

The Influence of Neoconservatives on Foreign Policy Making in the United States after 9/11: An Analysis of the Group's Strategies and Objectives

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Abstract:

Pluralism is a very old tradition that allows American non-state actors, such as interest groups and lobbies, to influence public policy. This article traces back the historical and ideological origins of a prominent interest group known as the “Neoconservatives,” and investigates, as well as analyses, the group’s strategies and objectives regarding US foreign policy under the George W. Bush Administration (2001-2009) after 9/11. The analysis of the neoconservatives’ strategies and objectives reveals that American pluralism seems to have transformed into a means of promoting big government, and safeguarding the interests of a powerful and influential category in the society.

Keywords: Neoconservatism, interest groups, post-9/11 US foreign policy, the Military Industrial Complex.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United States is always described as a model of a pluralistic democratic state where different actors have substantial impact on government policy. Those actors usually take the form of organized interest groups. This Pluralism is a very old tradition that dates back to the early years of the American republic, and it is still preserved until today. In fact, despite some ambivalent views about the existence of interest groups, many scholars and political analysts consider them as a necessary evil. They are necessary because they contribute to the mobilization of citizens into political life by leading them to participate in the democratic process through voting. The necessity of the existence of such groups was even more highlighted in the post-Cold War era through the new scholarly interest in the study of the role of such entities, mainly in the field of foreign policy.

The end of the Cold War in 1991 led to the rise of a new interest in foreign policy as a varied field of study that focuses on the centrality of non-state actors in making foreign policy decisions. In other words, with the collapse of the bi-polar system, the actor-general theory that used to be adopted to explain, analyze and predict system change in world politics proved to be inconsistent with post-Cold War world politics and was replaced by an actor-specific theory. The latter required theorists to look below the nation-state level of analysis in order to answer questions related to foreign policy processes and decisions. This involves taking the human decision makers, whether acting alone or in group, as a theoretical ground⁽¹⁾. So, non-state actors started receiving greater attention in the field of foreign policy analysis.

Among the most prominent non-state actors that dominated the American political scene in the twenty first century were “the neoconservatives.” This group of intellectuals and politicians are said to have greatly influenced US foreign policy after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on 9/11. A great number of articles and books, including those used for writing this paper, share the claim that their impact

was clear in the changes in G.W. Bush's foreign policy decisions after their accession to power.

Neoconservatism, however, was not an exclusively post-9/11 political phenomenon in the United States. In fact, it is a very old movement whose origins date back to the 1930's and whose activism was strongly felt during the Cold War (1947-1991). The latter period was characterized by a strong neoconservative anti-Soviet attitude, and a very clear leaning towards the endorsement of military action against communism. After the end of the Cold War, however, the group's activism regressed and so did its influence. This fact leads us to pose the following research question: What were the reasons behind such a sudden renewed interest in the United States foreign policy during the G.W. Bush administration after 9/11?

2. Methodology and Conceptual framework

In order to answer the main research question, three sub-questions have been formulated as follows:

- 1- Why did the neoconservatives regress after the end of the Cold War? And why did they come back to the political scene after 9/11?
- 2- What strategies did post-9/11 the neoconservatives use?
- 3- Was there any difference between the objectives and strategies of post-world War II and post-September 11 neocons?

The article starts with a definition associated with the historical background of neoconservatism in order to highlight the influence of this interest group on policy making throughout United States history. Following this definition is an analysis of neoconservatives' reaction to the end of the Cold War and to the 9/11 attacks, in addition to an examination of their strategies in order to unveil the real objectives behind their activism after the terrorist attacks in 2001.

This paper draws upon Realism for its utility in explaining the relationship that exists between the neoconservative ideology, its interests and the national interest of the United States. The latter fact leads us to refer

to the Interest Group Theory, mainly C. Wright's Elite Power and the Economic Elite Domination theories, which allow for a better understanding of the nature of the motives behind the neocons' vivid activism at the level of foreign policy decision-making after 9/11. Also relevant to our analysis is Role Theory for its importance in explaining the origins of the international role that the neocons have always attributed to the United States whether before, during or after the Cold War.

But what is neoconservatism? In fact, although much was written about this concept, neoconservatives or "neocons," as they chose to call themselves, the very definition of those terms is controversial. Neoconservatism is sometimes defined as an ideology, sometimes as a doctrine, and at other times as a movement, "Rarely has a term been thrown around so wildly while its meaning remains so popularly elusive," observed Douglas Murray⁽²⁾. So, neoconservatism has no simple definition, but what can be generally said to define this term is that it is an interest group whose founders aimed at differentiating themselves from older US conservatives by adding the prefix "neo" which means "new". The founders of this movement, who were originally liberals, Democrats or Socialists, were new to conservatism. Some of them were initially leftists who decided to change their political orientation and move towards the right because they were discontented with the excessive liberalism of the American administration and the counterculture of the Sixties. Nathan Glazer, Daniel Moynihan, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset and Irving Kristol were among the most influential figures in the movement's first generation. They were philosophers, sociologists, writers, historians and some of them were government officials.⁽³⁾ Although the origins of this ideology date back to the 1930's, it succeeded to survive until the present time and was adopted by different generations that usually activated through organized interest groups. The last generation of neocons was the interest group that dominated the Bush administration after the 9/11 events.

Before dealing with the analysis of the strategies and objectives of neoconservatives, it is relevant to define the concept interest group and

discuss the role that those entities play in the US political system.

An interest group is a non-governmental player or actor whose aim is not to hold office, but to influence or change public policy. It is also defined as an organized group or lobby sharing common objectives that actively attempts to influence government.⁽⁴⁾ Interest groups are also called pressure groups because they use all means and ways to make pressure upon the government in order to reach their objectives or interests. But interest groups are not the same; they operate at different levels, in different fields, and at different degrees. In addition, there are some groups that focus on a particular policy while others claim for broad changes. Consequently, different types of interest groups have emerged: they include corporations, trade associations, labor unions, professional associations, think tanks, media outlets, universities and churches. All those groups play the role of intermediary bodies between state and society. Their role consists in mobilizing voters in elections, influencing the representative process, providing people with different opportunities for participation, manipulating some kinds of information in order to have a favorable attitude towards their agenda, and exercising influence on policy making and implementation.⁽⁵⁾ However, not all interest groups succeed in influencing and implementing policy for some groups are more efficient than others. In the field of foreign policy, it is generally established that, "... internationally oriented business leaders exercise strong, consistent, and perhaps lopsided influence on the makers of U.S. foreign policy.... These findings indicate that the direct foreign policy clout of business and labour may be augmented by an indirect influence on policy makers that works through experts."⁽⁶⁾ Such claims are grounded on C. Wright's Elite Power Theory (1956) as well as the more recent theory of Economic Elite Domination which assert that financially privileged individuals and groups have more impact on policy making than other groups.⁽⁷⁾

3. Discussion

American neoconservatives belong to that category of highly influential

interest groups that played an important role in shaping policy at both domestic and international levels since the late 1970s. Historically speaking, the neoconservative ideology is said to be the product of the “largely Jewish-American Trotskyist movement of the 1930’s and 1940’s which morphed into anti-communist liberalism between 1950’s and 1970’s and finally into a kind of militaristic right”.⁽⁸⁾ In fact, the founders of the movement were students at New York City College during the 1930’s who tended to show their non-communist socialist activism. Those early American neoconservative students used to meet in college in order to discuss critical issues, and it was there that they had started their political combat. The latter brought its fruit four decades later since it is in the 1970’s that the term neoconservatism entered the modern American lexicon to refer to “a breed of political animal who had turned toward the right as a former liberal disenchanted with the left’s reluctance to stand up to the Soviets and the anti-American radicals”.⁽⁹⁾ The most important contribution of neocons during that decade was made through writing articles in well-defined magazines like: *Commentary*, *Public Interest*, *New Leader*, *American Scholar*, *Harper’s* and *Foreign Policy*. They were also very influential members in think tanks; those organizations specialized in conducting campaigns against policies that they consider threatening to US security. The Heritage Foundation, for example, is a think tank that produces well-referenced bulletins and essays on current issues based on detailed research and made accessible to government officials, journalists and academics. The neocons were also close advisors to office holders and political candidates who contributed to their speeches, recommended programs and helped in drafting legislation. The 1970s were crucial for neocons because it was the decade when the embryo of the second generation was being constituted. Richard Perle, Joshua Muravchick, Richard Pipes and Paul Wolfowitz, who belong to this new generation of neocons, showed a great deal of interest in politics rather than in academia. They chose to hold key positions in Republican administrations as opposed to the earlier generation who did not play a direct political role in the Republican Party. Moreover, although both generations are predominantly

Jewish, the second generation showed more interest in Israel than the first one through their numerous publications in favor of this state. For many of them, the American commitment to stand by and protect Israel was a duty because both states share the same enemies which are the UN, Communism and much of the Third World. This view was voiced by many Neoconservative intellectuals such as Midge Pecter, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Norman Podhoretz; it started to spread mainly after the oil crisis of 1973.⁽¹⁰⁾

During the 1980s, the neoconservatives did not succeed in imposing their ideas, but they made a very important step when they could form an alliance with Christian Evangelicals with whom they shared two main principles: American interventionism and missionary duty.⁽¹¹⁾ It was not the first time, however, that both groups showed an affinity towards each other; they had already reacted together to the counterculture movement of the 1960's and had opposed the notion of secular society that seemed to be taking hold of American minds and politics at that time. Also, both groups expressed their sympathy with President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) when he declared himself, "born again," and were later on very disappointed by his policies. Neocons and Evangelical Christians, then, went through periods of hope and optimism and others of disappointment/ disillusionment, but those seemingly shared feelings did neither stem from the same intentions nor aim at the same objectives. In fact, while conservative Christian groups led by Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority and Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition and the Christian Broadcasting Network were calling for a Christian America where religion would be taught in schools and where abortion, homosexuality and pornography would be outlawed and banished, and where the missionary duty of their nation would be fulfilled, the neocons were rather internationalists and globalists, and their domestic concerns did not greatly resemble the Christian conservative ones. Even when they joined the Christian Coalition's stand against the Counterculture Movement, it was mainly a negative reaction to the loss of Vietnam. The neocons had also

shown their disgust with the foreign policies of both Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan (1981-1989); they had opposed “détente,” as a strategy to deal with the Cold War.⁽¹²⁾

The 1990’s witnessed some deterioration within neoconservative circles, so looking for new allies became a vital necessity. Consequently, the second generation of neocons forged again links with Christian conservative groups, such as Empower America and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, in order to implement their foreign policy strategies especially in the Middle East. In a word, the neoconservatives had enjoyed a great deal of success since 1970’s because of the rise of revivalist theology under the leadership of the New Right. This success, however, did not last forever because of the changing circumstances that had marked the international political scene in the early 1990’s. The neocons had either to adapt or disappear. So, the signing of the 1989 Treaty on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) by Americans and Soviets and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990’s led to the gradual decline of neoconservative activism and influence in the U.S. Norman Podhoretz had himself declared that neoconservatism “...no longer exists as a distinctive phenomenon.”⁽¹³⁾

The decline of the movement, however, proved to be temporary since it came back to the political arena after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on 9/11. A new generation of neocons had emerged, with new leaders and a new political agenda.

According to David Truman’s Disturbance Theory, interest groups form when need arises. In others words, when people feel threatened by a change in the society they react by forming an interest group in order to resist that change.⁽¹⁴⁾ Although this theory has been criticized for being idealistic and restrictive, it can be used to explain the neocons’ reappearance after 9/11. Yet, the real event that the neocons had to react to was not the 9/11 attacks; it was rather the sudden and unexpected end of the Cold War. It was indeed considered by some historians and political analysts as the “raison d’être” of neoconservatives because the bipolar global rivalry provided them with many opportunities to reach their objective which consisted in the pursuit of US

pre-eminence through military power⁽¹⁵⁾. In fact, although the neoconservatives claim not to be realists, they do in fact share with them identical starting assumptions, and they both agree on the principle that “power continues to be the fundamental currency of international relations in a dangerous world.” Also, neoconservative theory has sometimes been described as “as Wilsonianism with teeth” and other times as a “democratic neoclassical realism” because the three theories advocate the necessity of the use of power and interventionism in order to preserve the state’s interests.⁽¹⁶⁾ However, in order to use military power, there must be an enemy or a threat. When the Cold War was over, the enemy that was represented by the communist block led by USSR has disappeared. For the neoconservatives, this meant that the government would necessarily focus on social engineering and welfare state programs in order to satisfy the domestic needs of the voters and cut funding for armament. To put it differently, once the foreign threat was over, Americans would necessarily “choose butter over guns and consumption over the death and taxes entailed by military competition”.⁽¹⁷⁾ This fact explains neoconservative Donald and Robert Kagan’s position towards democratic liberalism which they believe impacts negatively on the U S because it focuses on domestic comfort and neglects foreign policy which will consequently lead to military decline and US withdrawal from the world. The end of the Cold War, then, disturbed the neocons who spent years of semi-exile from the foreign policy arena during which a new Neoconservative agenda was in the making.⁽¹⁸⁾

The post-Cold War foreign policy agenda of neoconservatives was essentially the result of the intellectual efforts of two main leaders: Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz who had based their strategies on the ideas of neoconservative ideologists such as Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, and Michael Ledeen. The latter, and so many other neocons, acted through four important think tanks: The Project for a New American Century, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Jewish Institute for National Security

Affairs. Their activism involved also writing articles in conservative and neoconservative magazines such as *The Weekly Standard*, *Commentary* and *Foreign Policy* in order to influence public opinion. The President was the strategic target of the neocons because they realized the crucial role that he played as foreign and defense policy decision maker. This influence was done through writing letters or through hiring Neocons as presidential advisors.⁽¹⁹⁾

As a matter of fact, the neocons had already published documents and written letters to the president in the late nineties before they could even reach the White House. Their writings revolved around one main theme which was US hegemony and military supremacy under the new unipolar system. Among the documents published, we can cite the following:

- 1- Defense Planning, Guidance, and U.S. Department of Defense in 1992.
- 2- The Statement of Principles, the Project for a New American Century in 1997.
- 3- Open Letter to President Clinton, urging him to a war against Iraq: The Project for a New American Century, January 26, 1998.
- 4- Open Letter to President Clinton, asking for US military help for the Iraqi opposition, February 1998.
- 5- A letter to Republican leaders in Congress to promote US interests in the Persian Gulf, Project for a New American Century, May 1998.
- 6- A Report of the so-called Rumsfeld Commission to investigate the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, July 1998.
- 7- Rebuilding America's Defense: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century, a report of the Project for a New American Century, September 2000.
- 8- A Report of the National Institute for Public Policy (a neoconservative think tank), Nuclear Posture Review, January 2001.
- 9- Open Letter to President Bush, the Project for a New American Century, September 2001.⁽²⁰⁾

Those were key documents that reflect the neocons' activism and determination to make a change before the coming of G.W. Bush to power and far more before the 9/11 attacks. So, the terrorist attacks were just "a

window of opportunity”⁽²¹⁾ for this interest group who succeeded to ally with the hardline realists in the White House in order to implement their foreign policy agenda.

After 9/11, all the conditions were favorable for neocons to pass to action for they had already prepared the ground for their intervention through the above mentioned publications. One of the key documents issued by the Project for a New American Century in 1997 was the Statement of Principles in which the neocons had criticized President Clinton’s (1993-2001) decision to cut spending for armament and had praised President Ronald Reagan for his policy of military expenditure for the sake of US military leadership. In this document, the neocons stated the following:

We seem to have forgotten the essential elements of the Reagan Administration’s success: 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. The history of the 20th 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 this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership. Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next.⁽²²⁾

In addition to writing articles and publishing documents and letters, the new generation of neoconservatives succeeded to get access to key positions in the foreign policy department, aiming at influencing presidential foreign policy and defense decisions.⁽²³⁾ Their influence on George W. Bush had started even before he was even elected president. Once in the White House, the newly elected president was surrounded by a number of neoconservative advisors such as Deputy Secretary of State R. Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defense S. Hadley, Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee R. Perle, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz; Under

Secretary of Defense (comptroller) D. Zakheim, Trade Representative R. Zoellik, Bush's Special Presidential Envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, Chief of Staff to the Vice President Lewis Libby and Under Secretary of State for Policy Douglas Feith. Despite the fact that the key decision makers such as the President (G.W. Bush), the Vice –President (Richard “Dick” Cheney), the Minister of Defense (Donald Rumsfeld), and National Security Advisor (Condoleeza Rice) were hard line realists, they allied with the Neocons, helped them carry out their foreign policy vision, and put their strategy into action.⁽²⁴⁾

As for the reaction of the neoconservatives to the 9/11 attacks, Anatol Lieven, explained that the neocons are ultra-nationalists who share an old belief in American exceptionalism and “Manifest Destiny” to rule the world. They therefore felt strongly defeated and disappointed after they had been attacked on their own soil. They had to react quickly and effectively in order to restore the image of the United States as the land of success, openness, wealth and generosity.⁽²⁵⁾ In fact, and according to Role Theory, national political elites have their own image or conceptions of their states' roles at the international level. This national role conception is the result of the interaction between history, memory and socialization. According to Krotz, “National role conceptions are domestically shared understandings regarding the proper role and purpose of one's own state as a social collectivity in the international arena. As internal reference systems, they affect national interests and foreign policies.”⁽²⁶⁾ So, according to this theory, the neoconservatives' vision of the US as a global leader is the result of years or perhaps centuries of socialization that led them to conceive their country as an exceptional state endowed with a “manifest destiny” to lead the world.

Neoconsequences, Robert Kagan and William Kristol for example, claim that, “America must not only be the World's policeman and sheriff, it must be its beacon and guide.”⁽²⁷⁾ This fact leads us back to 1845 when John L. O'Sullivan introduced the term “Manifest Destiny” to refer to US leading role and mission. Even though the context is different, the message is the same. Some historians do even trace back the roots of the notions of

American exceptionalism and manifest destiny to the 17th century when the Puritans landed at New England, which they considered as an “exceptional place, a place chosen by God.”⁽²⁸⁾ This conviction was later emphasized after the American Revolution which led to the exceptional American War of Independence because it was considered as the first of its kind. The opening of the Frontier and the beginning of the westward expansion was another occasion for reiterating the idea of the US missionary duty and destiny. The same claims were voiced again when Americans adopted the “Open Door Policy” towards China. America’s leading role in the world became clearer after WWII when it launched its economic plans to rescue Europe and finally when the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, making the United States the world’s super power. William J. Bennett, co-director of Empower America, a policy organization in Washington D.C., expressed his profound love of his nation and his belief in its great role in the world when he wrote:

Our nation is something to be proud of, something to celebrate....A careful and close reading of our history demonstrates that we have provided freedom to more people than any nation in the history of mankind; that we have provided a greater degree of equality to more people than any other nation in the history of mankind; we have created more prosperity and spread it more widely than any other nation in the history of mankind; that we have brought more peace and justice to the world than any other nation in the history of mankind; and that our open, tolerant, prosperous society is the marvel and envy – of the ages....Outside those borders, we have been a beacon of freedom and opportunity to people throughout the world since the day of our creation....I will never forget the scenes that occurred in November, 2001, when the American and British forces liberated Kabul. Burqas were cast off; beards were shaved; and television sets were dug out of the ground. An entire city celebrated the end of strict Islamic rule. This event suggested that cultures and values are not so different after all.

Anyone who saw the pictures of people suddenly free to speak, dress, learn, work and worship as they fit would be hard-pressed to deny a universal human longing for freedom.⁽²⁹⁾

This same idea and conviction about the US leading role and mission in the world was reiterated by the American president George W. Bush when he declared: “Like generations before us, we have a calling from behind the stars to stand for freedom. This is the everlasting dream of America, and tonight, in this place, that dream is renewed. Now we go forward with-grateful for our freedom, faithful to our cause, and confident in the future of the greatest nation on earth. God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.”⁽³⁰⁾

In sum, the notion of American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny evolved through time and became part of the national consciousness of a great number of Americans. This fact has given a special character to American patriotism which Irving Kristol has defined as a feeling that “arises out of hope for the nation’s future, distinctive greatness.” This feeling is deeply rooted in an attachment to the principles upon which the nation was created and was so skillfully associated with US foreign policy objectives, as explained Irving Kristol, “The goals of American foreign policy must go beyond a narrow, too literal definition of ‘national security.’ It is the national interest of a world power, as this is defined by a sense of national destiny.”⁽³¹⁾ So, for the neocons, Americans are destined not only to protect their country, but also to make the world safe for liberty, justice and democracy.

From what preceded, it can be concluded that the US tough foreign policy agenda introduced after the terrorist attacks aimed at restoring US image in the world through emphasizing its role as a political and military leader. This agenda also highlights the group’s concern with the United States national interest and security. However, how can the neoconservative efforts to introduce that same agenda prior to 9/11 be explained?

One possible explanation is that the neocons as an interest group were seeking some interests through the foreign policy agenda they had established before 9/11 after they had been violently shaken by the end of the

Cold War. Then came the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre to provide them with a golden opportunity to reappear on the political scene. Yet, in order to convince the American government and public opinion of the necessity of using military force and pre-emptive war to face the enemy and to avoid eventual attacks in the future, they had to disguise their real objectives behind such an agenda under the mask of US national interest and security. The real neocons' interest and objective, however, was to increase the government's expenditures on military industry and armament for which they have always been lobbying. C. Wright Mills confirmed this claim through his Elite Power Theory in which he asserted that "...the constellation of interests comprising the military-industrial complex have helped determine, shape and refine the definition of 'national interest' in order to maximize profits and to protect access to resources."⁽³²⁾ The neocons were no exception for they had succeeded to implement their military agenda through their involvement in the most powerful war lobby that has ever existed since the beginning of the 21st century. That lobby was represented by the Military Industrial Complex (MIC) which is defined as an informal alliance between a country's military establishment and those industries producing arms or other military materials, regarded as a powerful vested interest (*MIC: English Oxford Living Dictionaries*). The military corporations that influenced policy through Neocons' lobbying were Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon Corp, Boeing Co, and General Dynamics. Other corporations, such as, Exxon, Ford Motor Company, Texaco and Gulf Oil, Halliburton, Chevron Oil Corporation, and Kellogg Brown and root (Kbr) were mainly concerned with the oil industry.⁽³³⁾ So, using the phrase "national interest" to refer to the neocons' objectives is totally erroneous and should be rather replaced by "vested interest" and sometimes even "self-interest." Even the identification of the enemy or threat becomes complex because neoconservatives do associate such notions with their own business interests and profits regardless of the real interests and needs of the nation.⁽³⁴⁾

4. Findings

The Discussion of the strategies and objectives of post-9/11 neoconservatives and the review of the historical background of this political entity led to the following findings:

- 1- Except for the first generation of neocons who showed a noncommunist, socialist, and liberal tendency, the other generations were rightists who believed in internationalism and US leading role in the world.
- 2- Both post-World War II and post-September 11 neocons shared the same objectives about US military supremacy and leading role in the world.
- 3- Both generations shared the same strategies such as:
 - Producing articles and essays and research bulletins and famous think tanks on highly important current issues;
 - Forging alliances with already existing influential groups and movements;
 - Hiring their members in key governmental positions;
 - Reacting appropriately and effectively each time a window of opportunity opens as what happened during the Cold War and after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.
- 4- Since it is an interest group, the leading members are necessarily seeking their own interests and hiding behind such slogans as “national security” and the “promotion of democracy and human rights.”
- 5- Neoconservatives have never completely disappeared from the American political scene. They are sometimes powerful, and at other times less powerful, but they are always around waiting for the right opportunity to intervene. This fact suggests that there was not really a renewed interest in foreign policy after 9/11 since the interest has never ceased to exist. In other words, the neocons do display their interest in foreign policy at times and hide it at others.

5. CONCLUSION

Importantly then, and in order to sum up the answers to the research questions, it is relevant to acknowledge the influence of neocons on US

foreign policy before and after 9/11. This movement, which had been started by a number of liberal intellectuals in the 1930's, transformed into a rather conservative pressure group that flourished during the Cold War years. The unexpected end of the Cold War and its repercussions on the world, however, shocked this group that relied in its existence on the support of a very important war lobby known as the Military Industrial Complex. In other words, the end of the Cold War and the establishment of peace between the two blocs meant that the US government would reduce or cut expenditures on armament, and it did not suit the interests of the war-mongering neocons who were highly backed by the military and industrial corporations. Consequently, the neocons withdrew temporarily from the political scene but never disappeared completely. During this period of semi-exile, they kept activating by issuing reports through think tanks, publishing articles for magazines and newspapers, and also addressing the President and other high governmental officers through letters. So, after 9/11, the general atmosphere was suitable for the neocons to intervene and suggest their agenda as the only alternative to respond to those attacks. What further helped the neocons to reach their objectives was the hiring of neoconservatives within the US government as presidential advisors and the forging of a strong alliance with the hard line national conservatives who were already in the White House such as President G.W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Minister of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. It is important to highlight the fact that the latter are themselves involved in the MIC.

In a word, and from all that preceded, it can be concluded that after 9/11, US foreign policy was designed by the neoconservatives, executed by the presidency, and financed by the Military Industrial Complex (MIC). This fact leads in turn to the conclusion that strong non-governmental actors or interest groups, that are supposed to influence policy through balancing the powers of governmental actors, turn sometimes into policy decisions-makers in the United States. One intriguing conclusion imposes itself at this level, a conclusion that leads to the questioning of the relevance of pluralism and

diversity, which are considered key building blocks of US democracy. In other words, diversity and pluralism, which are supposed to promote democracy and balance the power of the government, seem to have transformed into means of promoting big government and safeguarding the interests of a privileged powerful and influential category in the society.

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