On 17 September 2002, the White House sent the US Congress a paper entitled *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.* Every administration is under obligation to submit a concept paper on foreign policy, but the scale of this document sent ripples across Washington, DC and around the world. On 7 October 2002, Senator Edward Kennedy said, “The administration’s doctrine is a call for 21st century American imperialism that no other nation can or should accept.” From Moscow, Beijing and other capitals around the world, the document earned rebuke and criticism. Among those who welcomed the terms of the Bush Doctrine was the Hindutva-led Indian government, whose representative, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh saw nothing “revolutionary or new” in the document. Obviously he either did not read it in total, or else he took pleasure in the sop handed down to India in it: “The United States has undertaken a transformation in its bilateral relationship with India based on a conviction that US interests require a strong relationship with India. We are the two largest democracies, committed to political freedom protected by representative government. India is moving toward greater economic freedom as well” (27). Even as the document criticized the “pace of India’s economic reforms,” we might imagine that these sentences along with a several years of a general pro-imperialist tilt by the new Indian regime accounts for the Indian government’s lack of appreciation of the imperial claims of the Bush administration.

Apart from the Indian government, Tony Blair, the Sharon administration in Israel and the US right-wing, most governments and commentators picked up on the document’s opening line as well as a sentence from its final paragraph as evidence of an unabashed US imperialism:

“The United States possesses unprecedented -- and unequaled -- strength and influence in the world” (1).

“Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in the hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States” (30).
The United States government, the Bush Doctrine states, dominates world affairs and it will do everything possible to maintain this strategic position of dominance. To justify this new direction, the Bush administration is using the terror attacks of 9/11. It argues that 9/11 has changed the course of international relations, with terror now the main adversary of freedom and unreason the main psychology of that adversary. But the general outline of the policy follows the basic argument made by civilian Hawks within the US right wing whose roots stretch, at least, to the 1976 Committee on the Present Danger. The first section of this essay will show how the language in the current Bush Doctrine draws on and recycles earlier texts, notably the work of Dick Cheney’s Team B from the administration of Bush the Elder.

Cheney’s Team B, in 1990, wanted to depart from the general theory of deterrence and adopt one of preemption. They urged the US administration to offer “global leadership” and not work in concert with other states in the United Nations. The Team B thesis has created a new military arsenal for preemption, but it has not consequently reduced the massive nuclear capability of the US created for deterrence. This point will be elaborated in part 2.

Finally, the Bush Doctrine reintroduces the notion of universal values and demands that all states adopt the Bush version of economic relations or else pay the price. “Economic freedom” or neoliberalism is the test of civilization for the Bush administration, and a state’s openness to global corporations is the measure of “freedom.” This point is elaborated in part 3.

1. The Ruse of 9/11.

Old strategies, after 9/11, the document tells us, do not count because they are anachronistic. “We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few” (1). Post-9/11, we are told, “is a new condition of life. We will adjust to it and thrive – in spite of it” (31). If this is the case, then we should expect new models to deal with the amorphous terrorist webs that span the globe. Not so.

Instead the administration’s strategy paper resembles a document prepared for then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney in early 1990. When the Berlin Wall collapsed, Cheney asked his main advisors (“Team B”) to prepare a new set of strategic concepts for the new epoch. On 21 May 1990, Team B (Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Chief of Staff Lewis “Scooter” Libby and senior foreign policy advisor Eric Edelman) argued that the US must maintain its military and political preeminence by any means.[iii] President George H. Bush’s delivered his speech on some of these concepts on 2 August 1990, the very day that Iraq annexed Kuwait, so there was little reception and scrutiny of the text. Cheney’s team continued to work on the concepts and, in March 1992, The New York Times
published excerpts from a leaked version of their Defense Planning Guidance (DPG). “Our first objective,” the DPG noted, “is to prevent the reemergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. Our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor.”[iii] The germ of the 2002 document comes from this 1992 paper.

In January 1993, Team B released “Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy,” but they knew it would not be adopted with strength by the incoming Clinton administration.[iv] The civilian Hawks went into hibernation, with one of their number, Zalmay Khalilzad putting the case forcefully in a RAND publication from 1995: the US must take preemptive steps to “preclude the rise of another global rival for the indefinite future. It is a vital US interest to preclude such a development, i.e. to be willing to use force if necessary for the purpose.”[v] To fulfill this goal, Khalilzad put forward certain necessary elements, such as that the US government must “preclude hostile hegemony over critical regions,” “hedge against reimperialization of Russia and expansion by China while promoting cooperation with both countries,” “preserve US military preeminence,” “maintain US economic strength and an open international economic system,” and “be judicious in the use of force, avoid overextension and develop ways of sharing the burden with allies.” In addition, Khalilzad noted that the US must maintain the “zone of peace,” a misnomer for NATO and the G-7.[vi]

The main participants in the Cheney team assembled under the auspices of the right-wing Project for the New American Century in 1997 to redo the same concepts into a major position paper entitled, Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century. Published in September 2000, the text operated within the Bush election campaign as the main resource for ideas on foreign policy. Written by Thomas Donnelly, the project was overseen by Robert Kagan and Gary Schmitt, but had as its advisors and interlocutors such highlights as Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby and Dov Zakheim, all players in the Bush White House as we will see below, as well as such important opinion makers as Robert Kagan and William Kristol. In its introduction, the report tells us openly of its provenance. “In broad terms, we saw the project as building upon the defense strategy outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the waning days of the Bush Administration. The Defense Policy Guidance drafted in the early months of 1992 provided a blueprint for maintaining US preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with
American principles and interests.”[vii] Those “sound” principles are being reiterated, the report argues, because a new administration will need to produce a second Quadrennial Defense Review and “we hope that the Project’s report will be useful as a road map for the nation’s immediate and future defense plans.” What is the main concept of the Project? “At present,” the Project noted, “the United States faces no global rival.” Therefore, “America’s grand strategy should aim to preserve and extend this advantageous position as far into the future as possible. There are, however, potentially powerful states dissatisfied with the current situation and eager to change it, if they can, in directions that endanger the relatively peaceful, prosperous and free condition the world enjoys today. Up to now, they have been deterred from doing so by the capability and global presence of American military power. But, as that power declines, relatively and absolutely, the happy conditions that follow from it will be inevitably undermined.” Given this scenario, “Preserving the desirable strategic situation in which the United States now finds itself requires a globally preeminent military capability both today and in the future.”[viii] In essence, the same as the Cheney plan.

The Project’s concept revived the Cheney position and used 9/11 to foist it onto the nation as the new framework for national security, one rejected a decade ago for its imperialist implications. The Bush administration that took office in January 2001 brought most of the major players who kept this flame alive into the White House:

- Dick Cheney is the Vice President.
- Lewis Libby is Cheney’s Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor to the VP
- Eric Edelman is Principal Deputy Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
- Paul Wolfowitz is Deputy Secretary of Defense
- Dov Zakheim is Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)
- Stephen Cambone is head of the Pentagon’s Office of Program Evaluation and Analysis.
- Eliot Cohen is a member of the Defense Policy Board
- Devon Cross is a member of the Defense Policy Board
- Zalmay Khalilzad is Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Gulf, Southwest Asia and other Regional Issues
- John Bolton is Under Secretary, Arms Control and International Security

In the first few months of the administration, we heard little from
them on these themes. Then 9/11 provided them with their Reichstag. Team B, along with National Security Advisor and noted civilian Hawk Condeleeza Rice, went to work to produce the September 2002 document

2. The New Long Telegram.

Each president is under obligation to offer the legislative branch a look at the main concepts for its foreign policy. Since the 1950s, the consensus around the concept of deterrence meant that most of these types of documents did not reveal much and indeed, they tended to offer warmed over versions of previous papers. The notion of deterrence came from the highly influential paper published by US diplomat George Kennan (anonymously as “X”), where he assessed Soviet diplomatic strategy and felt that the concept of “containment” would work best for US efforts. Rather than engage the Soviets in a war or in a military confrontation, this liberal diplomat argued, the US should exercise power against the Soviets to “contain” them.

“[The Soviet regime] is more sensitive to contrary force, more ready to yield on individual sectors of the diplomatic front when that force is felt to be too strong, and thus more rational in the logic and rhetoric of power. On the other hand it cannot be easily defeated or discouraged by a single victory on the part of its opponents. And the patient persistence by which it is animated means that it can be effectively countered not by sporadic acts which represent the momentary whims of democratic opinion but only be intelligent long-range policies on the part of Russia's adversaries -- policies no less steady in their purpose, and no less variegated and resourceful in their application, than those of the Soviet Union itself. In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”[ix]

The theory meant that the US should create an arsenal of nuclear devices to deter the Soviets from an attack because retaliatory fire would wipe out both adversaries. Given the mutually assured destruction (MAD), peace would reign. In 1982, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger’s Defense Policy Guidance document called for the provision of strategic forces adequate to “prevail” in a “protracted nuclear war,” a military means to break the nuclear deadlock and move toward the possibility that the US might want to win a nuclear war against the Soviets.[x] The liberal establishment was outraged by the belligerence of this document, but it was unwilling to see that deterrence itself was only the cover of a far from liberal Cold War posture by the US government (the enmity may be rooted in National Security Council Resolution 68 from 1950, written by Paul Nitze, that argued for an increase in US military
expenditure because of the “excessive strength” of the Soviet Union). In January 1974, the US announced a plan for nuclear options in a conventional war as well as for the potential of full-scale nuclear war. In June 1980, President Carter issued PD 59, a presidential directive that called for an enhanced capability to let the military wage “protracted nuclear war.” The vast nuclear capacity of the US and the new language about prevailing in a protracted nuclear war escalated the arms race that put severe pressure on the Soviet budget.

Buried in the heart of Bush’s thirty-three page report the administration jettisons the concept of deterrence, mainly because the nature of the United States’ adversary has changed from another super-power (the Soviet Union), “a generally status quo, risk-averse adversary,” to “rogue states” and “terrorists.” For the former, the “rogue states” or the “Axis of Evil” (Iran, Iraq, and North Korea), deterrence “based only upon the threat of retaliation is less likely to work against leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling the lives of their people, and the wealth of their nations” (15). For the latter, the “terrorists” (among whom the report mentions al-Qa’ida), “traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness” (15). From deterrence, we have moved to the new position of pre-emption.

“The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary act preemptively” (15).

The United States, the new strategy argues, will “transform our military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results” (16). In other words, the US will act in a lean manner across the planet, using its “allies” to do much of the infantry-type work. “The United States will require bases and stations, within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of US forces” (29). In addition, the US will sell arms to its allies, so as to make them dependent on the US for military hardware. Armies around the world, now, will be ready to play the role of the Northern Alliance to the US bombers and Special Force troops. Therefore, the document tells us that the US “should invest time and resources into building international relationships and institutions that can help manage local crises when they
The United States military, since 9/11, expanded its planetary presence with bases across Asia and in Colombia. A brief list gives us some indication of how extensive this process has been.[xi]

Afghanistan: Bagram and Kandahar Air Bases for the 101st Airborne Division and other US military personnel.: The US Fifth Fleet runs out of Manama, while the Shaikh Isa Air Base plays host to the US Air Force.

Diego Garcia: Base for B-52 aircraft and a dump for provisions.

Djibouti: US Special Forces deployed for immediate dispatch for combat.

Georgia: US Special Forces in the Pankisi Gorge in long-term joint exercises against Chechen rebels.

Jordan: 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit in place for joint exercises with the Jordanian military, and use of the Ruwayshid and Wadi-al Murbah air bases.

Kazakhstan: Use of Almaty airport.

Kuwait: Camp Doha hosts US army personnel and houses F-16 and F-15 aircraft for the missions over southern Iraq.

Kyrgyzstan: Manas air base hosts troops engaged in Afghanistan.

Oman: Musnana air base is being upgraded for B-52 use, Masirah air base hosts P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft and AC-130 gunships.

Pakistan: Jacobabad air base taken over by US air force, and use of Pasni and Dalbandin.

Philippines: Almost two thousand US Special Forces in joint operations with the Filipino army, and new base agreements to use Subic Bay.

Qatar: Refurbishment of Al Udeid air base for use as a new command and control center.

Saudi Arabia: Prince Sultan Air Base serves as an important command center for US operations.

Tajikistan: Bases at Khujand, Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube host US aircraft and personnel.

Turkey: Incirlik air base hosts more than four-dozen US aircraft, used to patrol northern Iraq.

United Arab Emirates: Use of air bases.

Uzbekistan: Khanabad air base used by US air force.

While the US does not have a base in India, 2002 was an exceptional year for US-Indian military relations. In May, the armies held a joint
exercise in Agra called Project Iroquois. In October, the two navies held the fourth in the Malabar series of naval exercises (they held the first four in 1992, 1995 and 1996, but cancelled the series after Pokhran), what some Indian naval officers said was “like a mini war.” In mid-October, eighty members of the Indian 50 (I) Para Brigade traveled to Elmendorf air base in Alaska to train in the Jeronimo Thurst war exercise with the US 1st Battalion 501 Para Infantry Regiment. Finally, the Indian and US airforces held a joint exercise in Agra (called Cope India-02) for the first time in four decades. Air Commander P. K. Venugopal said, “This exercise is primarily for sizing each other up and synergizing interoperability capabilities.” These exercises, then, prepare the Indian army to take up the cudgels for the US army in the region when the time comes. “We will continue to encourage our regional partners to take up a coordinated effort that isolates the terrorists,” says the 2002 document. “Once the regional campaign localizes the threat to a particular state, we will help ensure the state has the military, law enforcement, political and financial tools necessary to finish the task” (6). With the FBI office in New Delhi now, the elements of India’s integration into US plans is now almost complete.

While the doctrine of preemption means that the US reequip its armed forces and deploy its bombers across the world in its new bases, the nuclear arsenal of the doctrine of deterrence will remain in play. Indeed, in its Nuclear Posture Review of 2002, the administration hoped to “build smaller nuclear weapons for use in certain battlefield situations,” such as against targets that can withstand non-nuclear attack, in retaliation for nuclear, biological or chemical assaults and “in the event of surprising military developments.” Furthermore, there is to be no rollback of the nuclear arsenal already held by the US even as the logic for that enormous stockpile now seems to have been superceded. The US will now have both an “overkill” capacity as well as the ability to use national armies to join with its bombers and Special Forces to preemptively attack presumed adversaries.

All this calls for a massive military buildup, certainly larger than the scale of increase in the 1980s. The global military expenditure is estimated to be around $839 billion (based on adopted defense budgets, and not counting any secret expenditures to security forces). From 1987 to 1998, the total declined as governments moved funds away from military uses to other, more productive uses. However, since 1998 and especially since 9/11, spending on armed forces has increased exponentially. In the budget for 2003, the GWB administration slated $396 billion on the US military, about $45.5 billion above the budget for 2002 (an increase of thirteen percent). The War Resisters League take this figure and add eighty percent of the national debt to the amount and conclude that almost half the outlay of funds ($1.6 trillion) will be swallowed by the military.
At almost $400 billion, the US spends six times more than Russia, the second largest weapons hoarder on the planet and more than twenty-six times as much as the seven “rogue states” (Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria). The combined military budgets of Russia and China are $117 billion, less than a third of the US military funds. Of all incredible facts, while the planet’s military expenditure dropped from $1.2 trillion (1985) to $812 billion (2000), the US share of the total military spending increased from thirty-one percent to thirty-six percent.[xix]

2. Uncle Sam as Proxy for Global Corporations.

“The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of F-15s. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.”

(Thomas Friedman, New York Times, 1999).[xx]

The 2002 document tells us, “A strong world economy enhances our national security by advancing prosperity and freedom in the rest of the world. Economic growth supported by free trade and free markets creates new jobs and higher incomes” (17). Jobs and income, this theory runs, create happiness and prevent the spread of disaffection and so, terrorism. Whether this is acceptable or not as a theory for terrorism, it does allow the US administration to propose that the pro-growth and no-tax agenda is the only legitimate economic policy after 9/11.

The US cannot directly force countries to adopt its “pro-growth legal and regulatory policies to encourage business investment, innovation and entrepreneurial activity” and its “tax policies – particularly lower marginal tax rates – that improve incentives for work and investment,” but it can “use our economic engagement with other countries to underscore the benefits of policies that generate higher productivity and sustained economic growth” (17). There are two ways to do this, either through the regime of the “free trade agreement” or else by the use of grants-in-aid as incentives. The pillars of “free trade” are now legion:

- The North American Free Trade Agreement of 1994, to absorb Canada and Mexico.
- The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act of 2000 to divide and conquer the raw materials and productive capacity of the African continent.
- The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum made up of twenty-one states that rim the Pacific Ocean, but at work to ensure a US presence in East Asia.
- The World Economic Forum, a business-government
partnership set-up in 1970, but since 1996 hosted in Davos, Switzerland and held in New York City in 2002, at work to ensure that global, mainly US, capital dominates policy discussions around the globe.

- The World Trade Organization, whose mandate is complex and contradictory, but whose ambit is being shaped by global capital, and pushed by the US government to cut down the sovereignty of states to regulate capital (for example, while the much more stringent International Labor Organization passed a slew of over a hundred amendments to regulate capital-labor relations, the US Congress has only ratified a handful – and it is this handful that the US has now pushed forward in the WTO as the planet’s “core labor standards”).

To give aid, the US government now proposes to start a “Millennium Challenge Account” to give states outright grants if their governments “rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom” (21-22). “Every project, every loan, every grant must be judged by how much it will increase productivity growth in developing countries” (22). All other measures for human progress are to be cast aside by the Bush Doctrine.

One example of wise expenditure is in arms purchases, and it serves as a useful case for us. The US arms merchants are now in control of more than half the world market. When the US arms merchants became the dominant force in the planet, the government renamed its Office of Munitions Control to the Center of Defense Trade – a surefire way to signal the commercial values of the Pentagon. The G-8 welcomes military sales because this amounts to an international regressive tax on the impoverished states and to super profits for the monopoly military contractors. (Consider that the merger frenzy has not left this sector untouched and operates as in other business areas to reduce rather than enhance competition: Lockheed Martin comprises Lockheed, Martin Marietta, Loral and General Dynamics; Boeing is paired with McDonnell Douglas; Raytheon with Hughes). World expenditure on munitions is in excess of $800 billion, with the Pentagon absorbing a third of the produce. The US stockpiles for “Full Spectrum Domination” (including the now vastly funded Space Command, and the 527th Space Aggressor Squadron based in Colorado, but with an eye to the sky) are enormous, and they will act as the ultimate force to secure the warrant of the dollar.

Anti-nuclear activist Helen Caldicott calls the Bush administration the “Lockheed Martin Presidency” because of the large number of arms dealers in government.[xxi] Thomas Donnelley, a senior fellow at the Project for the New American Century and an employee of Lockheed Martin, wrote the most recent ancestor of the 2002 Bush Doctrine. Bruce Jackson, also of the Project and one of the main authors of the Bush foreign policy platform in 2000, is the vice
president of Lockheed. Lockheed, the largest arms dealer in the US, has a star-studded board, whose ranks once included Lynn Cheney, wife of the Vice President. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice’s senior deputy, Stephen Hadley, was the lawyer for Lockheed Martin. Rice, herself, was on the board of Chevron, who named an oil tanker after her. When they talk about “interests” and “values,” they do not mean those that motivate the bulk of the American population, but only those that drive the profit engines of the Fortune 500 firms.

The 2002 review comes just as the Bush administration drums up support for a leadership change in Iraq. Poll data, however, shows us that the US public is averse to such a war at this time, with less than thirty percent in favor of unilateral action (September 2002). The anti-war movement, which is also a movement against the Bush Doctrine, is strong and growing stronger. The National Council of Churches, the Rainbow/PUSH organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Progressive National Baptists, the National Organization for Women, the National Student Coalition for Peace and Justice, Racial Justice 9/11, Peace Action, Global Exchange, Code Pink for Peace, Iraq Pledge of Resistance, American Friends Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Raging Grannies, National Network to End the War against Iraq, Not in Our Name, United for Peace, Black Voices for Peace, Sept. 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, ANSWER, the Communist Party, and a host of other organizations are on the march against the Cowboy Internationalism of the Bush White House. They show us that there is no widespread support for the Bush policies, indeed that the White House has appropriated the tragedy of 9/11 to establish the views of the right wing into international relations. These are bleak times, but such vibrant social movements show us that history remains undecided and refuses to end.


The Clinton approach emphasized multilateral international relations as well as the use of the US government to push for neoliberal economic policies, the latter a shared goal with the Hawks, but the former anathema to them. William Clinton, *A National Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, Washington, DC: The White House, July 1994.


Elisabeth Sköns, Evamaria Loose-Weintraub, Wuyi Omitoogun and Petter Stålenheim, “Military Expenditure,” *SIPRI Yearbook*


[xix] These comparisons are courtesy of the Center for Defense Information in Washington, DC (www.cdi.org).
