The Faith that Supports U.S. Violence: Comparative Reflections on the Arrogance of Empire

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In the second year of the U.S. occupation of Iraq many people in the U.S. still cling to a political tradition that confuses actually existing American society "with the ideal society that would fulfill human destiny."1 They tend to think of the United States not as the polyarchy and global empire that it is, but as the incarnation of "freedom and democracy," or at least the closest approximation to the democratic ideal that exists. Whatever their assessment of current U.S. foreign policy, they regard their country as the Promised Land, the embodiment of Western virtue, the deliverer of freedom to oppressed peoples.

Many see it, too, as the only national state that wages perpetual war for the global good. From starting a war to setting aside the prohibitions of international law and morality, the U.S. is entitled to do, beyond its borders, what it wants when it wants, provided the action can be justified in utilitarian terms of saving American lives and the U.S. Congress goes along with it.2

Whether we call this absolute veneration of "America" national essentialism or millennialism, whether we see it as the outlook of a superpower or the prerogative of a self-designated Chosen People, at its root lies "the belief that [American] history, under divine guidance, will bring about the triumph of Christian principles" and eventually the emergence of "a holy utopia."3 Such faith in the unique moral destiny of the United States may be held independently of Christian beliefs. Its historical origins, however, trace back to colonial New England, and beyond that to the Bible; and it is omnipresent in every part of the country, even though its strongest regional base presently lies in the South and West.

Long before the birth of the Republic, ideas of chosenness have been at the heart of a complicated ideology of rule that has resonated powerfully in American society.4 Both the Puritan Calvinists of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Protestant millenarians of the early 19th century conceived of the United States as an exceptional nation, chosen by God to be the acme of freedom and to redeem humankind. As historian Ernest Tuveson observed during the Vietnam War-era, the idea of the "redeemer nation" through which God operates is also the foundation of the notion of continuous warfare between 'good' and 'evil' people.5 Virtually every politician who exploits the religious emotions of people in the U.S. for the purpose of waging war draws on these ideas and images, embodied in religious and secular texts.

Today no single millenarian ideology exists, but rather a spectrum of religious and secular thought in which biblical ideas of a "conquering Chosen People" and visions of the United States as God's model of the world's future appear prominently.6 Just as in the past, these ideas link directly to the apocalyptic "defining moment," in which a small group of leaders at the top of

society summon the people to fulfill some sacred mission of redemption, or to play a new global role for the sake of humanity.7

Usually, the decisive moments occur when the president announces the mission or proclaims the godly mandate, regardless of whether the community is actually under threat. At such times, secular and religious millenarianism can generate support for policies of imperialism and war, or for advancing democratic ideals in the process of overcoming enemies.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, politicians repeatedly used different forms of this messianic national faith to justify killing Indians and acquiring their land, conquering Mexicans, and taking over the continent. In the 20th century they used it to establish a foothold in Cuba, take control of Puerto Rico, colonize the Philippines, overcome "isolationism," and construct a global empire of a new kind.

Economic greed, racial superiority, the blind ambition of leaders, and their desire to dominate other lands and peoples remained their own justifications for killing, but invariably the civil religion concealed these baser motives. Through over two-hundred years of expansion, belief in Americans as the Chosen People, morally superior to others, has reigned, enabling U.S. political leaders to repeatedly wage war more or less at will. That same belief in Americans as the Chosen People and the U.S. nation-state as God's "redeemer nation" (Tuveson) is the basis for their intense righteousness in threatening others, yet never "allow[ing] others to call them to account."8

For the past four years President George W. Bush has followed a line of chief executives who, for reasons of power and dominion, harkened back to the Old Testament theme of the Chosen People. But few earlier presidents made a Zen-like claim to "moral clarity" their guide for policy, or acted on the world scene with such open contempt for international law and democracy. Bush and his top ideologues have carried religious Manicheanism and the powers of the imperial presidency to new levels. In the process, they have not only violated international law but trampled on the U.S. Constitution, and turned America's procedural democracy in a more authoritarian, repressive direction.9

Neither religious conviction nor bigotry drove them to these acts. But for reasons for domestic politics and their (Congressionally unsupervised) control of huge military forces, Bush and his cohorts chose to do them while posturing about God, American values, and the unique American mission to lead the world. Right after a group of radical Islamic killers attacked the United States, Bush went out of his way to make gestures of tolerance toward "good" (non-Christian hating) Muslims and to deny that his "war on terrorism" was a crusade or a holy war. These acts were designed to allay fear in the Muslim community while insulating him from liability based on the speech and actions of subordinates who would have de facto authority for actually waging the holy crusade. Bush's public posturing right after 9/11, in short, illustrated the double message that his administration sent out for the remainder of his term: formally endorse one set of rules, values, and policies for the record; secretly establish different norms, values, and policies for daily operations.

In January 2001, in his first inaugural address, Bush introduced the theme of the U.S. taking on an "axis of evil," and suggested that God operated through the people of the U.S. to achieve His purpose.10 Although Bush was using the expressions of his speech writer, they overlapped with his own sense of the world divided between warring powers of absolute good and evil.

At West Point, on June 1, 2002, eight months after the start of his first war, in Afghanistan, Bush increased the targets of his "war on terrorism" to

"sixty or more countries," and declared that "moral clarity" was essential to our victory in the Cold War" and now, once again, "We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will . . . lead the world in opposing" "evil and lawless regimes."11 "[O]ur security will require transforming the military. . . that must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world. And our Security will require all Americans to be . . . ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives." He went on to note that this would mean maintaining "military strengths beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace."

These lines, from the strategy articulated in 1992 by deputy undersecretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz, would soon be enshrined in the administration's "National Security Strategy" (September 2002). The latter document made "preventive war" official state doctrine by proclaiming to the world that the U.S. would, whenever and wherever it chose, act unconstrained by international law. U.S. administrations had long been doing that without blatant public declaration. Bush, however, unabashedly announced that the U.S. no longer had need to genuflect to international law and morality, or even make excuses for its exercise of hegemony.

Two years later White House, Justice Department, and Pentagon lawyers informed him that he could authorize his underlings to order the use of torture during the interrogation of prisoners or detainees under American control, something they were already doing in Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.12 Shortly afterward, on March 19-20, 2003, Bush started his second colonial war, attacking without provocation the sovereign state of Iraq, which had already been crucially weakened through a decade of the harshest UN economic sanctions ever mandated and posed no threat to any state, let alone the U.S. The war, launched in the teeth of strong opposition at home and historically unprecedented worldwide protests, was in clear violation of the UN and Nuremberg Charters and the U.S. Constitution, which gives no president or congress the power to wage "anticipatory" or "preventive" war absent real, imminent threat.

After easily overthrowing the Baathist government in Baghdad and destroying the Iraqi state, the American conquerors failed to find nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. The administration had created a phony Iraq "threat," then used its millenarian creed in order to justify fighting an immoral, illegal war to eliminate it. The major newspaper and broadcast media, more anxious to serve the state rather than the public, eagerly went along, highlighting the lies that the Bush administration wanted emphasized. Many citizens, conditioned to imagine themselves part of the "redeemer nation," supported "Operation Iraqi Freedom" as part of a "war on terror."

One year after Bush staged his "mission accomplished," victory-photo opportunity on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln (May 1, 2003), the nationalist resistance of the Iraqi people would stretch the U.S. military to its limit and frustrate American expectations. Rather than putting an end to terrorism, the Iraq war of Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair spread the terrorist threat and made their citizens objects of hatred, revulsion, and reprisal throughout the Middle East.

In the course of waging the "war against terror" American military forces committed (and continue to commit) large-scale, systemic human rights abuses against Muslims that qualify, under Nuremberg principles and later international treaties, as "crimes against humanity."13 From Afghanistan to Iraq they have directly attacked and brutalized civilian populations, and imposed upon them collective punishments.

From the prison cages of Guantanamo to Baghram air base near Kabul, and an unknown number of secret detention facilities in Afghanistan and elsewhere, American military, CIA, and civilian contractors have subjected thousands of helpless prisoners of war to "Rumsfeld Processing." Chief among its features are hooding, beating, sexual humiliation, sleep deprivation, standing naked for long periods of time, mental abuse, the use of dogs to intimidate, and other forms of stress, designed to make them act against their will or conscience.14 At Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad and a dozen other Iraqi detention facilities (Al Qaim, Al Asad, Mosul, Tikrit, Umm Qasr, etc.), the charges steadily mount: murder, rape, the sodomization of children, violent beating, and theft of property on a large but unknown scale; widespread, officially-ordered infliction of torture; cruel, degrading treatment of prisoners of war and "security detainees" of all ages, most of them innocent of any crime. Moreover, the Bush administration continues to authorize the hiding from the scrutiny of the International Red Cross of prisoners and detainees, held throughout the U.S. planetary gulag.

Up and down the military and civilian chains of command, in the upper echelons of the Pentagon and on the ground, the evidence accumulates of stonewalling and lying to prevent the disclosure of incriminating facts, professional negligence, malfeasance, misfeasance, incompetence, and dereliction of duty. The evidence reveals not only that a minority of individual U.S. soldiers are "rogues" or "rotten apples" because they committed crimes. Rather, under the leadership of the Bush administration, entire organizational subcultures within the White House, Pentagon, CIA, and Justice Department have become mired in criminality.

Overwhelming evidence suggests, further, that the American state has been guilty of massive, repeated violations of customary international law, treaty law, and federal statute. Specifically, the U.S. bears responsibility to the international community for having violated: the 1949 Geneva Conventions; the 1984 UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Statutes of the UN international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; Article 7 (1) of the 1998 International Criminal Court Statute; and the 1994 Torture Convention Implementation Act (18 U.S.C. 2340 A). All six laws criminalize torture.

Many high-level members of the Bush administration and officials working in the "Office of the Secretary of Defense" were involved in these grave breaches of law and their cover-up. But under the doctrine of direct and imputed command responsibility the heaviest individual culpability accrues to commander-in-chief Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. Both acted on the premise that the end (intelligence) justifies the means (torture). Bush, whose "razor-sharp distinction of the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys' . . . filtered down the ranks," bears primary responsibility for issuing the orders and creating the ethical climate that condoned the torture of detainees.15 Rumsfeld approved not only the criminal policies establishing the U.S. global torture system but also some of the actual techniques used by lower-ranking military and CIA personnel to inflict pain.16 Their offenses cry out for criminal prosecution and appropriate punishment.

What needs to be understood here is how various right-wing social movements came together to re-energize the dangerous myth of the United States as a special nation, destined to reign militarily supreme over all others, and how those radical movements influenced this outcome. Focusing on the convergence of America's imperial expansion with its ideology of religious nationalism may be a way to answer these questions.

Let us see, then, observehow the Bush administration came to launch the biggest assault on international law, politics, and morality since

the U.S. attack, four decades earlier, on Vietnam and eventually most of Indochina. Let us see, also, how various radical right-wing backlashes -- against the legislative remnants of the New Deal and the advances made during the 1960s by the civil rights and women's movements -- aided the administration's pursuit of opportunities to strengthen control over oil and implant military bases in the Arab heartland, while projecting an illusive dream of security through global domination.

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When the defeat of Germany and Japan left the United States with a nearly global empire in the wake of World War II, many Americans saw in the new reality confirmation of their uniqueness: victory had proven them morally superior not just to defeated enemies but to all nations. Through occupation reforms the U.S. set out to lance the poison of Nazism in Germany, and Japan's emperor ideology and militarism.

At that point, most American journalists, feeling, quite correctly, they had done a better job than their Japanese counterparts in reporting the war in Asia and the Pacific, turned to cover the big post-surrender stories and never bothered to reflect on the lies and exaggerations in the war news they had produced and disseminated to the U.S. public. Correspondents had all but ignored the story of U.S. war supplies to Japan down to July 1939; they obfuscated the brutality and corruption of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime in China; they whipped up racist propaganda about Japanese-Americans on the West coast; they meekly complied with the government's suppression of news about the magnitude of the Pearl Harbor disaster; and they reported on the atomic bomb project in ways that elicited uncritical public support. When the moment of victory finally arrived, they looked down on Japanese journalists but failed to reflect on their own relationship to state power, and on how easy it had been for them as journalists to become government PR men, giving their primary loyalty to Washington rather serving the pubic interest.

Unsurprisingly, the victor retained intact its own virulent civic religion and showed little inclination to question its practice of war-making. Had Americans paid closer attention to the phenomenon of religiously-grounded nationalist ideology, and what happens to nations that act on the premise that they are chosen people, morally superior to others, they might have found the Japanese experience instructive, and been less eager to fight wars of conquest.

In the course of constructing a modern state, Japan's leaders had forged, partly from ancient myths, a quasi-religious emperor ideology. Using this official teaching, they had integrated the people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries through a series of imperialist wars. Later, in the 1930s, the emperor was gradually "sacralized," turned into a weapon of "thought war," and used to silence dissent and rationalize Japan's position as Northeast Asia's regional hegemon.

Although lacking in universality and the strong apocalyptic vision found in America's world-encompassing nationalism, the Japanese ideology of rule was woven out of material which contained functionally similar elements. The Japanese counterpart to the Chosen People notion was the idea of the peerless national polity and the Yamato race, tasked from time immemorial to loyally support and implement the projects of the sacred emperor. Supplementing emperor ideology, and contributing to making Japanese nationalism "ultra," was Zen and the popular religious sect of Nichiren Buddhism. Many of Japan's highest echelon military officers and civilian right-wing propagandists of the 1930s were Nichiren believers.17

Thus from the start, Japan's ideology of national uniqueness or exceptionalism was emperor-centered and embodied in institutions, practices, and words like kokutai (national polity) and arahitogami (living deity). The key element was the myth of the emperor's timeless, blood line of succession, starting from the Sun Goddess, mythical progenitor of the imperial house. As circumstances changed, other components were added or stressed: state Shinto; the notion of Japan as an indestructible, divine land, inhabited by the Yamato race; faith in the power of the Yamato "spirit" to rise in order to meet any emergency; and, from Christianity, Japan as the "shining light" unto the undeveloped nations of Asia, leading them along the path of modernization.

In short, with the empire repeatedly embroiled in incidents and wars from the late 1920s onward, Japanese identified their nation-state with the emperor, just as many Americans today view themselves as the Chosen People and look down on others. Japanese were taught to believe in their own moral superiority, and to take pride in bringing enlightenment and other valuable gifts to backward peoples. Americans are still taught these things. And when they encounter resistance from strongly entrenched nationalism in the countries they invade, as the Japanese did in China, they behave no better.

During the ten years that elapsed between the 1931 Japanese military coup in Manchuria and the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, military and civil officials used the ideology of national essentialism to reshape Japanese political life and validate war. Drawing on sacred national texts, army, navy, and Ministry of Education propagandists used the throne and emperor worship to justify campaigns of domestic "purification" and the waging of foreign wars. The emperor wielded the official teaching to validate war and strengthen his own control over the military. He and the ruling elites were also at one in wanting to maintain their power at home and rid China of the Western imperialist presence.

In 1939, when Germany started World War II in Europe, the "holy war" that Japanese soldiers had been told they were fighting in China was reinterpreted as a war for "universal brotherhood," designed to extend the emperor's "benevolent rule" and "benevolent heart" to all the oppressed peoples of Asia. After December 1941, it was presented as a war for "eternal peace in the Orient." If today this propaganda sounds absurd to us, it is no more absurd than the American tradition of equating the nation-state and chosenness, or the lies that the Bush administration uses to justify external and internal wars on the "ism" of terror.

Few of the three million Japanese who went to their deaths during the Asia-Pacific War ever questioned their country's right to lead East Asia. They imagined they were building a new paternalistic order to protect Asia and Japan from the imperialism of the U.S. and Europe. Americans soldiers who have been bringing death, destruction, and humiliation to Afghanistan and Iraq assume a similar right to lead, though most know nothing of the languages, culture, and history of the countries they now occupy. Today they are dying and being maimed daily for reasons that have little to do with the lies their government is telling them about the reasons for the war and continued occupation.

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In the wake of World War II, conflicts emerged with the Soviet Union, which led American leaders to reset their national goals. Almost overnight they defined both a new enemy and another altruistic mission to democratize the world in an epic struggle between good and evil.

Exclusive possession of a stockpile of doomsday

weapons and the bombers to deliver them strengthened evangelical belief in the power of the U.S. and its duty to set the world aright.18 The Truman administration had dropped the Bomb "not only to end a bloody war but also to display its awesome power and so to alter and reshape the postwar world to come."19 Most Americans thought the use of atomic bombs against Japan a fitting capstone to their great victory over the Axis. Abroad, many were more inclined to see the U.S. nuclear monopoly as an implicit threat to the Soviet Union, and to worry that a new military power had arisen, able to hold humankind itself captive to whatever dangerous design Washington policy-makers might seek to advance.

Helping to offset such fears, at least in the eyes of most Americans, were the judicial actions taken at the first international war crimes trials against German and Japanese war leaders between 1946 and 1949. Contemporaries assessed both events in the same context of messianic yearning for a better world that came with the ending of the war. But did the trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo really demonstrate that Washington was using its new God-like power to enforce the rule of law rather than the rule of the powerful?

At Nuremberg the proceedings advanced on the basis of an international agreement, signed August 8, 1945, two days after the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb on a largely non-military target, virtually obliterating the entire city of Hiroshima and taking by year's end 140,000 lives. Chief prosecutor Robert H. Jackson managed to have the Charter of the International Military Tribunal reflect his broad vision of aggression against other states as the "supreme crime" in international law. The ensuing court-room drama, however, focused increasingly on the German genocide of European Jewry, inadvertently shifting attention from "aggression" to "crimes against humanity" and conventional war crimes.20

Thanks partly to the way that Jackson framed the Charter for the European war, the legal categories of "crimes against humanity" and "war crimes" posed little threat to the U.S. "Nuremberg principles" allowed Washington and its allies to achieve impunity for their own acts. On some charges they even helped acquit many Nazis, including Admiral Doenitz, Hitler's designated successor as Fuhrer, who had led Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare against Allied ships, their passengers and crews in the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the German trials were the product of a multilateral negotiating process among the four Allied governments occupying Germany. The same could not be said of the Tokyo trial, held against the backdrop of U.S. naval and air control of the entire Pacific and near total U.S domination of Japan.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the tribunal's sole convening authority, was intent on preventing war responsibility from being attributed to the emperor and avoiding any international adjudication of Japan's chemical and biological warfare in China. He was equally concerned to protect the United States from legal or moral liability for its mass extermination of civilians by conventional and atomic bombing. When a lawyer for the defense at the Tokyo trial attempted to do just that by "setting Japanese civilian losses at Hiroshima and Nagasaki against Chinese civilian losses," the judges overruled him.21 Yet the un-addressed questions of Emperor Hirohito's absence from the trial and massive American war crimes against Japanese non-combatants hung over the proceedings.

The Allied powers in Western Europe had bombed methodically, as had Germany and Japan at a much earlier date. But in Asia the U.S. had gone several steps further. General Curtis LeMay, preparing for firebombing raids on Japan, had used B-29s to destroy large parts of the Japanese-occupied Chinese city of Hankow in December 1944, giving no thought to its presumably friendly civilian population.22

Turning his B-29 fleets from occupied cities in China to cities in the Japanese home islands, he probably killed more Japanese civilians in five months of terror bombing than the estimated deaths from five years' Allied bombing of Germany.23

In the end, U.S. leaders avoided a real public debate over the terror bombing of cities and the development and use of nuclear weapons. Having set a new standard of killing the innocent, they perceived no irony in the Allied side having inflicted "forms of total war far in excess of what the aggressor Axis powers might have imagined."24

President Harry Truman, the first "Dictator of Human Destiny,"25 saw himself as a crusader for freedom and against evil, which in practice meant against any nation that entertained geopolitical ambitions and refused to accept a subordinate relationship to the U.S. As he embarked on fighting the Cold War against the Soviet Union and waging the arms race, Truman did more than create a "mission." Recognizing that anti-communism needed the explicit sanction of religion to generate popular support for a policy of global military intervention, he moved to enlist the Christian churches in a crusade against godless communism and atheistic Marxism.26

From Truman forward, for over forty years, politicians and foreign policy elites sold the Cold War to the American people as one of history's greatest religious crusades, "a global conflict between the god-fearing [Christians] and the godless [Communists]."27 But until the presidency of John F. Kennedy (1960-63), the American people had not been fully mobilized to fight this great ideological crusade for what he called "Freedom under God versus ruthless, godless tyranny."28 The hawkish but cool Kennedy and his liberal advisers, starting with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, were the first to turn U.S. foreign policy in a decidedly more militaristic, criminal direction. The terrorist offensive they launched in the early 1960s against nationalist regimes around the world continues to this day.

In 1961-62, Kennedy's anti-communist crusaders moved beyond Eisenhower's policy of backing state terrorist regimes in Latin America and "South Vietnam" to a more active fostering of outright military dictatorships and deploying U.S. special forces abroad.29 Around the same time, his administration set the CIA to work teaching domestic spying and torture techniques to the police forces of U.S. client regimes around the world. The CIA method of "no touch torture," applied in Afghanistan and Guantanamo for the past three years, was first codified in a CIA training manual of 1963 and "disseminated globally to police in Asia and Latin America."30 Under Kennedy's reign in November 1961 McNamara's Pentagon drew up the first plan for an armed attack against "South Vietnam." Its implementation early the next year marked the real start of the Vietnam War.31

In 1963, the last year of Kennedy's presidency, civil rights leader Martin Luther King led a march on Washington, where he delivered a powerful sermon that was "directly in line with a long tradition of apocalyptic Protestant preaching." In King's "I Have a Dream" speech, "Black America is to be the redeemer nation, a 'light unto the Gentiles': white America the nation redeemed."32 At the close of his speech King invoked what Clifford Longley terms "the old dream of Protestant Millenarianism: the vision of a perfect world in which Christ reigns for a thousand years"33

What is so striking is not King's reiteration of the "old dream" or his positive message of Christian humility and non-violent resistance to oppression, or even his sense that blacks were a chosen "people" just like the ancient Israelites. Rather it is that King turned the higher morality against its White claimants while sounding the

themes of American greatness and exceptionalism. Who could resist such rhetoric? Not the privileged power-holders who believed "America" was already a "great nation" and were using America-worship to advance their own objectives.

A few months earlier, police in Birmingham, Alabama had turned fire hoses on civil rights protestors, and in June Alabama Governor George Wallace had rallied segregationists against the civil rights movement. Especially appalled by Wallace's attempt to block school integration were liberal Americans -- most notably the Kennedy brothers in the White House who until then had been conflicted about, if not outright opposed to, the civil rights movement. When King delivered his message, they identified with it because they too were repelled by "red neck" racism with its long history of anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish sentiment.

Overnight King became a liberal hero. But liberal sentiment cooled when he continued to speak for the poor and oppressed, called for economic justice, and in 1967 finally joined other black leaders who had already been speaking out against the Vietnam War. By the time of King's assassination in 1968, while en route to lead another march on Washington, a nationwide white, conservative backlash against the civil rights and antiwar movements was beginning to emerge. In that white-backlash the Chosen People theme would again figure prominently.

Following in Kennedy's footsteps, his successor Lyndon B. Johnson escalated the Vietnam conflict and lied to Congress and the nation about his intentions. In Johnson's wake came Richard Nixon who stocked the right-wing backlash, the short-lived presidency of Gerald Ford, and the failure to indict for war crimes any senior leader of the Vietnam War.

Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter took office aspiring to be a peace president. A born-again Evangelical Christian, he had earlier "organized an 'American Fighting Men's Day' and exhorted the citizens of Georgia to turn their motor vehicle headlights on in order to 'honour the flag as 'Rusty' [Lt. William Calley, convicted of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam] had done."34 After being sworn in, Carter talked in vague terms about the moral failures of his predecessors and his own human rights agenda for U.S. foreign policy. But after failing to rein in the Pentagon, the State Department, or the CIA, his administration quickly resumed business as usual with murderous regimes in Latin America, Iran, and Afghanistan.35

Carter extended to the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf the Monroe Doctrine, with its implication of future, "single-power" American supremacy in the Middle East as in the Western hemisphere.36 Connecting with voters by constantly evoking God, the Bible, and his own religious beliefs, Carter fixed religion more firmly at the center of public discourse.

When the Hollywood actor and corporate spokesman, Ronald Reagan, became president in 1981, the millenarian tendency in its toxic expression reemerged. During the 1980 election campaign Reagan and various conservatives in Congress looked for a political pitch that would appeal to the least sophisticated voters. They decided to moralize the election, and to give the Christian Right a respectability, visibility, and political clout that it had not previously had. Not for the first time, secular nationalists at the center called on religion to buttress their policies and succeeded in organizing right-wing Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

Once in office Reagan invoked for Americans John Winthrop's vision of the new Chosen people covenanted with God. Winthrop, leader of the seventeenth-century colony in Massachusetts Bay, had sanctioned the Puritans to live in the "shining city on a hill" and be a model for humanity to imitate. Reagan set about organizing

"traditional Protestant interests in fundamentalist religion, censorship, and stricter divorce and anti-abortion laws" -- in contrast to the politics of the 1960s and 1970s, which had "denounced the small-town mentality of Puritanism."37

During the 1980s, cold war hatreds and the bipolar vision of the world, which sustained such hatreds, were waning. Reagan tried to reverse these trends by bringing the nation back to the 1950s. He re-labeled the Soviet Union "the evil empire" and inaugurated a new round of investment in nuclear weapons and missiles, including the Star Wars Programs.38 John F. Kennedy, who had started the outright U.S. aggression in Vietnam and accelerated the nuclear arms race, was Reagan's model; and it was Kennedy's precedents that Reagan followed in his massive peacetime military build-up and his aggressive targeting of third-world nations.39 Reagan's "war on terrorism" aimed mainly at aiding "death squads" and assisting authoritarian governments in suppressing the rise of popular nationalist movements in tiny Latin American and Caribbean countries: Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

The ending of the ideological cold war in 1989 and the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, largely for internal reasons, reinforced the victory claims of those who saw themselves as the chosen people. Neo-conservative advocacy groups pressured the White House to take a more confrontational approach to tyrannous regimes like Saddam Hussein's and not to worry about the qualms of allies. They sought a bigger role for the military and the development of newer, more dangerous weaponry that no other nation could hope to match. As neo-con ideologues and senior Pentagon officials increased their influence in national policy decision-making, redemption rhetoric grew stronger.

With American leaders free to operate in a world without military rivals, the most hawkish of the geopolitical planners -- the secular ideologues who proudly called themselves neo-conservatives -- pondered how to construct an international order that would insure permanent American domination of the planet. They focused on overthrowing foreign governments that still defied American power, especially in regions of enormous strategic value like the Persian Gulf and Iraq.

The messianic-millenarian spirit in U.S. foreign policy gained strength from the short "humanitarian war" that President George W. H. Bush waged against Iraq in 1990-1, and the many self-declared "humanitarian interventions" that Bill Clinton ordered during the 1990s against weak, impoverished states. Both presidents contributed to making people in the United States feel that war was not a vain, senseless slaughter, as Vietnam had been, but a "good" activity. The message sent out under both presidents was: War halted needless violence against civilians and inflicted heavy losses on the "enemy" while leaving U.S. forces practically unscathed.

Clinton's Democratic presidency was shaped by his conservative Republican economic policies, a stock market boom, and episodes of personal scandal. The Republicans skillfully used the latter to stoke the fires of religious revivalism and to provoke a spirit of harsh moralism in American politics. Under Clinton the U.S. increased its dependency on foreign capital and energy resources, and elites in both parties came to recognize that military power was the one dimension in which the U.S. reigned supreme.40 By the time of his illegal Kosovo War in 1999, the radical neo-cons had targeted both the UN Security Council, which had refused to explicitly authorize the war, and the very principles of external sovereignty and equality among states, upon which rested the entire international legal order.

When Clinton left office the following year, the

rule of law had been weakened. The military budget as a percent of GDP had fallen from 4.7 to 3.0 but still "remained at a colossal $295 billion by 2000," more than the amount spent by nearly all other countries combined.41 Thanks to the burdens of unacknowledged empire, expectations of a post-cold war "peace dividend" had been dashed forever.

John R. Bolton of the American Enterprise Institute, soon to be appointed by presidential candidate George W. Bush as an undersecretary of state, and Condoleeza Rice, a born-again Christian, whom Bush, two years earlier, had tapped to be his foreign policy advisor, hinted in 2000 at what lay ahead: the advent of unabashed unilateralism supported by a resurgent moralism.

Bolton, writing in an academic law journal, targeted the very idea of a system of international law based on legitimate sources of authority. Law, he argued, had only rhetorical and political value. Because of its unique status the United States could not be "legally bound" or constrained in any way by its international treaty obligations. Americans needed to "be unashamed, unapologetic, uncompromising American constitutional hegemonists." In effect, Bolton wanted them to honor only the legal truths constructed by lawyers in the White House, Pentagon, and Justice Department. That would leave "senior decision makers" free to use force unilaterally.42

Rice, in her article in the Jan/Feb. 2000 issue of Foreign Affairs, was equally contemptuous of international law. She claimed that in the pursuit of its national security the United States no longer needed to be guided by "notions of international law and norms" or "institutions like the United Nations" because it was "on the right side of history." The "right side" of course meant "God's side," a conviction bolstered by the removal of the Soviet check on U.S. military supremacy. Clinton had also fostered the idea of the U.S. being on the right side of history, though more with capitalist globalization in mind and less with Rice's aim of discarding the Westphalian concept of formal equality of states in order to insure permanent U.S. dominance.

By the time the Republican Party took over the presidency (2001) and later both houses of Congress, the conditions for a new period of American military intervention were in place. In early 2001, the ideological extremists whom Bush brought to power set about implementing a version of international order based on their unquestioned belief in America's destiny to rule the world. Their decision-making soon began to influence the norms, policies, and organizational sub-cultures of the principal executive branch departments.

The Bush administration inaugurated an era in which the U.S. withdrew from arms control, environmental, and human rights treaties, and conducted its foreign policy as an unapologetic hegemon, openly disdainful of the rule of law, the interests of other states, and the concerns of other peoples. Not since the Nazis came to power in Germany and imperial Japan seceded from the League of Nations (March 1933), abrogated the Washington Arms Reduction Treaty (December 1934), and withdrew from the London Naval Conference on arms reduction (January 1936) had a major power so quickly lost the trust of other governments.

The ground for this takeover of government in the U.S. by Republican extremists had been prepared partly by the recasting of politics and economic policy along neoliberal lines, and partly by alliances forged and bargains struck between politicians and large corporations. According to the neoliberal orthodoxy, good meant globalization, neo-mercantilist foreign economic policies, and an unfettered free market economy, in which the wealth of the few "trickled down" to the many. Evil meant tax progressivity, welfare, "liberal morality," and a strong federal

government pursuing spending policies that help the many. Clinton and the Democrats preached a moderate version of neoliberalism; the Republican revivalists in the right-wing think tanks and churches a more extreme kind. In both cases the main beneficiaries have been unaccountable U.S. corporations, banks, and security markets.

By the late-1990s the U.S. economy, marked by a new wave of corporate concentration, was surging. Inevitably accompanying the boom came increased social inequality and moral decay at the top. Within the corporate managerial class at the height of the stock market bubble during Clinton's second term, unethical behavior, rule breaking, and plundering of the public increased significantly.

Congress abetted this corporate corruption through legislative deregulation (specifically, the complete repeal of New Deal-era financial regulation), and the granting of protection from liability lawsuits to large, well-connected firms like Halliburton. Meanwhile, at the state level legislatures enacted the anti-people agendas of the big corporations with consequences detrimental to the public good. In Texas the corruption increased after Republican Governor George W. Bush deregulated the Texas energy market at the behest of the now defunct Enron Corporation. The climax was reached in 2000-2001 when Enron, through its lobbyists, became the cash box for the state's Republican Party, today controlled from Washington by House majority leader Tom DeLay, advocate of "a biblical worldview" in U.S. politics.43

Yet another development along the path to war that followed Clinton's presidency was long-term demographic trends in the U.S. South and West. Population shifts in these regions set the stage for national political realignments. From 1964 onward, precisely because President Johnson had signed the Civil Rights Act, the South became potentially the largest political base for the Republicans. Over the next three decades White (and to a lesser extent, Black) migration from the north, combined with a realignment of political support, transformed the eleven states of the old Confederacy into the largest region in the nation, and an integral part of the Republican electoral coalition.

These were also the Bible belt states, marked by special forms of a vague yet distinctive religious culture.44 Here flourished the worldview of tens of millions of Bible "literalists," "conservative fundamentalists," and "millenarians." The literalists believe in a literal interpretation of scripture as do the conservative fundamentalists. Both tend toward Manichaean thinking but the latter are also at odds with certain principles of modern science, and more focused on a catastrophic end-time struggle between the forces of good and evil. Their mind-set is particularly supportive of moral crusades, patriarchalism, and militarism. The "millenarians" await the second coming of Jesus but have different views of the millennium and the forms it will take. They are both blacks and whites, this-worldly and other-worldly, liberals opposed to Bush as well as conservatives who fervently support him.

Concurrent to the rise of the South, Western states also experienced a significant population increase at the expense of California. Many of them became strongholds of right-wing conservatism and anti-minority prejudice. Conservative westerners chafed at federal government regulation and were deeply resentful of "presumed domination by the East." In this region the exaltation of the civil religion of "America" and support for fundamentalism, militarism, and conservative causes were particularly strong, which is one reason the West became a major source of money for the Republican Party.45

By 1994, when this process of demographic change was reaching full force, "aggressively conservative" white Southerners controlled

virtually all the key leadership positions in the House of Representatives.46 And the ideas of conservative whites and neo-conservative thinkers -- core supporters of the Republican Party that westerners like Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan reinvented by exploiting racism and bigotry -- dominated the nation's political discourse.47 Republicans and Democrats alike embraced the notion that the U.S. had a God-given mission to spread its values, promote its corporate interests, and establish its military presence everywhere.

Over the next six years, the rightward shift of U.S. political institutions, which began with Reagan, continued. Influenced by the nation's new status as the world' sole superpower, rabid interventionism became publicly acceptable. Nevertheless, the public still had not come around to favoring the blatantly confrontational, unilateralist approach to world problems that neo-conservative ideologues and militarists had been developing since the cold war ended.

In December 2000 the conservative Supreme Court selected as president the candidate with the hidden past who had clearly failed to win a majority of the popular vote. The "born-again" evangelical Christian, George W. Bush, like Rumsfeld, Cheney, and the other Reaganites he gathered around him, set out to transform the international order, confident that forging common understandings with allies was no longer necessary. A few days after the inauguration, at his very first National Security Council meeting, Bush made "regime change" in Iraq his top-secret priority.48 For the next eight months the Bush "team" floundered, obsessed with Iraq and indifferent to al-Qaeda and radical Islamic millenarianism. The only serious security problem confronting the American people since Islamic militants attempted to destroy the World Trade Center in 1993 totally eluded them. Meanwhile their unilateralist rhetoric and repeated treaty pullouts were arousing the world's concern.

Then on September 11, 2001, a small group of mainly Saudi terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, symbol of U.S. financial power, and damaged the Pentagon, icon of U.S. militarism. Over 2,800 were killed. Disbelief at the spectacular attack, followed by feelings of vulnerability and anger, spread.49 The next day, after Bush told his advisers gathered in the White House's emergency operations center that "nothing else" but war matters, "Rumsfeld noted that international law allowed the use of force only to prevent future attacks and not for retribution." Whereupon Bush yelled, "No. I don't care what the international lawyers say, we are going to kick some ass."50

Bush laid out his Administration's response when he vowed before Congress (September 20, 2001), to destroy "every terrorist group of global reach." Depicting the problem in theological terms as a fight between good and evil, he declared that "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."51 That evening, at a private White House dinner, Bush asked Tony Blair to support his removal of Iraq's Saddam Hussein from power.52 Britain, the other nation with a "Chosen People paradigm," and a half-century of loyal service to U.S. administrations, became Bush's first ally for war on Iraq.53

Denied the facts needed to assess the situation and constantly misinformed by their government and the corporate mass media, they easily swallowed the lies that were the Administration's main justification for its policy of regime change in Iraq. When Hussein's alleged stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction failed to materialize, the neo-cons shifted to arguing that (in George Bush's words) Americans had an historic duty to use their "wonder-working power" to spread "democracy" and "freedom" to countries whose peoples were unable to or incapable of deciding for themselves their best political arrangements.54

In today's quasi-wartime environment, Bush continues to pursue a fraudulent crusade to "rid the world of evil." He claims that God "called" him to run for president and "to strike at al-Qaeda" and Saddam Hussein. He lards his speeches with religious rhetoric, talks repeatedly of "God's will," "God's Master Plan," the "American mission," saving and destroying "souls."55 He aggressively woos religious groups, a key part of his electoral base. His re-election campaign focuses especially on the conservative Christian churches, encouraging pastors and ministers to enroll their "flocks" in support of the "values" represented by the Republican cause.56 All the while he and his circle spread messianic nationalist myths and lie to the public with persistence and clarity.

Until the Abu Ghraib torture photos and videos, roughly half the nation, including many who are either among the least informed or the most misinformed of social and political realities, still gave tacit support to Bush's domestic and foreign policy agendas.57 Public polls indicate this is changing, as more Americans perceive the consequences of his disastrous policies in Iraq and Central Asia and the consequences of his fiscal and welfare policies at home.

Nevertheless, Bush still retains the loyalty of his natural constituents -- conservative Christians, political reactionaries, and corporate millionaires who profit most from his tax cuts. He even benefits from the fake "alliance" of convenience between the religious fringe groups: specifically, those neo-conservative evangelicals, who see in the birth and growth of Israel the fulfillment of biblical prophecy leading to the second coming of Christ, and Jewish fundamentalists who also anticipate the arrival of the "messiah" once all of biblical Israel has been "reclaimed" from the Palestinians.

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Millenarianism in the G.W. Bush era is an essential part of U.S. domestic politics. It denotes the vision that rationalizes aggression in Iraq while overlooking the geopolitical objectives -- control of energy resources and bases -- for which the war was undertaken. Millenarianism is also the rhetoric that renders publicly acceptable rabid global-interventionism as well as isolationism, which for many Republicans and Democrats are merely two sides of the same coin -- inverted forms of a simplistic, crusading approach to the world.58 Above all, millenarianism is the historic expression of a resurgent U.S. imperialism asserting its Puritan and Evangelical Christian roots while struggling to extend its hegemonic leadership. Bush-style millenarian politics, on the other hand, is hypocritical posturing about God, the patriarchal family, and "values" by calculating "realists," right-wing militarists, and Christian rightists, all bent on assuring American dominion.

During the presidency of George W. Bush the neo-conservative quest for global domination through unprovoked, preventive war found its stride. Government attention turned away from real problems of worsening global and domestic poverty, environmental havoc, and proliferating weapons of mass destruction. Bold assertions of U.S. military power and dishonest claims of moral authority to tell others how to behave followed. In less than a year, the Bush administration set an example of lawlessness for governments around the world, affording them a new justification for unleashing a dynamic of repression against their own people. Thereafter the administration spread chaos and devastation in Iraq, and instability throughout the Middle East. It also secretly authorized the U.S. armed forces to use torture (as had been done in Vietnam) knowing that it was a criminal offense under law.

If Hiroshima and Nagasaki, My Lai and Abu Ghraib, did not dent, let alone shatter, the conquering Chosen People ideology, what

chance is there that U.S. failure in Iraq will? As long as U.S. political and economic institutions elude thoroughgoing reform, and American officials at the highest level enjoy total immunity for their crimes, the historic cycle will recur. Another group of privileged elites will take charge of this imperial republic and, shielded by the U.S. system of political non-accountability, skillfully manipulate the national faith to justify perpetual war.

Notes

1. Raymond Aron, "History and Politics," in Politics and history: Selected Essays by Ramond Aron, Transl. by Miriam B. Conant (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 239.

2. Lawyers working for the chief agencies of the executive branch recently expressed this as the notion of a president's "inherent constitutional authority," as commander-in-chief, to set aside the laws of war, order torture, and do anything else he wants in waging war.

3. Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968, 1980), p. 34.

4. Ronald A. Wells, "Religion in American National Life: What Went Wrong," The Mennnonite Quarterly Review, Vol. 65, No. 2 (1991), p. 124.

5. Clifford Longley, "The Religious Roots of American Imperialism," Global Dialogue, Vol. 5, Nos. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 2003) p. 41.

6. For the term "conquering Chosen People," see Francis Jennings, The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), p. 285.

7. Tuveson, Redeemer Nation; also see Bush's speech at Ellis Island on the first anniversary of 9/11 attacks, as reported in New York Times (Sept. 12, 2002).

8. Clifford Longley, Chosen People: The Big Idea That Shapes England and America (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 2003), p. 281.

9. Longley, "The Religious Roots of American Imperialism," Global Dialogue, Vol. 5, Nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 2003), p. 41.

10. Bush's words, as quoted by Longley (Ibid., p. 41), were: "Much time has passed since Jefferson arrived for his inauguration. The years and changes accumulate. But the themes of this day he would know: our nation's grand story of courage and its simple dream of dignity. We are not this story's author, who fills time and eternity with purpose. Yet his purpose is achieved in our duty, and our duty is fulfilled in service to one another. . . This work continues. This story goes on. And an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm. God bless you all, and God bless America."

11. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/prints/200206.

12. Wall Street Journal, June 7, 2004, as noted by Eric Umansky, "Reagan Reverberates," Slate, posted same day.

13. Lisa Ashkenaz Croke, "American Lawyer Finds New Evidence of Recent Torture in Iraq," The New Standard (Aug. 30, 2004). Available at http://newstandardnews.net/content/?action=show_item&itemid=911.

14. Duncan Campbell and Suzanne Goldenberg, "They said this is America . . . if a soldier orders you to take off your clothes, you must obey," The Guardian (June 23, 2004).

15. Matthew Gutman, "Analysis: Will Rolling Heads Crush Rebellion, or Iraq Itself?" Jerusalem

Post online edition, April 11, 2004.

16. Josh White, "Methods Used on 2 at Guantanamo," Washington Post (June 4, 2004), p. A16.

17. The political yonaoshi (setting the world right) tradition also contained millenarian beliefs but had died out at the end of the 19th century. The Nichiren sect of Buddhism as well as Zen, which encouraged action based on intuition, mainly influenced Japanese military officers during the 1920s and '30s. In 1931 Staff Officer Ishiwara Kanji, a devotee of the Nichiren sect, masterminded Japan's conquest of Manchuria, which abruptly ended Tokyo's cooperation with the great powers. Ishiwara also envisaged a permanent era of universal peace following a world war in which Japan would emerge victorious over the U.S. On Buddhism and war see, Brian Daizen Victoria, "When God(s) and Buddhas Go to War," in Mark Selden & Alvin Y. So, eds., War and State Terrorism: The United States, Japan, and the Asia-Pacific in the Long Twentieth Century (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, Pub., Inc., 2004), pp. 91-118.

18. Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence, Captain America and the Crusade Against Evil: the Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004).

19. Robert Jay Lifton, Superpower Syndrome: America's Apocalyptic Confrontation with the World (New York: Thunder's Mountain Press/Nation Books, 2003), p. 5.

20. Jonathan A. Bush, "The 'Supreme Crime' and Its Origins: The Lost Legislative History of the Crime of Aggressive War," Columbia Law Review, 102/2324 (Dec. 2002).

21. Timothy Brook, "The Tokyo Judgment and the Rape of Nanking," Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 60, No. 3 (August 2001), p. 682.

22. H. Bruce Franklin, War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), p. 109.

23. Philip Nobile, ed., Judgment at the Smithsonian (New York: Marlowe & Co., 1995), from "Smithsonian Script," p. 14.

24. Winston P. Nagan, "Nuclear Arsenals, International Lawyers, and the Challenge of the Millennium," Yale Journal of International Law, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1999), p. 487.

25. The term comes from American science fiction of the period before and during World War I. Truman, then "a young Missouri farmer and businessman," avidly devoured such literature. See Franklin, War Stars, p. 53.

26. First to become actively involved was the anti-Semitic Pius XII. Truman next tried unsuccessfully to mobilize Protestant leaders of the World Council of Churches in a "religious anti-communist front" against the Soviet Union. He failed because he completely ignored the historic schism in Christianity between the Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations. See Dianne Kirby, "Harry S. Truman's International Religious Anti-Communist Front, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the 1948 Inaugural Assembly of the World Council of Churches," Contemporary British History, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 2001), pp. 37-41.

27. Kirby, p. 35.

28. Richard J. Walton, Cold War and Counter-Revolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 9.

29. "Six military coups overthrew popular regimes during the Kennedy years," notes Noam Chomsky, "ten more later; in several cases, Kennedy Administration policies contributed materially to the outcome." See his Rethinking

Camelot: JFK, the Vietnam War, and U.S. Political Culture (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1993), p. 146.

30. Alfred W. McCoy, "The Long Shadow of CIA Torture Research," in Counterpunch, Weekend Edition (May 29/31, 2004), available at http://www.counterpunch.org/mccoy05292004.html; Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism (Boston: South End Press, 1979), pp. 26-28.

31. Noam Chomsky, Rethinking Camelot.

32. Longley, Chosen People, p. 255.

33. Longley, Chosen People, p. 254.

34. Timothy L. H. McCormack, "Their Atrocities and Our Misdemeanors: The Reticence of States to Try Their 'Own Nationals' for International Crimes," in Mark Lattimer and Philippe Sands, eds, Justice for Crimes Against Humanity (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2003), p. 136.

35. Michael McClintock, Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counter-insurgency, and Counter-terrorism, 1940-1990 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), pp. 318-328.

36. See Martti Koskenniemi on the generalization of Monroeism in his, The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), p. 415.

37. Edward R. Schaffer, "The Myth of American Exceptionalism and Global Peace," in Jurgen Kleist & Bruce A. Butterfield, eds., Mythology: From Ancient to Post-Modern (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1992), p. 91.

38. Niels Thorsen, "American Religion and the Idea of Unprecedented Violence," American Studies in Scandinavia, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1986), p. 61.

39. On Kennedy. see Chomsky, Rethinking Camelot, p. 2 and the documentation that he presents throughout the study.

40. Noam Chomsky, Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), pp. 155-6.

41. Robert Pollin, Contours of Descent: U.S. Economic Fractures and the Landscape of Global Austerity (London: Verso, 2003), p. 74.

42. John R. Bolton, "Is There Really 'Law' in International Affairs?" Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems, 10/1 (Spring 2000).

43. Michael Lind, Made in Texas: George W. Bush and the Southern Takeover of American Politics (New York: Basic Books, 2003), p. 110; Paul Krugman, "Machine at Work," New York Times (July 13, 2004).

44. Charles Reagan Wilson, "The Southern Religious Culture: Distinctiveness and Social Change," Amerikastudien, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1993), pp. 360-367.

45. On the rise of the new right in the West see Richard White, 'It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own': A History of the American West (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 601-611; Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," American Historical Review, Vol. 99, No. 2 (April 1994), pp. 417-418.

46. Earl Black and Merle Black, The Rise of Southern Republicans (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002), p. 5.

47. Black and Black, pp. 398-399.

48. Reuters, Security Watch, Jan. 13, 2004, citing the disclosure of former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill.

49. Lifton, Superpower Syndrome, p. 3.

50. Richard Clarke, Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 24.

51. Cited in Allison Ehlert, "Iraq: At the Apex of Evil," Berkeley Journal of International Law 21/731 (2003), p. 8 of 43.

52. David Rose, "Bush and Blair Made Secret Pact for Iraq War," The Observer/Guardian Unlimited (April 4, 2004); Raymond Whitaker, "Blair Told US Was Targeting Saddam 'Just Days After 9/11," Independent/UK (April 4, 2004).

53. Longley, Chosen People, p. 279.

54. In his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush used the phrase "wonder-working power," "an allusion to an evangelical Christian song." See Chris Mooney, "W.'s Christian nation; how Bush promotes religion and erodes the separation of church and state," The American Prospect, v. 14 (June 2003), p. 34 (4).

55. As reported by the Israeli paper Ha'aretz, at the Aqaba Summit in early June 2003, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas alleged that Bush said: "God told me to strike at al Qaida and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East." Posted a t http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.j html?itemNo=310788

56. David D. Kirkpatrick, "Bush Allies Till Fertile Soil, Among Baptists, for Votes," New York Times (June 18, 2004).

57. Mary Leonard, "Bush presses funding for faith groups," The Boston Globe (Nov. 30, 2003), available at www.boston.com

58. Jim Lobe, private communication; also see "What a Tangled Web the Neocons Weave," Dec. 23, 2003, available at http://antiwar.com. Lobe's many excellent articles on the neo-cons and Bushite policy may be read on Alternet and Inter Press Service.

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