cold War had paralysed the United Nations Security Council, rendering it unable to deal with security conflicts. Thus, the post-Cold War era, in theory, could have become characterized by intensified multilateral cooperation via the UN. Moreover, communism, the largest threat to capitalism and democratization had subsided together with dissolution of the Soviet Union. The idea that democratic liberalism was now fundamentally unchallenged was most famously described by Francis Fukuyama in his bestseller *The End of History and the*

*Last Man* (1992). George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton ushered in a post-Cold War US foreign policy with a propensity towards multilateral cooperation via the UN, with what was dubbed the New World Order and Assertive Multilateralism respectively, and defence spending was significantly reduced.

This multilateralist turn did not last. The Clinton administration discarded their multilateralist foreign policy, as the Republican Party obtained a majority in the 1994 election. Also, neoconservative principles had to be adapted to a post-Cold War world devoid of the threat of communism, as their ideology in its original form, as it had been shaped from the nineteen seventies onwards, had been largely centred around the existence of that threat. The post-Cold War neocons rejected the idea of intensified multilateral cooperation through the UN, preferring unilateral American action through ad-hoc coalitions to protect its interests. Neoconservative foreign policy ideals were adopted by the Bush 43 administration, as members of the neocon core became part of the executive office. This eventually culminating in the unsanctioned invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The research in this thesis was conducted by collecting and analysing publications and policy documents by leading members of the post-Cold War neoconservative circle in which they discuss the position of the UN as security provider in the post-Cold War era. The authors of these publications were members of what has been described in the literature as the “neoconservative core.” There exists a large degree of consensus in the academic literature on the subject as to who made up this “core” and this has been taken as point of departure for this thesis.<sup>125</sup>

### ***Research findings***

Having completed the primary source research, it is now possible to discuss the research findings in regard to the arguments taken from the neocon publications. The source material largely consisted of publications from influential neoconservatives Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz and John Bolton. Further source material came in the form of publications from the neoconservative think tank Project for a New American Century. The analyses of the neocon publications have resulted in some interesting conclusions. We have come across a wide spectrum of argumentation as to why these figures in the neocon core rejected a central role for the UN as security provider after the Cold War. This conclusion will serve to categorize these

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<sup>125</sup> I discuss the foundational research more extensively in my introduction.

different arguments and to expand on the central themes that have been taken from the primary source material.

### ***New possibilities in the post-Cold War era***

What the analysis of their writings shows, is that as black-and-white opposition of the multilateralism of an earlier era and strict unilateralism advocated by the neocons is not the best way to understand neocon arguments. One of the first elements that have appeared when analysing the neocon publications is the fact that the multilateral possibilities in the post-Cold War era are acknowledged. In several articles the neocons acknowledge the fact that the end of the Cold War has provided the United States with the possibility of working more intensely via the UN than they had done during the Cold War. Moreover, the neocons acknowledge the fact that the United Nations was severely hampered by the Cold War dynamic. However, the neocons did not believe the United Nations should be central to the future of United States foreign policy, or the only platform for multilateralism. They acknowledged that the US was facing a new era after the Cold War, and that a new foreign policy strategy was needed, but they did not envision a large role for the UN in that strategy.

It is important to note that, as John Bolton's statements make particularly clear, the neocons never saw the UN as an independent supranational body with an existence of its own. In essence they see it as a transactional space where nation states compete to defend their interests.

### ***Ad Hoc coalitions and the importance of military action***

The neocons did not oppose multilateral cooperation in the post-Cold War era, nor did they reject the UN in all of its forms. They were, however, convinced that policy can only be effective if there is a readiness to use military means to enforce them. They believed that, in order to effectively intervene in a conflict, alliances should take the form of ad-hoc assemblies comprised of states with a shared interest and a readiness to act militarily. Furthermore, neocons argue that the United States should lead these alliances, as they are the only one capable to do so. Thus, the neocons maintain that the United Nations is unfit to effectively deal with security conflicts, as the United Nations is dependent on American military power and leadership. Additionally, the long-term multilateral structure of the UN is ineffective in dealing with specific conflicts, which require specific short-term alliances. The First Gulf War is used as a case in point by the neocons, as they argue that the decisive victory against Iraq should not be seen as a UN accomplishment, but as an accomplishment for the American-led alliance.

### ***The UN charter and outdated forms of aggression***

Another important finding is the fact that the neocons do not reject the United Nations in all of its forms and in all possible roles. They argue that the United Nations has some tremendous flaws, which make it unfit to serve in the role it had been given under its original charter. Most important to the neocons is the legitimizing of the use of force. They reject the idea that the United Nations is the only institution that can sanction the use of force for several reasons. First, the neocons argue that the UN Security Council has been designed to deal with acts of aggression across national borders. The threats facing the United States in the post-Cold War era are of a different nature, and so they require different resolutions. Neocons maintain that the 21<sup>st</sup> century threats often require pre-emptive action, for example to stop a “rogue state” from acquiring WMDs, and as the Security Council only deals with outdated acts of aggression across state borders, the UN is not fit to decide when force is legitimate.

### ***Failed UN interventions during the 1990s***

An essential part of neoconservative thought in regard to the role for the UN in the post-Cold War era has been the failure that characterized UN interventions during the 1990s. Evident from the primary source material is how often the neocons refer to Rwanda and Somalia as examples of failed intervention through the UN and to Bosnia and Kosovo as examples of where (NATO-based) American-led ad-hoc coalitions were successful. The failures of the UN can constitute either a failed intervention that did not achieve its goals, or an instance where the UN should have acted but did not.

### ***Corruption/wasting of funds***

An element of critique often found in the primary source material is the fact that the neocon figures denounce the United Nations because of the alleged corruption and inefficient wasting of funds. Part of the critique on waste is that the United States pays a significant part of the total UN budget, and that a lot of this money goes to waste because of incompetence and a lack of coordination among member states. A key element in the critique on corruption is the Oil-for-Food Scandal. This affair is mentioned in several primary sources and seems to have had an impact on neocon ambivalence towards the United Nations. Part of this can be possible explained by the fact that it involved Iraq and Saddam Hussein, which is a focal point of the neocons after the Cold War.

### ***The moral right to take part in decision making***

While it can be argued that the three arguments listed above are in a sense pragmatic in that they are based on a critique of the actual functioning of the UN, there has also been since the beginning in the nineteen seventies, a very strong moral side to the neocon argumentation. Neocons see foreign relations in terms of a fundamental opposition between right and wrong, represented respectively by liberal democracy and authoritarian dictatorship. Until 1991 the latter is represented by communism, but in the post-Cold War era by a variety of states. Hence, the neocons argue that the United Nations is made up of states which have no right to decide when the use of force is legitimate. Aside from the democracies, the UN is filled with authoritarian states and dictatorships, which should have no say in determining what is right and wrong. Therefore, the neocons prefer an ad-hoc coalition of like-minded democracies over the United Nations not just for pragmatic reasons, but also for moral reasons. They regard decisions by these democracies on intervention, even if it is preventative, as legitimate, because they represent the essential force for good in this world. While the neocons thus state that the UN has no moral right to decide over security conflicts, they do not reject the peacekeeping role of the organization *after* military interventions.

### ***Ideological underpinnings***

The neoconservative argument against the United Nations as the framework through which the United States should seek to achieve its foreign policy objectives is thus a mixture of realist and ideological arguments. Partly the UN is rejected in its major role of deciding on war and peace because it is seen as outdated and ill-equipped for the twenty-first century, because it is corrupt and wasteful, and because it has no effective military means at its disposal. Partly it is rejected because in a struggle between good and evil, it is the United States (working in coalition with like-minded states where possible) rather than the United Nations that is able to maintain morality in the world and – to quote Frum and Perle – put an end to evil. In this the United States is seen as unique, exceptional and irreplaceable.

Evident from the source material is the fact that neocons are convinced of American exceptionalism. They believe that the United States is unique compared to every other state in the world. As the repository of democracy, the United States has a kind of moral superiority over the rest of the international community, which they believe legitimizes an American hegemony. In other words, while they believe there should be some form of international law that restricts countries in their sovereignty, they argue that the US should be exempt from these laws. American exceptionalism, in their eyes, means that the US – as the ultimate force for

good in the world - should be completely free in shaping the world, and protecting American interests abroad. This is the reasoning that underlies the rejection, not only of the United Nations' authority but also of the International Criminal Court.

The final conclusion of this thesis therefore is that the neoconservatives rejected a central role for the United Nations as a security provider in the post-Cold War era on the basis of a range of arguments, most of which were pragmatic and – at least in the eyes of the neocons themselves – evidence based. At the same time, it has to be recognized that underlying their argumentation is an ideological position that sees the world as involved in a struggle between good and evil and the United States as uniquely qualified to make good triumph over evil.

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\* Means that the title has been used as a primary source.

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