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NEOCONSERVATISM AND THE FUTURE OF
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good afternoon, everybody. It's a great pleasure to welcome you here. I know that the very fact that you're here means that you don't need to hear too much of an introduction of our panel. You all know E.J. and Frank and Bill -- and a terrific panel indeed -- and I'm going to say a word or two in a couple of minutes about Justin, who has turned in his homework in a fashion that allows us to have this discussion.

What I did want to do at the outset is to offer just a couple of words in a fairly personal vein about the topic and the program and the author. But I think I can start with a proposition that is not controversial. I'd be pleased if I could rise to the challenge of saying something that might elicit some disagreement in the course of these remarks, but the working proposition of the book and of the careers of the four colleagues you see up here is also very much at the core of Brookings' identity and mission. And that is that good policy and good governance depend very importantly on sound ideas. That means that politics, which is a necessary part of reaching good policies -- and I mean both domestic and international politics -- should have sound intellectual underpinnings.

Now with regard to U.S. foreign policy, which is an important part of the discussion this afternoon, too often the debate and discussion of foreign policy tend to treat diplomacy and national security policy as though

they were entirely determined by electoral forces, by lobbies, by special interests, by economic considerations, and what you might call pure geopolitical considerations and not enough attention is given to the role of ideas and political philosophy. I think we're going to go a little bit in the direction of correcting that over the course of the discussion this afternoon.

One set of ideas that has, of course, gotten a lot of attention is loosely under the rubric of neoconservatism. And that, of course, is in the title of Justin's book and it's going to be part of what the panel is going to be talking about.

Here I would like to make just a couple of personal remarks. I don't know about E.J. and Bill and Frank and whether they would share any version of what I'm about to say, but I did check it with Justin first and I've also read his book and had a pretty good idea that he has in his own head a version of this thought. And that is that there is something that should make us all a little bit uneasy about the very term "neoconservatism." And I say that in part because I think one of the afflictions of our politics and our political discourse in this country is what I would call "labelitis." We are much too quick to slap labels on ourselves and, more problematically, slap labels on each other. And I think "neoconservatism" -- in quotation marks -- is a specific case study in the need for a bit more sophistication and I will also say intellectual openness to the issues that are involved.

I have almost a kneejerk problem with many words that end in the suffix "ism" because it suggests a degree of uniformity, even dogmatism, and suggests an ideological quality in a pejorative sense of that word that is not justified by so much of the work that is done by people who either self-identify or are identified as neoconservatives. I don't think the phrase does justice to the complexity of the ideas -- plural -- and often the ideas that contend with each other that are bundled under the term, nor does it do justice to the diversity among the individuals who willingly or not have the lapel pin of neoconservatives. In fact, as Bill and I were chatting very briefly outside, the subject of climate change came up and Bill said he's all for it. Why? Because he's for change. So, we may or may not return to that particular topic in the course of the discussion this afternoon.

There's another problem, which bothers me actually more about the word "neoconservative," and that is that it is, of course, a variation or a cognate of the word "conservative" itself. And my difficulty with that word is that it is so often used as a kind of antonym or antipode of the word "liberal." And I think that that either/or typology -- you're either a conservative or you're a liberal -- is part of the problem in our overall debate. I think it's contributed to the toxic partisanship that has gotten so far out of control in this nation and it's also contributed to the breakdown in civility of political discourse as well as in the intellectual integrity of the political

discourse. There's this implication that you're either one or the other.

Yet I would say it's not just possible, but it's almost a no-brainer -- if I can put it that way -- to believe in conserving the best of the past and the best of the present, therefore, being a conservative while at the same time believing in the concept of liberty, which, of course, is at the root of the word and the concept of being liberal. And I think the headlines of the last week -- particularly headlines with the dateline of London -- have underscored the point that I'm making where you have a conservative party teaming up with liberal Democrats to try to govern the U.K. out of its current difficulties.

The last thing I would say in a personal vein and then what I'm going to say a word about Justin is very personal indeed. When I came into the Department of State in 1993 and was charged with having to think about and help develop policies on a complicated part of the world, one of the first things that I did was to try to enlist as a colleague somebody named Eric Edelman. I think he may be known to some of you. And I did that for a number of reasons, including his expertise on military and diplomatic matters, but also because he was deeply steeped in the traditions and the school of thought that is often characterized as neoconservative. He would literally send me home on Friday nights with homework assignments that involved reading a lot more Strauss than I ever intended to read, and I might

add that there was a certain amount of Kristol and Fukuyama in my homework assignments in those days as well.

Anyway, I hope I've made and not over-made the point. Much more interesting than my views are those of the panelists and you know them well, but let me say a word or two about Justin. He is, in a way, kind of the quintessential Brookings scholar. He's been here, at least associated with Brookings, longer than I have and he's a lot younger. He came here as a visiting fellow in 2001. In the great Brookings tradition, he has passed both ways through the revolving door, which is to say he's gone into public service -- in his case in his native country, France, where he served on the Policy Planning Staff; the most appropriate parts of the Quai d'Orsay to have worked given his interest -- and he has come back to Brookings working as a specialist on Europe in general, of course, and in particular on the issue of Islam in Europe.

He has an earlier book that was published by the Brookings Institution Press that I very much recommend on the subject of Islam in Europe, and that was done under the auspices of our Center on the United States in Europe. He has another specialty, which is the intellectual history of U.S. foreign policy, and that, too, has now borne fruit.

Justin has been working on this project for a very long time. The time was well spent. The book is well worth waiting for and it's a great

credit to him, I think, that Bill and Frank would join us. They have been terrific over the years in many respects with regard to this institution. They have participated in our events. They have elevated and broadened the intellectual scope of our discussions in this auditorium and in seminar rooms elsewhere in the building. So I would welcome them back to Brookings and congratulate Justin on his first-rate piece of work and turn it over him to get us started.

So, thanks. Over to you.

MR. VAISSE: Well, thanks very much, Strobe, for your kind words and thanks again to the panelists for being here today. My wife told me not to summarize what's in the book, because if I did, you wouldn't buy it. So instead I thought I would start by elaborating on Strobe's points.

First, as Strobe related, the book is premised on a conviction: in domestic and foreign policy, ideas have consequences. It doesn't mean that material forces are secondary, but ideas, concepts, and representations that serve to interpret the world play an essential role in the policy process. This is especially true for American foreign policy, where elite representations matter more arguably than in domestic policy. Neoconservatism is a case in point. It is a quintessential elite movement, basically limited to a few dozen active people in Washington, D.C., and New York City. There are no prominent neoconservatives in Des Moines or in

Memphis. There are no politicians who run on a neoconservative platform.

And yet the impact of neoconservatism has been sizable.

This is not to say that a group of intellectuals can somehow control American diplomacy. The intervention in Iraq, for example, was decided for a variety of reasons, foremost of which was the transformation of threat perception by the American government after 9-11. But in that mix of reasons, a certain set of ideas and representations, including neoconservative ones, played a distinct role in making the intervention possible and desirable.

Let me say here that the book is not a polemic. It is not neoconservative. It is not anti-neoconservative either, even if I point out what seem to me to be the shortcomings of the neoconservative vision in the most recent years. My goal in the book was to offer a political and intellectual history of neoconservatism, not a history of pure ideas, but the concrete story of men and women, think tanks, magazines, citizens' committees and foundations which supported them, of political networks who coalesced around certain ideas and promoted them in the political sphere, and their interaction with the larger American history.

Which leads me to the second point that Strobe made about the label -- about the neoconservative label. It's true that no two neoconservatives think the same about all issues and many object to even

being called neoconservatives in the first place. Labels are great simplifiers. But this would also be true -- as you pointed out, Strobe -- for "conservatives" or "liberals" or "libertarians" and other groups. What makes neoconservatism even more tricky is that its very substance, its definition has been so profoundly transformed since it was born in the 1960s. Since then, neoconservatism has shifted from domestic issues to foreign policy, from the left to the right, and from New York intellectuals to Washington-based political operatives.

To make sense of this complex history, I suggest in the book to look at neoconservatism not as one continuing school of thought, but rather as a succession of three very different families over time: the original neoconservatives, the Scoop Jackson Democrats, and then the latter day neocons. Let me start with the first family.

Neoconservatism was really a child of the 1960s. It is a result of the split in liberalism that occurred when some liberals reacted against what they saw as the leftward turn of other liberals. You have to remember that liberalism -- between the New Deal and the 1960s -- was not really synonymous with the left as it is now, nor with the ambition of far-reaching social change. In the 1950s, for example, it was pretty mainstream. It was a consensus doctrine that even some Republicans could identify with, certainly nothing radical.

But in the 1960s, some developments shattered the liberal consensus. Social movements, like student protests especially against the Vietnam War, counterculture, black nationalism, radical feminism, and environmentalism on the one hand, and government overreach through LBJ's war in poverty programs. Government intervention was no longer just about civil rights, but about racial quotas and bussing. It was not just about social programs based on insurance and oriented towards the middle class, but about social engineering to sort of bring about equality.

So faced with these developments, a group of liberals dissented from that change in the content in the very definition of liberalism by pointing out the dangers that the egalitarian dreams of the new left and the counterculture were creating for stability, meritocracy, and democracy. They coalesced around *The Public Interest*, a magazine created by Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell in 1965 with intellectuals like Nathan Glazer, Seymour Martin Lipset, James Q. Wilson, or Pat Moynihan, and then a few years later, around *Commentary* magazine, whose editor was Norman Podhoretz. They were still liberals. They were quite different, quite distinct from the conservatives, the true conservatives, of *National Review*, say. They were not against all government intervention, but they pointed the limits of what that intervention could achieve. Still, their opponents on the left rejected them, rejected these intellectuals and tagged them with the label -- with the

epithet, really -- “neoconservatives” so as to banish them from the confines of liberalism.

Then we get to a second distinct family of neoconservatives: the Scoop Jackson Democrats. This reaction to the new left in the realm of ideas was transposed into politics as the new left started making inroads into the Democratic Party where Senator George McGovern won the nomination to be the Democratic candidate against Richard Nixon in 1972. McGovern was seen by many traditional Democrats as far too much to the left both in domestic policy -- he supported massive social programs and affirmative action through quotas -- and in foreign policy, where he advocated a hasty retreat from Vietnam, deep cuts in the defense budget and a sort of neo-isolationist grand strategy.

The reaction against that evolution of the Democratic Party happened in different places: around *Commentary* magazine, which I already mentioned; around Senator Scoop Jackson's office -- he was a Democrat from Washington who gave his name to this group, and his main aide was Richard Perle; and around a group called the Coalition for Democratic Majority, which I document in the book. Democratic operatives and intellectuals like Jeane Kirkpatrick, Eugene Rostow, Ben Wattenberg, Joshua Muravchik, Elliott Abrams, and others tried to steer the Democratic Party back to the center throughout the 1970s. They wanted to get back to

tradition of Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy progressive policies at home, muscular anticommunism abroad, including the defense of human rights and fellow democracies including Israel, and the reinforcement of American military power which they saw as drifting dangerously vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. This is why they found themselves battling two enemies actually: not only the left wing of the Democrats, but also Nixon and Kissinger's realists policy of détente, which included deemphasizing the ideological aspects of the Cold War and engaging Moscow, thereby legitimizing the Soviet regime rather than trying to change it.

So why are these Democrats, these Scoop Jackson Democrats, also called neoconservatives? Well, simply because they were porous borders with the first family, the original neoconservatives. Some of them belonged to both groups and they were also institutions shared by both families, like the American Enterprise Institute or *Commentary* magazine. And more importantly, they had -- they shared the same enemy, which was the new left.

To make a long story short, the Scoop Jackson Democrats failed to recapture the soul of the Democratic Party, which, in their view, remained way too dovish, especially under Jimmy Carter. And so they went to work for the Reagan Administration and inspired large parts of his foreign policy, including the Reagan doctrine of support for Freedom Fighters,

whether in Afghanistan, in Central America, or elsewhere; the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy; the evil empire rhetoric; and, of course, the military buildup. But, ultimately, in the second part of the 1980s, Reagan distanced himself from this line, especially during his last few years; not, I would note, unlike the way George W. Bush did to some extent with the neocons after 2005, 20 years afterwards.

That leads me to the third and current family. In the mid-1990s, at the very moment where neoconservatism was being declared dead, especially because the Cold War had been won, a third family of neoconservatives appeared: the latter day neocons, who coalesced around *The Weekly Standard*, launched by Bill in 1995, but also the American Enterprise Institute and the Project for the New American Century between 1997 and 2006; and figures like Bill, like Bob Kagan, Gary Schmitt, Max Boot, Doug Feith and others. So this third family, the neocons, they are the ideological heirs of the Scoop Jackson Democrats in a sense, but with some pointed differences.

First, the newcomers, the younger neocons, were never really Democrats nor liberals, let alone radicals. And they are firmly located within the Republican family. It means, among other things, that they have to somehow reconcile their foreign policy stance with the electoral interests of the Republican Party, which can, of course, create tensions.

And second, America's relative power in the world has considerably increased since the days of Scoop Jackson and Ronald Reagan. The Soviet enemy is gone and America's military force and economic strength are greater than ever. This, of course, has been a bit less true in the most recent years. Whereas the Scoop Jackson Democrats urge Americans not to retreat and to defend democracy and human rights, the neocons are in a position to exhort them to advance and act boldly; in other words, to use American power to shape a world safer for all.

So what does neoconservatism mean today and what do neoconservatives believe in and what are we talking about exactly when we use that label "neoconservative?" Well, today neoconservatism is a school of thought really restricted to American foreign policy, I would argue, that stands in contrast to isolationists, liberals, or realists, and combines five principles.

The first one is internationalism: the belief that America should be active in the world and shape international order, otherwise this order will be shaped by others in ways that reflect neither America's interests nor its values.

The second principle is primacy: the idea that American hegemony is good for America and is good for the world and should be preserved.

The third one is unilateralism: the skepticism that international institutions, especially when they can play any useful role in safeguarding peace and the belief that America, as the real purveyor of stability, should not be tied down by treaties and institutions which include so many free riders and dictatorships.

Militarism would be the fourth tenet or the fourth principle: the idea the military force remains critical in the current world order, that the world is really Hobbesian, and the belief that America should be willing to shoulder its global responsibilities by maintaining a high level of defense spending and willingness to use force when necessary.

And last but not least, the fifth principle or fifth tenet is democracy: the idea that defending and promoting democracy is not only the right thing to do in principle, but that in the long term, it's the smart thing to do as democracies tend to be more friendly vis-à-vis the U.S., less belligerent to the neighbors, and not to generate proliferation or terrorism or other international ills.

So, this is the basic presentation. Before I move to my fellow panelists, I thought it would be worth just pointing out the fortunate position in which I find myself today as both the author of the book and the actual moderator for this discussion, which will allow me to block any unfavorable comment about the book.

(laughter)

So with this said, I turn the mic over to E.J. for his comments.

MR. DIONNE: I hope that you don't exercise that power to use unorthodox interrogation techniques against us. This being -- I am really honored to be here. I love Justin and his -- it's a fantastic book. Anyone at a think tank has to love the idea of a book arguing that ideas really matter, that ideas have consequences. Disagreeing with that and being at a think tank is like owning a McDonald's or Five Guys franchise and being a vegetarian. So I want to thank you for that.

And I also want to thank neoconservatives in general. I think that neoconservatives have done more for liberalism than anything since Herbert Hoover's 1932 campaign. And so we are very grateful, Bill. You're a good man.

(laughter)

You know, I am a liberal myself or maybe I'm a neo-paleo-retro-proto-eco-metro liberal or something like that. You may recall back in the '60s and early '70s, many neocons -- this may have been one of Bill's father's lines -- it was said that a conservative is a liberal who has been mugged or alternatively a liberal who has been mugged by reality. I think in 2010, a liberal is a former moderate who has been mugged by the reality of neoconservative policies.

(laughter)

But I want to say it's a tribute to Justin that he could draw this very broad group here. He really has two of the best possible respondents here, plus me. You have Bill Kristol. His dad was the godfather of neoconservatism. I figure Bill is either the ringmaster or the precinct captain of what remains of neoconservatism. And I have said many times that Bill is the warmest, kindest, most thoughtful person I know who also wants the United States to be at war simultaneously with as many countries as possible. (laughter) And so I always love being with Bill.

And Frank Fukuyama is a brilliant man. He is, some would say, a fallen away neoconservative. Others would say he has risen above neoconservatism. If -- some of you may remember that book by an ex-Communist called *The God That Failed*. If there is ever such a book on neoconservatism, the most interesting essay would be from Frank. And we could -- actually if just Bill and Frank did it we could have a great Hegel versus Strauss discussion here today, but that might not help Justin sell many books, which we wouldn't want.

And, by the way, Justin underplays, I think, the role of Leo Strauss in his book, which proves that he is part of the Straussian conspiracy. Straussians, as you know, always tell you how smart they are and how little political power they actually have.

This is a great book and it struck me coming up here that I actually have three friends who have written three of the best books on neoconservatism: one was Peter Steinfels, whom I think really wrote the first serious book on neoconservatism back in 1979; Gary Dorrien wrote another great book; and now Justin. And it's intriguing that Justin is French and Peter Steinfels was a student of French. He got his Ph.D. in French history. And it may be that either our French comrades or someone steeped in France, the French are more likely to see the importance of ideological movements than others. But I say in the blurb, my blurb for the book, that, you know, if Tocqueville helped us understand Jacksonian America, then Vaisse helps us understand our current moment.

And so I could spend all my time praising Justin and his book, but I just assume you will read it and buy it. I thought it would be more interesting -- except for Justin himself, for whom eight minutes of praise would be just fine -- to note either where I would extend his analysis or where I have a few disagreements with him. So I want to start with the first point.

Justin has a paper, a very interesting paper, there called "Why Neoconservatism Still Matters." I'd like to argue that neoconservatism no longer exists, at least as neoconservatism was originally conceived. And in a way I am simply building on Justin's analysis in making this point. He has

a wonderful chart at the end of his book, as a supplement to his book, where he describes the first and second and third ages of neoconservatism. It's got everything from heroes to adversaries, key words, campaigns. It's a really -- actually a superb chart. That alone is worth the price of this book. But, if I understand neoconservatism at all, it is -- was an intellectual moment that began in around 1965 really with the foundation of *The Public Interest* magazine. And I think what made neoconservatism distinctive was its skepticism about ideology in general. It was a common -- it combined in a very interesting way liberal sympathies with skeptical conservative sensibilities. And I think that was the spirit of *The Public Interest* magazine, certainly a magazine that I admired very much.

The reason I would argue that neoconservatism, at least as anyone understood it when it began, no longer exists is because I think starting around somewhere in the late 1980s, neoconservatism really split into two movements. I think one part of neoconservatism stayed with or drifted back toward the Democratic Party, and that many of the people who had been called neoconservatives as dissenting liberals remained liberals. The names that come to mind: Daniel Bell; Daniel Patrick Moynihan; Nat Glazer, who can't easily be classified; Mark Lilla, who also can't easily be classified to some degree; Marty Lipset. The other wing of the movement became straight out conservatives. I think, in fact, the transition from Irving

Kristol to Bill Kristol is an interesting case in point, where except for Bill's brief time as a precinct -- a volunteer for Scoop Jackson, you know, abandoned the Democratic Party fairly quickly, abandoned liberalism and moved into straight out conservatism.

I do not mean this in any hostile way. I just think it's a description of reality. Bill did work in the Bush -- the first Bush Administration for Dan Quayle and his sympathies were clearly conservative. He will tell you the story of how he voted in 1984, or at least I hope you do. And I think that one of the -- because we view neoconservatism now so much through the prism of the Iraq War and foreign policy concerns, we forget that this split, as I see it, I think began not around foreign policy issues, but around domestic issues.

And I think the rise of supply-side economics is very important. And Justin does talk about this in the book, that some neocons, particularly Irving Kristol, were very taken by supply-side economics. They saw it as the answer to liberalism's skill at giving benefits to people. Irving Kristol invented the great theory of the two Santa Clauses and that the liberals had the Santa Claus that gave people things through government and so conservatives could be a Santa Claus who gave people things through tax cuts. And Jude Wanniski, the founder or one of the founders of supply-side economics, found his -- one of his most important homes in *The Public*

Interest magazine. And so you had a whole group of other people who were neoconservatives who were basically absorbed in the larger conservative movement. And it's hard now -- I think they are a distinct tendency perhaps, but they are really simply part of the larger conservative movement.

I think -- now my one bit of evidence on behalf of this thesis is that sadly several years ago, *The Public Interest* magazine died and it has been replaced by a new magazine, which is a very interesting magazine called *National Affairs*. But I think it is unquestionable -- the new magazine is unquestionably a conservative magazine in a way that the old *Public Interest* on the whole was not.

I think a second big transition is -- in this transition I'm talking about, is that the law of unintended consequences, which to me was one of the great lessons of neoconservatism, is now no longer central to the neoconservative idea. Indeed, I was arguing with Bill about the Iraq War before the war started, and I said one thing I learned from you neoconservatives is the law of unintended consequences. And my greatest fear about this war is that it will have more unintended than intended consequences.

Just a couple of famous quotations on this. Dan Bell, one of the earlier -- earliest editors of *The Public Interest*, wrote before -- years before the magazine was founded: For the radical intelligence the old

ideologies have lost their truth and their power to persuade. Few serious minds believe any longer that once they are set down, blueprints and social engineering can bring about a new utopia of social harmony.

That was not a critique of the Iraq policy. Or Jay Forrester's idea that, "In complicated situations, efforts to improve things often tend to make them worse, sometimes much worse. On occasion calamitous."

I think the new neoconservatism, or what's followed neoconservatism, does not on the whole follow those warnings. Indeed, I think it's skeptical of some of those warnings. It is a movement that sees much more possibility out of government action, particularly if it's engaged in in other countries.

Two other points I want to make -- the -- Justin argues correctly that one can take a movement like neoconservatism and use it as a prism to view many parts of our history, and this book does a wonderful job of that in so many places. And he has a very interesting -- some very interesting and useful accounts of all the fights inside the Democratic Party. And at the end of the book, he makes a wonderful point, I think, where he says that in some ways it's not clear whether you should view neoconservatism as more part of the history of liberalism or more part of the history of conservatism. But I do think it's a mistake to view too much of our history through the neoconservative prism.

For example, I think there's a tendency to assert that Cold War liberals -- anti-Communist liberals -- tended to become neoconservatives. In fact, Cold War liberals -- many Cold War liberals, remain liberals. Many Cold War liberals actually opposed the Vietnam War, two of the most prominent being Reinhold Niebuhr and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. And Eugene McCarthy, the great anti-war -- one of the two great anti-war candidates in 1968 was clearly no leftist. Many who opposed George McGovern in 1972 did not become neoconservative. They remained liberals and Democrats, most notably, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, Ed Muskie. Indeed, many who supported McGovern were not McGovernites. McGovern himself, by the way, says he was not a McGovernite as it came to be described. You know the great McGovern line. He said, "I wanted to run for President in the worst way, and I did." And one notable McGovernite, who was not a McGovernite, was Bill Clinton, the founder of one of the key figures in the Democratic Leadership Council.

And so I would -- I think that it's very -- it's hard now to distinguish between neoconservatives and any other kind of conservatives. *The Weekly Standard*, Bill's magazine, is important not because it provides conservatism with a distinctly neo voice, but because it finds itself right in the middle of the Republican, conservative, FOX News consensus. Its positions now overlap substantially with those of the *National Review*, something that

could not be said so easily of the old *Public Interest*. And I think that the current neoconservatism -- and Justin in focusing so much on foreign policy in the book I think underscores this -- in particular does not have a distinctive domestic policy. David Brooks and Bill took a stab at it with "National Greatness Conservatism", but there -- I think over time, there really was not any particular domestic policy attached to National Greatness Conservatism. But David Brooks keeps trying and I think David Brooks may be the last existing real neoconservative.

Having said that, individuals who carry the label will remain important voices. Neoconservatism is fascinating, but I believe a bygone intellectual movement.

And I just want to close by quoting the founding statement of *The Public Interest* magazine -- not the whole thing, you'll be happy to know -- because I think it says something very important that we can all still bear in mind. "For it is the nature of ideology," its editors wrote, "to preconceive reality and that is -- and that exactly such preconceptions are the worst hindrances to knowing what one is talking about."

I think that's a great warning. I think those of us who are neo-proto-whatever kind of liberals should take it to heart. I think current day neoconservatives would do very well to go back to that original essay and read it again about five or six times.

Thank you very, very much.

MR. FUKUYAMA: Well, thank you very much for inviting me on this panel, this very distinguished panel. And I really like Justin -- I'm going to say Justin instead of Justin; you'll bear with me.

MR. DIONNE: I'm a French Canadian, so I love saying Justin.

MR. FUKUYAMA: Yeah, but we're in America now, so. But he really has written an extraordinarily good history. This is a temptation I think that both in our blurbs, both E.J. and I fell for is to compare him to previous French observers of the United States. I would not say Tocqueville because it's very hard to meet that standard. I would also not say Bernard-Henri Lévy because that's too low a standard. But, in fact, there has been a tradition of, you know, quite good French writing on contemporary American politics. The book I'd point to is the one by Alain Frachon and Daniel Vernet that was actually published at the time of the Iraq War.

Justin's book is much more comprehensive. I mean, he's a serious historian. The other two are basically journalists. And so he's filled in a lot of the gaps and documented in a much more systematic way, the history of this movement. And there's a number of reasons why I like it a lot. As Justin said himself, he's made very clear that there is no party line in this movement and I think he's really paid attention to the complexity of the ideas that have underlined it.

One of the early lines of defense of many neoconservatives when they were attacked was to claim that there was no such thing as neoconservatism, and by that I simply think it meant that there were really quite a lot of different ideas feeding this movement. And I think Justin's account of the three different ages is roughly right and the kind of generational changes that were involved in moving from one to the other. And it makes, I think, very clear that this interpretation that neoconservatism was something like a, you know, this alien spore that came from Mars and settled on the fertile plains of the United States and then took over the minds of these wholesome Americans, it's just not right, because, in fact, most of the tenets of neoconservatism are actually very old ones in the American tradition and in American foreign policy. I just think that the way that they were put together, particularly in the 2000s, was in a way quite unique, but every single one of them had deep roots.

Justin mentioned these five pillars: internationalism, primacy, militarism, democracy, unilateralism. I think that's -- you know, I think you could actually collapse the primacy and militarism into a single pillar. But I think if you look further back at the history of the movement, there's another important pillar that was there right from the beginning and was the essence of *The Public Interest* magazine, which is what E.J. had just alluded to, which was a great skepticism about the prospects for a very ambitious social

engineering. In addition to the examples that he gave, I'll just cite two of the classic books that came out of that.

One was James Q. Wilson's "Thinking About Crime" in which he explicitly says -- you know, this was in the midst of the great crime wave that began in the mid-1960s. And when he wrote that book finally in the 1980s, he said, look, anybody that thinks that you can deal with crime by getting at root causes, like poverty and racism, doesn't understand the limits of public policy. What you can do is ameliorate some of the symptoms and manage the problem, but you cannot deal with root causes. One of his ways of managing it was the famous "Broken Windows" article that he published with George Kelling in the Atlantic that actually -- it's an article that I've greatly admired as an academic. I wish, you know, I could write something that would have a comparable good effect on the lives of other people because that's really what, in a sense, you know, laid the basis for the kinds of policing policies that were then carried out after the late 1980s in New York and really lead to the renaissance of that city.

The other great example, of course, was Charles Murray and the whole argument about falling behind -- about AFDC and the impact of that particular social program on out-of-wedlock childbearing, which ultimately lead to the repeal of that law in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which ended the modern

American welfare system that Bill Clinton signed and was passed by a Republican Congress. And both of these, in a sense, you know, these really major developments that came out of that whole school of *The Public Interest* were very much in line with this idea that in social policy we frequently get results very different from the ones that we hope for.

And so, I think that as we began the 2000s, there are actually two very contradictory pillars of thought in the neoconservative movement: the one was that, you know, a very cautionary one about the use of power, but the other one was one that actually approved and legitimated, and to some degree celebrated, the positive moral uses of American power. And there wasn't really any forum because the two -- these two pillars, in a sense, were discussed by completely different groups of people: one doing domestic policy and the other doing foreign policy. There never was an effort or an opportunity, I think, to try to reconcile what were actually quite contradictory points of view of the opportunities for human agency to manipulate social outcomes. And I think what happened in the 2000s is that the power principle won out over the cautionary principle and that's what led to the result that we had in advocacy of the Iraq War.

Another point that I liked, admired about Justin's book is he doesn't -- he was very polite today, but he also, I think, doesn't let neocons off the hook. And in discussing the movement in the way it evolved in the

2000s, I think as you can infer from his presentation, there was a shift from a more open-ended intellectual pursuit of ideas towards a more, in a sense, close-minded advocacy of policies where the ends were not so up for grabs. And he accuses that generation of certain real failings, including -- and this is not my -- these are not my words, these are his -- intellectual laziness; failure to distinguish, for example, between different Islamist and Middle Eastern groups that were giving us trouble; resort to conspiracy theories linking Al-Qaeda and Iraq; failure to acknowledge the fact that the world had changed and there were now non-state actors that were competing with states as sources of power; failure to understand the complexity of social transformations in distant countries.

And his other criticism is one of arrogance of belief in our ability here in Washington to understand very complex issues that are going on in other parts of the world and then the failure to invest in the kind of knowledge that would make those kinds of decisions or would temper some of the predictions and beliefs that flowed out of those convictions. I think this is all fair and needs to be taken to heart.

Now, actually E.J. has kind of stolen a little bit of my thunder on what I was going to say about the future of neoconservatism. Because I would agree with him completely that as far as I can see, you know, when neoconservatism first appeared it was a genuinely new position because it

really was universalistic and took aspects of the left-wing agenda -- that is to say universal human rights and a progressive view of the possibility of social change -- but coupled it with, you know, these cautionary kinds of conservative principles, and that was a mix that really had not existed previously. But I think that in the current incarnation, it's either that there's, you know, neoconservatism has just evolved into conservatism, as E.J. said, or else that some of those neoconservative ideas have simply become mainstream Republican ideas and it's much harder to see the difference.

Bob Kagan tried to do this a couple of years ago in his book *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*. I don't know where he got that title (*laughter*), but, you know, in which I think he was trying to outline in a kind of post-hegemonic world where you had a return of big powers like Russia and China, you know, what a distinctively neoconservative foreign policy would look like. I actually don't think it's terribly successful because I think he's actually trying to muscle a, you know, a very different kind of world back into this old, familiar bipolar, Cold War framework where you've got democracies on one hand and authoritarian states on the other. And I just don't think it works because, you know, countries like Brazil and South Africa may be democracies, but they just don't have a -- or India for that matter -- really do not have a natural community of interest with the United States and, therefore, I think you're really dealing with a very different kind of world.

I think that there's actually a big missed opportunity with regard to a future neoconservatism. One of the things that I've always thought was a weakness in the movement as a whole was its failure to pay enough attention to economics and to come up with a coherent view. And in a sense there was, you know, the foundations of this. So Bill's father wrote a book called *Two Cheers for Capitalism*. Daniel Bell, a long time ago, wrote a book called *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, and it was clear from a lot of this early writing that many neoconservatives simply did not buy into, you know, Friedrich Hayek and libertarian economics and then the kind of neoclassical paradigm that was dominant on, you know, on the American right. But for one reason or another, you know, there was a merger and an acceptance basically of the Reagan economic agenda of low taxes and supply side and so on and so forth.

And it does seem to me, especially after the financial crisis that we've just gone through, that there's actually a big opportunity for rethinking some of those from a neo -- you know, some of the -- you know, what's happened both to United States economy and to the global economy from a point of view that doesn't simply, you know, like neoclassical economists, look at economics from an extremely reductionist and very ideological point of view, but that takes moral value seriously, that takes community seriously, that takes national interest seriously. And I think that

if, you know, people had thought through what the real failures of the free market orthodoxy were that we've just experienced, you actually could come up with a very interesting position that would, you know, be the equivalent of neoconservative for the era that we are entering into.

And, again, this would lay the seeds for future conflicts because I think if you thought that through, it would then throw into question the tenet about American primacy. Because one of the big, you know, challenges we're going to face is that the economic basis for our primacy is fast eroding.

So, thank you, but congratulations, Justin, on your book.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, thank you. I will join in the praise for Justin's book and I, of course, will also call him Justin. As a neoconservative, I can't -- you know, I have to give him the American pronunciation. *(laughter)* I'm a little shocked that Frank bowed to such a hegemonic and almost nativist matter of discourse, but that's okay.

I'll praise the book, but I don't really -- I won't engage the book. Not because I don't think it's worth engaging, but because I think I'd either be defending myself or defending friends or relatives, or distinguishing some friends from other friends, and I think all of that would be sort of unseemly. So you all should read the book and make up your own mind.

I would say this, and I think Justin would agree with this, you

know, many of the thinkers discussed in the book are serious and interesting thinkers. And I have found in life -- maybe this is my bias from studying political philosophy originally -- that it's usually better if you read the thinkers themselves than even very fine accounts of the thinkers, especially when those accounts are -- have a purpose not of simply rendering the thought, but of putting them in context as part -- with other thinkers as part of a political intellectual movement. So I think it's really worth reading the different thinkers in this book. Most of them are available in essays and books. I include Frank's book on the end of history, which has been caricatured as much as a lot of other neoconservative -- maybe I shouldn't say "other," but a lot of the neoconservative books that are caricatured or articles. But, you know, the national -- *Public Interest*, all 40 years of it is available online at the *National Affairs* website. *Commentary* is available online. *Weekly Standard* is available online. Books by various people are available. So, I think you will find a lot more diversity than people realize. I think you will find different intellectual strands. There are Straussians and Burkeans and Madisonians and there were tensions from the beginning and there were agreements in practice even when there was intellectual tensions.

I think, honestly, if you look the *Commentary* magazine in the early '80s, the notion that that was a heyday of greatly diverse views about

what to do about the Soviet Union, but now there's a kind of uniformity, I think is a little ridiculous. There are different moments when people agree on practical issues and emergencies much more and there are moments when there doesn't seem to be a practical emergency and it's easier for magazines to devote space to more sort of speculative thinking about where to go in the future, and these things are partly driven by the moment of time one is in. In any case, I would just say, read the thinkers themselves. Don't simply read about the thinkers.

In a related way, my only other comment about sort of the past, before I get to the future -- or the present and the future -- is I think it's interesting that Justin calls the book, and I don't quarrel with this, *The Biography of a Movement*. My father, you know, preferred -- and, in fact, there's no reason that Justin has to defer to my father on this -- "neoconservative persuasion," though he originally had used other terms, "neoconservative imagination," playing off Trilling's the "liberal imagination." He usually was pretty careful to try to say that he didn't really think it was a movement in the classic sense of a movement. There was just too much diversity and heterogeneity in terms of both the actual conclusions people had come to, but also in terms of the influences on those different thinkers and political activists to the degree that some of them were political activists.

I think the term "movement" -- I may be wrong about this -- the

term "intellectual movement" is itself an interesting idea actually. I think it's -- I'm not sure that it's -- and it may not be wrong, but the first use of it I know of is in *Democracy in America* actually, in part 2 of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, where he talks about the movement of ideas in the United States. And, of course, an intellectual movement is, you know, is ideas in motion. But ideas, of course, really ideas -- (inaudible) ideas, not to sound too Platonist or something, you know -- are, you know, ideas at rest, and the ideas in motion are ideas engaged with politics, engaged with reality, engaged with current historical circumstances. And, therefore, intellectual movements are always complicated things to try to understand and disentangle. And I think Justin does a -- makes a good effort at disentangling and reassembling into these three families, but in all honestly, there are lots of other ways one could carve that up and I think they might be equally legitimate.

But movements, you know, ideas in motion are engaged with politics and with reality and with crises and with challenges. And, therefore, it's always then hard afterwards -- 20, 30, 40 years afterwards -- to disentangle what was the practical conclusion people came to as opposed to some theoretically grand rethinking, and people don't always tell you that or in any case, it's always -- one would have to, you know, go back and read the original sources to decide that.

I mean, we live in a certain kind of regime. If you think that the country is going to -- if you think that the economic -- the size of the government had to be reduced, there was a real argument in the late '70s that one couldn't get there by pursuing more standard conservative economic arguments, that supply-side economics had some truths in it -- and some real truths I think in terms of economic growth and still has those truths. It also had a certain political utility that wasn't part of the more standard conservative economic recipe. And if one wanted to actually change economic policy in the United States, one would have to think about what combination of good policy and achievable politics was possible.

I would say very much the same is true of foreign policy. I think I wrote a review -- this is, I mean, utterly unimportant -- but Pat Moynihan went to the U.N. in '75-'76, used a lot of human rights rhetoric. I mean, not just -- you know, really made that a centerpiece, I think, of his tenure at the U.N.; wrote a book about it. And I remember reviewing the book in the early -- in the *American Spectator*. This was a long time ago, in the late '70s when I was a grad student, I guess, or an assistant professor, and saying I wasn't sure that I really agreed as a matter of political theory that we should be -- American foreign policy should be excessively driven by a concern for universal human rights.

On the other hand, this is a democracy based on human rights

and maybe, therefore, it's appropriate to achieve reasonable ends: a more decent, more stable, more peaceful world; a world friendlier for freedom. It's crazy enough to somehow embrace the principle of the regime and, therefore, try to advance that.

On the other hand, one can't be excessively dogmatic or radical or certainly not utopian about doing that. And I would say parenthetically that I don't honestly think that many neoconservatives were, although everyone thinks we were apparently over the last 10 years. But, I mean, these are complicated considerations. I mean, in the real world of ideas and politics and people made judgments and people differed on judgments and so you do have in this myriad kind of complex of neoconservative thinkers and journalists and political activists, people who agreed on first principles and disagreed on tactics, because they just had a simple -- simply a different judgment of what might be prudent at the time. They supported different candidates at different times. You had people who differed on first principles, but actually agreed on tactics. I mean, I would say there were people -- just thinking of my father and his friends -- there were people who my father was closer to at some fundamental intellectual level, whom he probably disagreed with more in practical politics, than other people whom he had more -- you know, came from a very different place, so to speak, intellectually, but who, as it happened, ended up thinking that in

the here and now, for the next two, four, six years, you know, these three or four priorities were awfully important and they were in basic agreement about how to achieve them.

So I would sort of, therefore, urge these two qualifications of complexity in terms of Justin's book: one that the ideas themselves are a little too complicated to be cabined or confined or organized into movements; and, on the other hand, that movements themselves are, of course, distorting of ideas by definition almost or -- and the people participating in politics, to the degree that a lot of these thinkers chose to, understood that. And it's not that they mislead anyone or didn't say what they believed, you know, when they wrote, but they did think about how to achieve certain things and what was a responsible thing to propose given the world we live in, given the history we have.

I mean, that's a -- if anything is a neoconservative truth, I should think that being in that respect, sort of practical about the world one lives in and what can and can't be achieved is one such tenet. So that I think just makes the whole picture of the last 30, 40 years more complex.

In terms of the present and the future, I don't, you know, have any great insights. It's a very fluid moment in American politics as we've seen and I guess I'm pretty confident that neoconservatism has a present and has a future. I almost feel like Descartes, you know. I feel like, you

know, I'm here. Therefore, neoconservatism exists. (*Laughter*) But that wouldn't quite be correct, I suppose.

But, you know, the term itself is, of course, so funny. It was originally given by Mike Harrington. It was a label affixed by Michael Harrington not to my father, I guess, in particular, but to a bunch of former liberals in the early '70s. Some of those former liberals were real liberals who had been mugged by reality and become neoconservatives. And really, you know, this is *Commentary* magazine; if you compare *Commentary* magazine from 1966 to 1971, you'll see this. Others were much more complicated.

I mean, my father certainly had been a liberal sort of, but a critic of liberalism and a doubter of the depth of liberalism way, way back. His first essays in the '40s, he had written a defense of T.S. Eliot when he was very, very young, you know, was not a classic liberal, and his worries about modern culture and capitalism -- I mean, essays and commentary in the '50s by my father and others were certainly worried about some insufficiencies of modern progressivism and liberalism. So at the very beginning it was quite different. And my father was the one who decided, you know, if they're going to keep call us -- and for about a year or two, my impression is everyone decided we can't be conservatives or even neoconservatives because conservatism is so toxic. And, therefore, my

father finally said, well, look, if they're going to call us neoconservatives, we'll just say I'm a neoconservative and he, more or less, cheerfully kept that term.

But it had -- it did seem to have gone into disuse by the mid-'90s and I didn't particularly think one -- I mean, I had no problem with being associated with it, but most of my views were pretty conservative at that point. And I think most neoconservatives were reasonably comfortable in different parts of the conservative galaxy. But then -- matter of fact, when Bob Kagan and I wrote the piece that I think Justin mentioned in '96, in *Foreign Affairs*, it was called "Towards a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy." And, I mean, we weren't being cute, you know. We just thought Reagan was kind of what -- we wanted to make the case that Reaganism remained a good guiding principle for a post-Cold War world, which is not something that everyone agreed upon on left or right.

There were many conservatives who -- including neoconservatives like Jeane Kirkpatrick, whose first big essay after the fall of the Soviet Empire was "return to normalcy", and so we were arguing with Jeane. We were arguing with some old-fashioned conservatives. We were arguing with some liberals. We were agreeing with some Clinton Administration liberals. The first piece Bob and I ever wrote together in December of '95, was an editorial in *The Weekly Standard*, which had been

in existence for three months, defending President Clinton's intervention in Bosnia and criticizing congressional Republicans for seeking to make a political issue of it and seeming to hope that it would go badly. I think at the time we lost about a quarter of our subscribers to the magazine who had just signed up in the preceding four or five months and who wrote indignant letters about how they didn't subscribe to *The Weekly Standard* to read editorials defending Bill Clinton. And we ended up actually --

MR. DIONNE: You made up for it.

MR. KRISTOL: Yeah, exactly, we did. Well, we tried to go -- you know, we call it as we see it. You know, defend him one day, impeach him the next. It's politics and life.

But, you know, so we did not think much -- we didn't use the term. I bet you can't find the term "neoconservatism" much in *The Weekly Standard* from '95 to 2001 or so. And you can't even find it even that much afterwards because we tried to write about the issues confronting us, not so much about -- you know, not self-referentially about how we think about the issues.

But the term was then used after 9-11 to attack a lot of hawks, a lot of Bush doctrine supporters, a lot of the supporters of the war in Iraq. And, again, my attitude is it's fine if that's now -- if we're now neoconservatives again, that's perfectly good tradition and I'm happy to

embrace it. I don't think it's by any means dead or even dying or even suffering particularly. If *National Review* looks more like *Weekly Standard* today then it looked like the *Public Interest* 30 years ago, that's partly because *National Review* was changed a lot, and because conservatism has changed a lot to be honest. And I think that's a good thing and I'm not taking any credit for it. These people make up -- people make up their own minds.

But, you know, it -- the broader picture -- I mean, it's easy to say, well, the neoconservatives are just part of the Republican Party or part of the Conservative Movement now. But maybe the character of the Republican Party and the Conservative Movement has changed and maybe a lot of it is up for grabs and as it has been in the past. And there were neoconservatives who preferred Howard Baker and Ronald Reagan and a lot of other people in 1980, and I imagine the same will be true in 2012. I do think neoconservatism has a future.

I'll close because there will always be liberals who will be mugged by reality. Liberalism seems to have an amazing ability to produce well-meaning and somewhat utopian intellectuals and politicians who then get mugged by reality and, therefore, there's always the potential that they can become neoconservatives. So to those who ask me whether I'm disturbed by the fact that, you know, young people voted a little bit more for

Obama and consider themselves a little bit more liberal, I say not at all.

(laughter) You know, this is even more potential neoconservatives out there.

My final point, though, I would say this. I think the distinctive thing about neoconservatism, in all of its different iterations, certainly about those who were willing to sort of embrace the term, it's not just that they were mugged by reality, because everyone is mugged by reality at some point or other. But -- and my father when he made that -- used that line, it was a little bit of a joke, obviously. A young colleague of my father's named Mike Scully, who passed away actually at a young age about -- I guess now about 15 years ago, 18 years ago -- once commented in the early '80s. Now remember there were neoliberals, Gary Hart, all these people who accepted the problems of the Great Society and the welfare state, but who wanted more liberal solutions than Reagan. And I think it was a review of several books by these neoliberals and Mike said, you know, if a neoconservative is a liberal who has been mugged by reality, a neoliberal is a liberal who has been mugged by reality and refuses to press charges. And I've always thought that was a really deep point.

There are a lot of people who acknowledge, yes, I was sort of wrong about something. The world is little -- not quite working out the way I thought, but in politics -- and I would say especially in foreign policy -- one has to be willing to press charges. That doesn't mean one has to agree on

practically what one should do, whether you have to endorse, you know, the Iraq War or the Afghanistan War for that matter, or one policy or another. But I do think it -- if one is going to engage in debates about the real worlds of policy, one has to be willing to press charges in the sense of saying what the alternatives would be and willing to walk through how those would play out as opposed to other alternatives.

And I think at its best, neoconservatism has always been willing to look reality in the face, but also to try to think seriously about what can be done and what has to be done to press charges in those ways and not simply to sort of turn one's back or walk away or pretend that all would be well if only we could avoid some choices that sometimes one can't avoid.

MR. VAISSE: Great. Thanks to all the panelists. And while we're getting mic'd, I'll just open the floor and set the ground rules, which is I will take batches of three questions and ask you to make sure that there's a question mark at the end of your sentence when you are talking, and also to identify yourself when you are asking the question.

And so, the floor is now yours. Yes, sir. Hold on for the mic.

MR. YOUNGSMITH: Hi. Barron YoungSmith from *The New Republic*. I was wondering if you could talk about military spending actually.

I don't know if you caught Secretary Gates' speech over the weekend, but he sort of seemed to be suggesting that we're ending an era

of sort of flat increases in the defense budget, and it touched off like a couple op-eds about the return of peace through strength. And I was wondering if you guys could comment on sort of how you see that situation playing out.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. Here.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report.

I want to get some reaction from the panelists on an idea that seemed to bridge neocons with whatever their counterparts might be, but a number of people who have worked here and most of whom are now in the administration, and that's the notion of a concert of democracies. And I want to -- the way I'd like to sort of pose the question is what is it about -- for those who favor the concept of a concert of democracies, and that's everybody from Bob Kagan to Anne Marie Slaughter to, you know, a very wide range, what's the attraction of that concept? And what is its -- where does it fit in the current thinking of this sort of democracy versus autocracy notion that Bob Kagan is talking a lot about?

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. In the back there, sir.

MR. COFFEY: John Coffey, retired State Department.

Ambassador Jack Matlock, who was present as a key advisor to Ronald Reagan, in a recent book called *Superpower Illusions*, is very

critical of neoconservatives for what he calls the dangerous distortion in the way they interpret the end of the Cold War as sort of akin to a military victory achieved by force and pressure, whereas Matlock maintains it was a negotiated settlement that proved to the interest of both sides. Anyone on the panel who would care to address that, I'd be welcome to hear it.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. We're going to get to panel. Would --

MR. DIONNE: Why don't -- you should start. You're -- as the center of attention here, or should be.

MR. VAISSE: Okay. Thanks. So I'm not abusing the privilege of the chair too much.

MR. DIONNE: It's your book.

MR. VAISSE: Well, probably I will pick up on the question of the concert of democracies because one of the things that I mention in the book is that as early as the 1970s, among the Scoop Jackson Democrats, you find ideas of having some sort of concert of democracies, of league of democracies, of community of democracies, et cetera., which is -- so it's an idea that you see sort of popping up regularly as an alternative, of course, to the U.N. and sort of, you know, wouldn't it be nice if we -- if democracies could advocate for their own regime and at least have a caucus at the U.N. or perhaps be an -- complete alternative to the U.N. And, of course, you may remember that this also popped up during John McCain's campaign in

which he actually suggested the creation of a league of democracies. The attraction, of course, would be to offer the alternative to the U.N. Security Council where you have an autocracy and a semi-autocracy -- namely China and Russia -- and so that you would have basically a better meeting of minds.

The problem, of course, is the one that Frank pointed out, which is that interests are not necessarily dependent on the nature of the regime and we might agree on some issues with China with Russia, whereas we would disagree with Brazil or with Turkey. Let's take Iran, for example. We all know -- and that is one of the problems of Kagan's book of 2008 -- on Iran, for example, we all know that we have problems with our democratic friends, whether in India, in Turkey, or in Brazil, and so it doesn't solve the problem.

And one quick word on the end of the Cold War question, just to point out the fact that, yes, there is -- I mean, this is the fundamental debate on historiography. Meaning depending on whether you think that the Cold War was won by forceful assertion of American power, star wars, the Reagan doctrine, et cetera, on the one hand, or you think that detente -- that's the Helsinki Accords that opened up space for dissidents, et cetera -- and more importantly Gorbachev's role and perestroika and the sort of inner rotting of the USSR was the real cause for the Cold War, it will tell you on

which side of this spectrum you are. And, indeed, it's important in the lessons of history that some schools of thought derived, of course, have a direct impact on today's policy prescriptions and how to deal with Iran, how to deal -- 10 years ago, 15 years ago -- with Iraq, with North Korea. Obviously, if it was possible to somehow change the regime in the Soviet Union, then we shouldn't settle for less when it comes to smaller -- smaller rogue regimes.

So I just wanted to point that out. But there were maybe other points that on military spending, for example, or the concert of democracies that other panelists might address.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, I'm for -- I think military spending is too low; has been too low. I think it was insane not to increase the number of ground troops after 9-11. These have been -- these arguments have been rehearsed many, many, many times and rehearsed with great futility, I would say, in *The Weekly Standard* over the last 10 years. And I continue to think military spending is too low. I mean, if we think we can maintain a decent world order at 4.2 percent of GDP fighting two wars, having increased civilian employment in the last 10 years -- incidentally civilian federal employment more than military employment.

I mean, we labor it and labor it and we fought on *the Standard* for six years until finally there was congressional pressure and the Bush

Administration agreed to increase the size of the Army and the Marines by, I think, net about 40,000 troops. You've increased the civilian workforce in the federal government by 110,000 people in the last year and a half, you know. I mean, I think that's a wild distortion of priorities when we're fighting two wars. Maybe if people think we don't need to fight wars anymore and if we can secure a reasonably stable and decent world order on the cheap, I suppose that's what people think. Obviously, Bob Gates -- you know, I respect Bob Gates and if he can trim 10- or \$15 billion from unnecessary defense overhead, more power to him, but I would prefer to see that come back into defense spending and foreign aid spending and intelligence spending.

I want to make clear I'm for soft power as well as hard power. We're not spending enough on soft power, incidentally. The Obama Administration was the great -- was a great advocate and spokesman for soft power and smart power, and there's been very little serious revamping of the federal government to enable us to do public diplomacy better, to use intelligence better, and I think an underinvestment in that, so I would say an underinvestment in foreign policy across the board.

Now, maybe we can live in a world in which we spend a nickel on the dollar on all of our foreign policy instruments basically, all of our national security instruments. And Europe, the other main democratic force

in the world outside of India, spends less than 2 cents on the dollar. And maybe that's the state of the world for the foreseeable future. I'm extremely doubtful about it and I know when, you know, people say now, of course, if we're now going to constrain spending everywhere, defense can't be sacrosanct. But I would just say that, you know, in fact, we spend much, much less as a percentage of GDP on defense than we did at the height of the Cold War and we're a wealthier country.

We had -- and a final point on this. I don't want to go on too long about this, but I am -- it is really -- and it's not partisan. I mean, the Republicans have not done anything much on this either. So I'm not -- you know, I'm almost as exasperated with the Republicans as the Democrats on this. They do a little bit. We had a \$795 billion stimulus -- Keynesian stimulus while we were fighting two wars when everyone agreed the military had been stretched. We had a huge task of refitting certainly the ground forces. We have a pretty big task of refitting the more strategic forces, too. We're flying bombers that are 45 years old, et cetera. We spent \$4 billion out of \$795 billion on defense. Even from a Keynesian point of view, I think this was insane, incidentally.

What did get us out of it? What is the Keynesian account of how we got out of the Great Depression? Does it have something to do with the pre-World War II defense buildup? Isn't the Defense Department good

at spending money? Don't they have a lot of shovel-ready projects? That's what they do for a living, unlike the rest of the federal government, which is a problem actually because they are not good -- you know, they tend to give money to states and localities and aren't very good at actually employing people to do things.

And the failure, the ideological resistance to spending the money on defense -- and here we made a push and some Republicans in Congress said a few things, couple of Democrats, but the Administration wasn't interested. I mean, I think it really does show, honestly, a lack of seriousness about the world we live in and about our responsibilities in that world. Now, if we -- if people want to make a serious argument that we're going to retreat to being an offshore balancer and all kinds of other things, that's nice, but that's not the argument the Obama Administration makes. That's not the argument leading Republicans make.

And I do think the more tentative neoconservatism is, if you say we're going to maintain our commitments around the world and try to maintain our forward positions and our strength, I think we could afford, and certainly the rhetoric of the Obama Administration and of Republicans is that we can afford it, and I think we should act, therefore, to fulfill our responsibilities in that area.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks. Frank, do you want to?

MR. DIONNE: Could I just say something real quick on that?

I always want to ask Bill when he calls for his defense budget increases, what taxes will he raise to pay for it or what programs will he cut to pay for it? And when the Iraq War happened, it just struck me as a lack of seriousness that we went to war without paying for it. And I think that the defense budget is actually an area where we could learn a lot from the original neoconservatism, which is that you do not necessarily make America more secure just by throwing a lot more money at weapons systems.

And I think when Bill talks about increasing the size of the military, what we really need to have is a debate over why do we want to do that? What wars do we have in mind to support by doing that? Because I think the -- you -- yes, you do need a military that matches the size of your foreign policy ambitions, but sometimes your foreign policy ambitions also match the size of your military. And I just think that I would welcome an open debate about that.

But I do think that after a period of build up, the defense budget may not have risen as much as Bill wanted, but it went up very substantially during the Bush years. And I think we are going to see a big debate on that.

One quick point on the concert of democracies is just there is this fascinating overlap occasionally between liberal human rights advocates

and some of what the neoconservatives say, sort of like something isn't wrong just because Bill Kristol says it and that -- although watch your wallet. But, you know, it's interesting. I think there have been moments, for example, when -- just to pick three people at random -- what Bill wrote about Chinese human rights policy, what I was writing in my column, and what Nancy Pelosi was saying on Capitol Hill -- there was this overlap. And I think that is actually what may have misled some liberals into supporting the Iraq War.

I always thought the one argument for that war that was the hardest to refute is Saddam Hussein is a very bad man. It's an evil regime and we should go in. Of course, the question is where does that stop? Which -- why did this serve America national interest as opposed to some other intervention? But that -- and that sort of explains why some neocons, like Bill, supported the Kosovo intervention.

I think that -- you know, what I hope doesn't happen is that liberal support for democracy as a core principle of American foreign policy doesn't get discredited just because, in the view of some of us, it was misused in the Bush years. And I think you're going to see a new debate over this in the -- over the coming years in the Obama Administration as realism looks a lot better now than it did in 2001. However, pure realism without any linkage to democracy and human rights I think is problematic not

only for neocons, but also for a lot of liberals.

MR. VAISSE: Do you want answer that or we go to another --

MR. KRISTOL: No, just on the -- I mean, the Cold War is such a big topic and James Mann and others can discuss it at great length. I mean, let's put it this way, I don't think -- I think Jack Matlock's argument is a little ridiculous, but let's assume that Reagan had very little to do with it, the defense buildup had little to do with it, help to resistance fighters against Communists -- Communists against the Soviet Union directly and indirectly, and Afghanistan and Central America had nothing to do with it. The moral challenge to the Soviet Union had nothing to do with it. It didn't hurt. It didn't hurt.

Reagan was President from 1981 to 1989, and the Soviet Union seems to have crumbled on his watch and on the watch of his Vice President who then took over, and who incidentally was told as late as 1990 that he would have to be very careful. We had to not ask for united Germany within Europe, within Western -- you know, within free Europe, "Europe whole and free" I believe was the term, as that was too aggressive. That was too Reaganite. That was the internal debate in the Bush Administration, the first Bush Administration.

So I would defend the foreign policy of the United States from 1980 to 1990. I think it was a pretty successful 10 years, and those 10 years

were characterized by a pretty conservative and neoconservative foreign policy.

MR. FUKUYAMA: Well, this provokes me to make a comment. Yeah, I think that that's right, but it strikes me that what this was was really -- you know, it was a slot machine that was broken and, you know, the United States was putting these quarters into the slot machine and got this huge jackpot that I don't think anyone anticipated, you know, and Reagan himself didn't anticipate it. And so you say, wow, you know, you stick those coins in and look at what you get out of it and that's what we're going to base our foreign policy on from now on. And in the meantime, the casino went and fixed the slot machine, so the next time you go, you're not going to get, you know, that same kind of payout.

And I think that's -- you know, apart from the argument about the end of the Cold War, I think that that was a fundamental mistake to think that this kind of spectacular, you know, total victory as a result of just a little bit more defense spending and a little bit of, you know, rhetoric was going to be a kind of permanent condition and if we could apply this, you know, as a tool, you know, down the line and structure an entire foreign policy around this.

MR. DIONNE: Could I say one quick thing?

MR. VAISSE: Yes.

MR. DIONNE: The -- I have a theory that I don't know fits into either liberal or conservative. I always thought that in some ways the critical moment in the -- toward the end of the Cold War was the failure of the Soviet Union to stop the Euro missiles from being put into Europe and that it was a political failure on their part. It closed off their best avenue of checking us, which was political rather than with weapons. And since I say Justin, I would point out that one of the people who was part of that was François Mitterrand, who said very famously that while they -- the East is creating missiles, we are creating pacifists.

And so I think that solidarity in the West at that moment was actually very important to setting up a lot of other things that happened afterward, which I don't think is a particularly liberal view, but it's my sense -- I think the politics of that moment in Europe were very important.

MR. VAISSE: Okay. It's almost finished. We have time for just two more questions and then we'll have concluding remarks from the panel. There's one question here and one here. And please make your question as brief as possible.

MR. LOBE: Jim Lobe, Inter Press Service.

Does Israel hold any special place in the movement or the imagination of neoconservatives? And I'd like to address that especially to you, Justin, and to Dr. Fukuyama, who had a kind of contretemps about this

with Mr. Krauthammer and then subsequently dropped it in his book and I always wondered why.

MR. VAISSE: Okay. And last question here.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Pete and I'm just a taxpayer. I guess one of the lines I liked in your book, Justin -- my French is terrible, but I apologize -- was that speaking about the neoconservative love of -- love affair with the military. And I'm just curious to each member of the panel whether or not the intellectual underpinnings of the ideas should at all be influenced by the fact that as far as I know -- and, hopefully, I'm wrong -- none of the leading thinkers or proponents of the movement as you call it have ever served in the military. And I'm just curious does that contribute in a way to their lack of understanding of what soldiers, Marines, airmen, sailors can actually do on the ground, especially in those forward operating bases, joint security stations, combat outposts that we speak about, continuing to man and our posture in the years ahead?

MR. VAISSE: Okay. Thanks. So, I'm going to give a brief answer and then a chance to the three of you to conclude -- to answer and conclude.

On Israel -- yes, Israel has a special place for many reasons that I mention in the book, especially for the '60s and '70s -- the shock of 1967 and also of 1973. And it is true that it has been a very important

element in the various ages of the movement.

That said, it is -- and here I would just follow what Gary Dorrien, whom E.J. mentioned earlier and who wrote two -- actually two excellent books on this said. That is that basically Zionism is an important component and the defense of Israel is an important component of neoconservatism, but it's certainly not the key to everything else. Meaning that it's not sort of the key that will explain the rest of the views, the ones that I mentioned.

And, you know, once again, the fact that Israel was a democracy did a lot to sort of change the views of many liberals, including many Jews, who had misgivings about the use of American power and then came to realize that American power could be used to defend democracies, and so there was a sort of conjunction here that operated. And so Israel, yes, remained -- remains something important, but not something that explains all the rest. And I'll let Frank answer on the question.

And as for any neoconservatives serving in the military, I will simply defer to the other panelists and to Bill maybe. Maybe we could take in the same order that we started. E.J., do you want to say a few concluding words?

MR. DIONNE: Yeah. Just on this question, I want to leave it to them. But I do think that if the Iraq War was in any way connected to the

security of Israel, I think one of the ironies of the war is that, if anything, it left Israel in a less secure position than it was in before because it had the effect of strengthening Iran's position in the Middle East. We did seem to make Iraq safe for Iran, if not the world safe for democracy, and that's disconcerting.

I think, by the way, support for Israel is a position that goes way beyond neoconservatism. It includes most American liberals going back a long way, all the way back to Harry Truman. But there's a lot more to be said on that. I know, I mean, I've spoken enough. I just want to say two things.

You know, the first is that I do think this distinction between the domestically -- largely initially domestically based neoconservatism, it's humility about government functions. I think at times that humility led to a skepticism about government's capacity that was dangerous. And yet it was Pat Moynihan himself, who is widely associated with this movement, who even talking about the Great Society that is so often derided by various kinds of conservatives, Pat Moynihan once said there are more successes -- there were more successes than we wanted to know. And so I think that at its best, neoconservatism could have and has had some effect in making liberals think more about unintended consequences, think more about how to structure programs. Community policing, after all, was promoted in

significant part by Bill Clinton and the Clinton Administration.

So I think I will say myself that I have learned a lot from that brand of neoconservatism. I worry when neoconservatism itself begins to harden into a kind of ideology and that for the future, as I said, I don't think there -- that neoconservatism, as originally conceived, no longer exists, but there will be people holding a series of foreign policy views who will be influential and many of us will keep arguing with them.

MR. VAISSE: Frank.

MR. FUKUYAMA: Well, just on this question of Israel. I think that, first of all, the problem is not, you know, that -- I think that Israel is important to many neoconservatives. The problem is not divided loyalties or putting Israel's interest ahead of the United States. What I said in my argument with Krauthammer is the problem is that many neoconservatives have adopted the point of view, the strategic prism of many hardliners on the Israeli right, including their interpretation of Arab motives and behavior. You know, this idea that the Arabs don't understand any principles of legitimacy; it's only force that, you know, they respect; this sort of thing, which then dictates a whole way of dealing with region as a whole. And I just said I think that that's -- you know, that was a big mistake. And I think that, you know, that continues to be a problem and then Krauthammer said that's anti-Semitism. But I just don't believe that that's really what was motivating me.

MR. VAISSE: Bill?

MR. KRISTOL: Yeah, I don't want to get into the dispute between -- I don't want to get into any disputes because they are somewhat distasteful, honestly. And I think the questions are not asked in a spirit of inquiry, but in a spirit -- in the spirit of gotcha in this case. I mean, it seems to me hard to understand how we now neoconservatives have contempt for the Arabs to think they only believe in force and are ludicrously utopian about the possibility of building an Arab democracy in Iraq, but maybe those can go together. Can they? Is that what you think?

MR. FUKUYAMA: Well, that's the big -- yeah, I mean, that was a big contradiction because --

MR. KRISTOL: We just totally could -- okay, so we're --

MR. FUKUYAMA: That was a big contradiction it seems to me in the position.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, maybe it's a big contradiction in the understanding of the position and maybe one shouldn't impute views generally that in such -- but anyway. It's not -- you know, the two questions were, I guess, about Israel. I mean, I don't know what the question really is. Yes, I'm pro-Israel. I think it is very good thing that the state of Israel exists. I think it would be a calamity for the world if the state of Israel were destroyed. It doesn't mean I agree with one particular party in Israel.

I just don't think it's empirically true what Frank says that many of the neoconservatives were very much influenced by Israeli hard line views on the rest of the Middle East. I'm not even sure -- I don't even know that many Israeli hard liners, I don't think, very well, but most of the ones I knew were very skeptical about the war in Iraq because they really wanted to totally focus on Iran.

I also don't agree that the intervention in Iraq has weakened us vis-à-vis Iran, but that's another foreign policy debate and we can debate Iran policy -- we will debate Iran policy for the next couple of years. I would just make the obvious point that Kagan, Krauthammer, and I -- and millions of hawks supported a bunch of interventions in Rwanda and Sudan and Bosnia that had nothing much to do with the interest Israel one way or the other. And I think we were hawkish on China. As E.J. said, we are just generally hawkish I think. And it wasn't a matter of watching out for Israel's interest, but I also think the U.S. -- Israel is a strong ally and the U.S. should, where possible, help Israel defend itself and not be cavalier about Israel's interest in a dangerous part of the world. You know, people can debate. I'm not going to give some -- in some defensive way, give some list of people who have served in the military on one side or the other. I think the question is really contemptible.

MR. VAISSE: Thanks very much. Please join me in thanking

the panelists. I'm sorry for going over time on this and have a very good day.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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