

THE ELITE FOREIGN POLICY NETWORKS

HOW ISLAMOPHOBIA IS NOT JUST PREJUDICE

In 1867, the eminent encyclopedist and Protestant convert Butrus al-Bustani warned his Arab brethren about the need to defend themselves against the onslaught of "the armies of European customs, which attack Arab customs with much strength and determination."¹ Arabs have been aware of the cultural encroachment, moral incriminations and disparaging views emanating from the West since the 19th century. While studies have shown that Arabs felt a filial affinity and trust towards the United States before World War II, they became gradually and painfully familiar with the United States' broken promises and the loss of its credibility over the past hundred and fifty years.² September 11th created nothing new. It did not create Islamophobia or increase US designs on the Middle East. It did, however, unchain the paradigms, hate-speech, hate-acts and political programs and policies that were hinged by political latches and ethical filters. The attacks of September 2001 gave license to American commentators, journalists, politicians and pundits to adopt new Islamophobic discourses that were reconstituted during the 1990s. During this time, key political hacks paired up with rogue academics and pundits to resurrect, reconstitute and reinvest the most heinous of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab stereotypes under the pretense of "understanding" the "Arab mind" and discovering "why they hate us."

In the Middle East itself, the global demonizing of Muslims had captured the attention of Arabic news media since the early 1990s, far before George W. Bush's ascension. The appearance of satellite television in the Arab world serendipitously accompanied the advent of the unipolar world. News programs and talk shows engaged the texts and theories that would form the ideological basis for US foreign policy as soon as they were released, most notably publications such as Bernard Lewis' "Origins of Muslim Rage," Samuel Huntington's notorious "Clash of Civilizations," and Francis Fukayama's *End of History*.³ These texts were a signal that a shift in the political language of the United States government towards the Middle

East and Muslim world was underway, a shift that the new globalized Arab media detected.

Arab Radio and Television (ART), the first Arab satellite channel, was launched in 1993, while both al-Jazeera and the popular entertainment channel, the Lebanese Broadcasting Channel International, started broadcasting via satellite in 1996. These channels introduced Arab audiences to a language and political discourse particular to the new unipolar age as well as redefining the civil and political discourse within the Arab world.⁴ Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" became a household catchphrase in Arab news shows, invoking a familiar paradigm that posed Western and Arabo-Islamic cultures as unavoidably and perpetually at loggerheads. Through satellite media and later through the internet, Arab audiences in the 1990s became proficient in the Islamophobic register, codes and language that would structure US foreign policy and reach its apex in George W. Bush's "Freedom Agenda," then be institutionalized in the politics and presidency of Barack Obama.

This chapter maps out only the surface of deep political and personal relationships between the ideological architects, propagandists, opportunists and other stakeholders in the reformulation of Islamophobia since the 1990s. The collusion between the state, think-tanks, lobbies, private interest groups, on the one hand, and academics, activists and journalists, on the other hand, exploded with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the "success" of Operation Desert Storm. This network of relationships underpinned Bush's "war on terror," but also reached deep into the Clinton administration. If this network of policy wonks, journalists, advisors, and academics has a lighter presence in the Obama presidency, the paradigms and policies that they popularized and naturalized are currently being institutionalized and legalized by the current administration. In other words, this chapter outlines how Islamophobic paradigms in the era of globalization and American Empire are interwoven into the fabric of US policymaking, media and the American mainstream worldview irrespective of presidential administration.

Ideology Is Not a Conspiracy or Party Platform

Over the past two decades, ever-widening networks of political operatives, economic brain trusts, commentators and academics successfully normalized a myriad of Islamophobic paradigms into American mainstream civil society. During the Obama years, hate speech and prejudice towards Muslims has reached unprecedented levels long after the heady days of the Bush era. Polls have showed that forty-nine percent of Americans have an "unfavorable" opinion of Islam, while a third of Americans see it as a religion that "encourages violence."⁵ That a third of Republicans believe that Obama is a closet Muslim is not a matter of ignorance just as President Obama's back-peddling on Muslim-Americans' right to build a mosque at Park 51 in Manhattan is not due to political cowardice.⁶ They are both expressions of a deep-seated Islamophobia that is not an episodic anomaly. Islamophobia also does not arise from an inherent "clash of civilizations" between East and West nor does it arise from a historical Christian distrust of and acrimony towards their Muslim counterparts. Islamophobia does, however, comfortably emerge from white America's history of racism and discomfort

with people of color, especially when those people of color assert themselves.

But, racism is not genetic. It is a political and economic phenomenon that always has historical contexts. In the case of Islamophobia, the accepted acrimony toward Islam and Muslims arises from the United States' political role as global leader in a "unipolar world," which exercises its power most noticeably in the Middle East.⁷ This said, the mainstream discourses on Islam and Muslims would not be readily available to be deployed by the mainstream public if they had not already been effectively disseminated and used as political justifications and cultural explanations by the network of journalists, pundits, commentators, "native informants," and academics over the past two decades. In other words, the interaction mapped out in this chapter between key rogue "public intellectuals," notably Bernard Lewis, Fouad Ajami and Fareed Zakaria, and key political actors, think-tanks and "committees" is the means by which Islamophobia was introduced deep into both liberal and conservative political communities under the guise of scholarly, informed political analysis and cultural explanations. Furthermore, the networks that are traced in this chapter are but one of a series of means by which US politicians, interest groups, ideologues and policymakers continue to formulate, disseminate and use anti-Arab and anti-Muslim "analysis" to justify political, military and economic policies domestically and abroad.

The barrage of pseudo-academic writing by pundits, ideological hacks, journalists and political commentators paved the way for an environment of siege in the Arab world that was only accentuated and exacerbated after 9/11. That said, it must be made clear that this chapter rejects the idea that an explicit conspiratorial relationship exists between rogue academics, pundits, journalists and government leaders, policymakers, politicians, political operatives, businessmen and industrialists, think-tanks, political action committees, boards, "private clubs," "commissions," "councils" and "groups." This book stresses the ideological component of Islamophobia; how it is a construct that cuts across party lines, political affiliations and economic sectors in order to shore up the putative necessity and justification for American superpowerdom. To reveal this, this chapter highlights how the relationships between these various actors are political and ideological and, therefore, endemic to the system of politics and power in the United States. In fact, the effectiveness of the alliance between neoconservatives, Democratic hawks, evangelical Christians and hard-line American Zionists and their pet "intellectuals" attests less to a conspiracy than to a systemic structure by which political interest groups, political ideologues, economic interests and policymakers symbiotically serve each other's interests.

Likewise, this chapter is not comprehensive in defining the inter-relationship between pseudo-academics, political commentators, and journalists with the aforementioned extra-mural network. Nor does this chapter or book claim that the network of political, academic, media and economic actors form a cabal, conspiring behind locked doors on how to persecute Muslims and destroy Islam. In unequivocal language, the amorphous network is not a conspiracy. Rather, it is an ideological class of actors that do not share common political beliefs but do share common interests and goals, most notably, extending the longevity of global capitalism and the United States predominance of it. In other language, the term "elites" could simply replace the world network. However, I use the term "network" because the figures deserving

mention in this chapter are really only a cursory sample of the larger class of national elites. In other words, the “network” mapped in this book is only a cursory sampling of the inter-relationship between different voices, contributors, and stakeholders in determining the public discourses that enable US foreign policy. They are, quite unfortunately, only a representative tip of the iceberg of deep-rooted ideological animosity towards Muslims, if not also the people of the South, in North American political culture.

Since the rise and fall of George W. Bush, many critical journalists and scholars have marked the origins of the ideological coup that the neocons pulled off in the 2000 elections. Among the most forceful studies, David Altheide shows how the Project for a New American Century engaged in a “public conspiracy” starting in 1992, advocating military intervention and regime change in Iraq. This massive propaganda campaign fed a compliant media selective and contextless information that would form the foundation for an Iraq invasion and occupation.⁸ This chapter can offer little new on the inner workings of the minds of Bush and his coterie and even less on the intricacies of how such a coup occurred. However, this chapter does seek to make a connection between the radical ideological shifts underway in the 1990s and the activation of Islamophobia to justify the political and economic agenda that accompanied globalization at the same time and beyond. Indeed, we will see in this chapter how gurus of Islamophobia interacted with key political figures, policymakers and media outlets. This association explains one of the means by which Islamophobic analysis was formulated and deployed to further American political agendas in the Middle East by inculcating the American public with racist stereotypes and analysis that comfortably fit with its own racist unconscious.

The Network of a Media Intellectual

Soon after the attacks of 9/11, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz invited a group of “academics,” journalists, policymakers and “experts” to a secret meeting in the White House. Bob Woodward reports that Wolfowitz told the President of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), Christopher DeMuth, that, “The U.S. government, especially the Pentagon, is incapable of producing the kinds of ideas and strategy needed to deal with a crisis of the magnitude of 9/11.”⁹ Alongside high-ranking military and State Department officials and members of the Bush cabinet, the intellectual muscle of this “war on terror” caucus was then to center on Fareed Zakaria, Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami along with other life-long anti-Arab, pro-Israel ideologues and activists.¹⁰

Zakaria was the darling token of the right, a rising star and already *Newsweek*’s youngest chief editor. Raised in a prominent secular Muslim family in India, with his father an official within the ruling Congress Party, Zakaria rose to prominence in the nineties due to his conservative political pedigree. He graduated with a Ph.D. from Harvard as a protégé of Samuel Huntington. Handsome and articulate, he made a perfect talking head for the new Right. While reaching the position of managing editor of the influential beltline *Foreign*

Affairs and then *Newsweek*, he developed ties with the old Republican guard as well as the neoconservative hawks. Unlike Lewis, however, Zakaria has gracefully refashioned himself as a centrist media personality who speaks to a far larger crowd than the now démodé neoconservatives.

Bernard Lewis, professor emeritus at Princeton University, acted as the aged and distinguished “doyen” of Middle East studies. By 2008, Zakaria and Lewis would be named among the world’s top 100 intellectuals by *Foreign Policy*. Fouad Ajami, on the other hand, is a professor at Johns Hopkins University, who has desperately tried to insinuate himself into the good graces of the Right since the 1980s. In fact, both Lewis and Ajami have been in cahoots with the neoconservative community for decades. They are rogue academics whose scholarship harbored subtle and, at times, not so subtle political agendas. They both keenly recognized the political relevance of the Soviet Union’s disintegration vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Middle East politics. Lewis and Ajami eagerly became “public intellectuals” during Operation Desert Storm and were quickly adopted by the political factions within the Beltline.

Wolfowitz, Perle and Rumsfeld’s meetings were milestones. They codified a policy statement that designated the invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein as among the highest priorities for US foreign policy in the new war on terror.¹¹ Zakaria disputes that he was aware that these conclaves were anything more than “brain-storming” sessions.¹² However, we know of his participations in these meetings at a time when he would be one of the most vocal, visible and influential proponents of regime change in Iraq. Within a week of 9/11, Zakaria, Lewis, and Ajami were already considered the brain trust for Wolfowitz’s “Delta of Terrorism” paper and policies that, by November 2001, were all but a fait accompli.

The relationships between the White House and Zakaria, Lewis, Ajami and other minor league ideological hacks who pose as intellectuals are as intricate as they are disconcerting. These rogue academics and journalists had positioned themselves perfectly within a network of powerful political circles and think-tanks that opened the doors for them to assume their public roles in the “war on terror.”

Think-Tanks and Policy Institutes

Think-tanks, policy “committees” and “councils,” institutes and policy organizations have been the mainstay of Washington “intellectual” culture for decades. Yet, the hot bed of rightist activism in the 1990s made such institutions particularly salient. And, indeed, come the Bush years, the cadres sharing in institutional affiliations would spring forth to form an ideological phalanx that would prosecute many of the White House’s agendas. Zakaria’s membership in a plethora of committees and boards is informative and representative of the political network in which political commentators, journalists and rogue academics are ensconced. These memberships and associations reveal the intimacy between high profile journalists, political commentators and editors and the economic and political power elite. Whether or not these relationships constitute a cabal

or conspiratorial fraternity is irrelevant. What they do form is a political culture that not only formulates, then justifies, United States foreign and economic policies but also produces campaigns to ensure these policies are integrated into the American mainstream easily so as to solicit its support. In other words, these groups, fraternities, committees and associations serve as a means to design foreign, domestic and economic policies as well as devise means by which these policies can be sold to, and supported by, the American people, who conflate the interests of the American political and economic elite with the interests of the white middle class.

Zakaria's connections and filial groups within the political establishment intertwine with his equally extensive ties to the media and private sectors. For an editor of one of North America's leading news magazines, his place within the *political* establishment is telling. For example, Zakaria was a member of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) during the Bush years. The CSIS was founded by David Abshire, Cold War hawk and former counselor to President Reagan, along with the legendary Admiral Arleigh Burke. Currently headed by the veteran senior ex-senator Samuel Nunn, the CSIS retooled itself after the Cold War into one of the leading policy institutes that consult the executive branch, Congress and the Departments of State, Defense, Homeland Security and Energy. Its board shares many members with the Defense Policy Board, which acts as the informal, out-of-house advisory committee to the Defense Department. The CSIS hosts a slew of bi-partisan Washington insiders, former military officials, bankers, oilmen and "political commentators." In this respect, the CSIS differs from many of the right-wing think-tanks and groups with which Zakaria would be associated. The Center is the home of Cold War warriors, who share a belief that a strong military presence in the Middle East must be accompanied by a strategy of engagement.

Zakaria successfully distinguished himself among his neocon allies and peers as a pragmatist and realist. This is important as it binds him with political analysts and operatives from across the spectrum, including fellow CSIS board member and Cold War hawk, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski, the former National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, was responsible for orchestrating the arming of Afghani mujahidin, even before the Soviet invasion, successfully turning them into a militant political force. In fact, Peter Dale Scott states that Brzezinski is responsible for supporting nascent Islamist movements on the borders of the Soviet Union, including switching support from the Shah to the Ayatollah Khomeini.¹³ Sharing Zakaria's deep animosity to socialism and affinity for neoliberalism, the Democrat Brzezinski strongly argues for the importance of maintaining US economic and political predominance in a unipolar world, implying that its interests trump any other regional interests. Also similar to Zakaria, he is known for hardnosed pragmatism and political realism.¹⁴ Fellow former and current board members at the CSIS include "pragmatists" from both sides of the aisle, including establishment figures such as Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright.

The intellectual-political network that Zakaria inhabits is not

unique. The mapping of his network of affiliations provides, if nothing else, a shockingly banal example of networks that structure US political life, make up "insider" political culture and are the very vascular structure of the Beltline. In Zakaria's case, we can see how he positioned himself as an intellectual in a field of political operatives and powerbrokers spanning across parties and bound by a shared ideological pragmatism.

In this regard, the CSIS is exemplary. Its circle is not so innocuous as to be only a group of post-Cold War ideologues concerned with the pragmatics of American economic interests and security. The Board of Trustees is a high-powered group of former high-ranking officials from the Nixon, Carter and Reagan administrations. These officials maintain intimate relations with the most powerful Wall Street investment and banking companies as well as the defense and energy, and most notably, oil, industries. Among the board members are former Merrill Lynch Chairman William Schreyer, Boeing President James Bell, Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson and Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Advisor to Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush. Relevant to later chapters, Joseph Nye, "soft power" theorist and the current North American chairman of the Trilateral Commission, also serves on the Board. These members sit alongside other trustees, "counselors" and "corporate officers" with long political and business ties to banks, political action lobbies and the energy sector (most notably, the oil industry). The résumés of these counselors and board members are too extensive to discuss here but the diversity of their political and professional affiliations is overwhelming.

If the diversity of the board is bound by a general, shared political pragmatism, the membership of a handful of hard-line ideologues such as Zalmay Khalilzad, James Schlesinger and Richard Fairbanks is noteworthy. Fairbanks is no pragmatist or realist, but rather a hardcore ideologue with a mission to shore up American power in the Arab world. He served under Ronald Reagan as Assistant Secretary of State and acted as the President's "special negotiator" for the Middle East peace process.¹⁵ Founder of Capital One Financial Corporation, he is Chairman of the Board for Layalina Productions, a multi-million-dollar endowed, non-profit corporation that broadcasts pro-American media throughout the Arab world. Layalina's stated mission is to address "negative stereotypes of the United States" and improve the American image among Arabs. This mission dovetails with Zakaria's conviction that the US needs to sell its "values" to the Arab world as well as "set an example" for it. Layalina, which will be discussed later, itself sports a high-powered board including George W. Bush, Kissinger, Brzezinski, George Schultz, Lawrence Eagleberger, Brent Scowcroft and Daniel Yergin.

The CSIS links to innumerable, influential policy institutes, lobby groups, think-tanks and branches of government. These organizations often share members on their boards and committees, while each serves particular functions within the US political system. If CSIS is the go-to policy institute for industry chiefs and government leaders then an organization like the New America Foundation (NAF) is the pragmatist think-tank to counter-balance the pedantry of William Kristol and Robert Kagan's Project for a New American Century. The

NAF is a bipartisan, multi-disciplinary think-tank that engages issues from energy policy to electoral reform. Members and fellows are as diverse, from independent journalist Nir Rosen to Francis Fukuyama to Google CEO Eric Schmidt and Walter Russell Mead, author of *Moral Splendor: American Empire in Transition*.

Similar to the CSIS, New America Foundation's platform regarding the Muslim world contrasts many of Washington's think-tanks. It stresses engagement with Iran, Syria and Hamas along with an uncompromising commitment to Israeli security and a strong US military. Yet, despite the multidimensional texture of its members, NAF's board shares some of the CSIS's most oily members including Daniel Yergin, NAF's Director. Yergin is a prominent member of the National Petroleum Council and a longstanding petro-insider, who advocated for the future and sustained use of petroleum predicated on the eventual development of technology and the opening of access to oil fields.¹⁶ Indeed, the network that we are mapping in regard to Zakaria comes full circle when one realizes that he, too, is a board member and active participant of the Foundation.¹⁷

The Pragmatist Center

Some might deduce that Zakaria's membership in these foundations, policy institutes and boards innocuously attests to his stature as a leading member of the US media. Furthermore, some might assert that acting as a board member involves little interaction between board members and even less input into the workings and fellows of the actual institutions. This examination of the network of shared board members, however, rejects this simplistic rationalization of Zakaria's professional affiliations. The argument is twofold. Mapping out the interaction and association of those such as Zakaria and Lewis with powerbrokers, governmental gurus and policymakers properly locates their political affiliations, beliefs and motivations. But also, their memberships and connections attest to the active role that these players have in forming US public opinion and serving US foreign policy and policymakers. It is for this reason that this chapter focuses on their influential role as ideologues during the late 1990s and the Bush years.

While Zakaria and even Lewis might not be generators of policy or strategies, their participation in these groups lends their credibility to the naturalizing of fundamental assumptions at the foundation of domestic "anti-terrorism" laws and US policy in the Middle East, policy that this book argues is fundamentally Islamophobic and Arab-hating. Zakaria, like his fellow commentator Thomas Friedman, has always been more careful than those such as Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami or political hatchet men like Daniel Pipes. While he wears his neoliberalism on his sleeve, as Friedman wears his "liberal" pragmatism on his, Zakaria's own pragmatic stances have often allowed him to appear non-partisan and "objective," when in reality, as we will illustrate, his work exposes that he has a virulent anti-Arab and anti-Muslim axe to grind.

The board members and advisors on think-tanks, foundations and policy institutes are difficult to delineate insofar as their ranks expand and contract when members join and leave public service and presidential administrations,

as new ideologues are cultivated and aged advisors retire or die. They, too, are underpinned by another level of professional sociability among the power and economic elite. For example, Zakaria is also a member of the Aspen Strategy Group. This group is housed in the Aspen Institute, which is headed by Brent Scowcroft, who is also a board member of the CSIS. Zakaria's fellow Aspen members are a familiar litany of names of policymakers, ex-diplomats, cabinet members and high-ranking government officials from both parties. They include Madeleine Albright, Richard Armitage, Dennis Ross, Martin Indyk, Sen. Richard Lugar, Sen. Chuck Hagel, Sen. Diane Feinstein and Richard Haas. Ex-ambassadors and AIPAC lobbyists Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk were prominent in the Clinton White House and, as we will see, reemerge in the Obama administration. Likewise, the Aspen Group is one more shared venue for Zakaria and Richard Fairbanks, who is among the group's Society of Fellows, consisting of those who have contributed \$25,000 or more to the institute. The intimacy of this and other groups contrast with the more professional affiliations of the Washington and New York policy industry. The Aspen Group is a small version of the three most powerful policy groups, in all of which Zakaria is a member. These groups are Bilderberg, the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations. Their members arise from the same pool of Reagan, Clinton and Bush's cabinet members, industrial leaders and intellectuals that we find in the CSIS, NAF and elsewhere. Aspen board member Richard Haas, for example, heads the powerful Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). Haas was the advisor to Secretary of State Colin Powell and advisor to George H. W. Bush during Operation Desert Storm.

The CFR is undoubtedly the most influential policy center for international issues, followed perhaps by the CSIS. Its Board of Directors has included fellow CSIS members Brzezinski and Joseph Nye, Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, Richard Holbrooke and Brookings Institute's president, former *Time Magazine* denizen, and Clinton's Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, and the Carlyle Group's CEO, David Rubenstein. Zakaria is also on the CFR board along with rogue academic and political hack, Fouad Ajami, who will be discussed later. Haas's leadership of the CFR is interesting, as he was not a part of the neoconservative cabal that coagulated into the Bush administration. Rather, he was a part of the competing clique of traditional foreign policy conservatives from the Bush Senior circle. This has positioned him well in creating a "pragmatic," bipartisan council that advises the State Department, Congress and White House regardless of administration.

This pragmatism has elicited criticism of the CFR from pro-Israel think-tanks like the Middle East Forum for its opposition to "US unilateralism and military action" in the region.¹⁸ The "even-handed" tone of the CFR cloaks the fact that it houses many commentators and political operatives with explicitly and consistently anti-Muslim and anti-Arab viewpoints. Its board members, including Albright and Talbott, have historically taken Likudist positions in their unwavering support for Israel. Indeed, a cursory glance at the CFR's Middle East "experts" exposes a litany of virulently anti-Muslim and anti-Arab policy jockeys including "native experts" such as Mohammad Bazzi.

The most noteworthy member of the CFR, however, is the Center's

Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Elliot Abrams. Abrams is also a member of The Heritage Foundation, Project for A New American Century, the Hudson Institute, and the Middle East Forum. He is also a signatory to an open letter calling for the overthrow of the Syrian regime, as well as the notorious open letter to President Clinton calling for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 1998. Not only was he instrumental in the Iran-Contra affair but he was also Senior Director of Near East and North African Affairs of George H.W. Bush's National Security Council. As Bush's Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Democracy, Human Rights and International Operations, he is acknowledged as one of the architects of Bush's "Freedom Agenda." He has been called "The Neocon's Neocon."¹⁹ His views on the Middle East reflect those of his mentor and friend Richard Perle and likewise are informed by his militant allegiance to Israel and its most extreme policies toward the Palestinians. Abrams condemned the Oslo Peace Accord and later called for the removal of Yasser Arafat as the head of the Palestinian Authority (PA), endorsing the Israeli siege in the Muqat'ah, the PA's central administration headquarters in Ramallah where Arafat was trapped for two months.²⁰

Despite his leading role in forging the Bush administration's Middle East policy, Abrams has no formal professional training in Middle Eastern studies. He is the archetype of ideologically-inspired political operatives that guided the White House's foreign agenda after 9/11. Abrams was key during the Bush years in "manufacturing consent" for US militarism and intervention in the Middle East by promulgating the ideological tenets that project Arab regimes as pariahs and perennial threats to democracy, freedom and human rights, through back channels in the media. The argument might be made that the less than nuanced difference in Zionist zealotry between Abrams and Zakaria gives credence to the fact that "non-partisan" foreign policy councils represent a spectrum of views especially in the age of Obama.²¹ But in reality, such differences only give increased gravitas to Zakaria, whose neoliberal and Arab-hating opinion then appears measured in contrast to the unbalanced opinions of the likes of Elliot Abrams.

Strategy Groups and Brain-Trusts

Zakaria's network is indeed more widespread and insidious than those of Bernard Lewis. His role in American political culture and media is prominent and visible, as host of several shows including, most recently, his own weekly CNN program, "Global Public Square." As we will see, Lewis maintains entrées into the halls of power but was essentially a resource to be called on by the neoconservative and pro-Israel Right, especially during the Bush administration. Zakaria's relationship with these same venues is, on one hand, less intimate than Lewis' ideological mentoring. On the other hand, Zakaria shares the table with the power and policy elite on the litany of think-tanks, committees and centers that we have so far discussed. Indeed, Zakaria's pragmatism stands in contrast to Lewis' pro-Israel zealot-like "idealism."

Interestingly, Zakaria and Lewis both maintain memberships not only

in US policy-formative institutes but also in the two most powerful international cliques, the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Conference. Conspiracy theories aside, the Trilateral Commission is the international compendium to the Counsel for Foreign Relations. It was started by David Rockefeller in 1973, specifically for the purposes of "foster[ing] closer cooperation among these core democratic industrialized areas of the world with shared leadership responsibilities in the wider international system."²² They meet yearly as a group as well as separately in their regional conferences. In addition, they publish influential policy papers, such as "Engaging Iran and Building Peace in the Persian Gulf,"²³ by ad hoc task forces. The Commission's rotating membership and leadership is a roll call for the world's most powerful politicians, industrialists, journalists, bankers and financiers, ex-military officials and academics. It is important to note for this study that although the Commission acknowledges the "growing interdependence" of nations, no Arab country and no Arab individual is a member of the Trilateral Commission.

Zakaria is a member of the Commission along with Bernard Lewis and other politicized academics such as Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama and Joseph Nye. The Commission has numerous fellow CFR members including Brzezinski, who was in fact a founding member of the Commission. Other members are, or have been, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, William Cohen, Lawrence Eagleburger, and David Gergen, as well as a handful of powerful anti-Muslim senators such as Tom Foley, Diane Feinstein and Jack Danforth. While it is asserted that the Trilateral Commission seeks to establish a "one-world government," one only has to look at their own honest statement to understand their mission is to brainstorm ways to maintain the economic and political dominance of the developed North in relation to underdeveloped countries. They term this as maintaining international "leadership" of developed countries in North America, Europe and Asia so they "remain the primary anchors of the wider international system" while taking "into account the dramatic transformation of the international system" at a time when "power [is becoming] more diffuse."²⁴ The mission of the Trilateral Commission, for all its secrecy, seems quite explicit: to maintain Western economic and political hegemony. In this respect, Lewis and Zakaria have been small functionaries in lending their "expertise" to the mission.

The Trilateral Commission was in fact founded out of another closed, elite "private" organization called the Bilderberg Conference—named after the Dutch luxury hotel that housed its first meeting in 1954—that meets once a year by invitation only. The expressed concern of the Bilderberg Conference, as select as it is secret, is explicitly to shore up relationships between the opinion-makers, corporations and governments in the service of keeping the West at the crest of capitalist hegemony. Along with Lewis, virtually each of Zakaria's fellow board members of the CFR have been among the 130 invitees to the Bilderberg Conference. In 1979, Lewis attended the conference, presenting on his theory of the Arc of Islam and the balkanization of the Middle East.²⁵ Lewis' attendances

at several more Bilderberg conferences, including after Desert Storm in 1991 and 2001, have been reported in the blogosphere. However, his attendance is difficult to confirm because the Bilderberg organizers closely guard the list of invitees, releasing it at their discretion. Their official list of attendees for 2009 include, among the US's most prominent attendees, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Richard Holbrooke, David Rockefeller and Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank, former director of the CSIS, foreign affairs advisor to Condoleezza Rice and member of the CFR and Aspen Group.²⁶

In 2003, Zakaria attended the closed, virtually all-male and all-Western conference in France alongside many members of the aforementioned boards and committees including Kissinger, the CFR's Richard Haas, right-wing congressman Chuck Hagel and journalist Thomas Friedman. This meeting convened only weeks after the commencement of the US invasion of Iraq in May. The Bush administration, oil industry and leading figures in the media were well represented at the conference. Other invitees included the powerful clique of Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and John Bolton, as well as oil, banking and media barons such as David Rockefeller, President of Shell Oil's Jeroen van der Veer, Chairman of Dutch Oil Anders Eldrup and Conrad Black, Canadian media giant and then owner of the conservative *Jerusalem Post*.²⁷

Indeed, one way to understand these organizations, councils, boards and associations, let alone conferences like Bilderberg, is to naively see them as professional organizations created to bring together the best and the brightest in an attempt to solve world problems. Another way is to understand them as conspiratorial. We strongly reject conspiracy theories that contemplate groups such as Bilderberg and the Trilateral Commission as coteries of a singular global ruling clique. Rather, the Bilderberg Conference in 2003 demonstrates how global capitalist elites come together to share strategies and insights in maintaining their hegemony in global markets, particularly industries such as oil, as well as their political leadership, particularly at times of global crisis. In other words, these groups and councils are precisely what they state. These yearly conferences, retreats and getaways are where power and economic elites can meet to anticipate and strategize imminent challenges to their hold, and that of the leading industrial nations, on power. In the words of the Trilateral Commission statement, the group intends to circulate "shared thinking and leadership by the Trilateral countries, who (along with the principal international organizations) have been the primary anchors of the wider international system."²⁸ Or, as a statement by the Bilderberg Meetings put it, the meetings are an "off-the-record discussion about topics of current concern especially in the fields of foreign affairs and the international economy." Despite what is admittedly a series of differing attitudes and experiences among the Western nations, the Conference concurs on the need for developed nations to come up with a unified vision for global development and security, saying "there remains a clear need to further develop an understanding in which these concerns can be accommodated."²⁹

Quite explicitly, conferences, workshops and meetings, whether

sponsored by the Aspen Group or those as elaborate as that at Bilderberg, serve as the technical mechanism through which these figures exchange ideas and coordinate logistical means by which these plans can be executed. For the purposes of this book, however, we understand these councils, organizations, institutions, and affiliate groups effectively as fraternities that circulate understandings and paradigms that form the basis of the foreign economic policy of the US and the developed world, particularly in the Middle East. Over the past two decades, anti-Arab and Islamophobic paradigms have come to undergird the perceptions and policies that emanate from these venues. The network of power elites that enfranchise Bernard Lewis and Fareed Zakaria is not unique or even sinister in itself. It is, in fact, quite banal. These networks allow "discussions" and "exchanges of ideas" to take place that naturalize ideological paradigms. The participants are less generators of these paradigms than functionaries whose most important job is to organize the narratives that make specific policies possible. The "intellectuals" and journalists of these groups, such as Lewis and Zakaria, serve to provide the coherency of the narrative, to disseminate the paradigms and give them an air of intellectual credibility. The next chapter demonstrates that Lewis and Zakaria are not originators of any particular thought or paradigm (unlike their neoliberal mentor, Leo Strauss, for example). Rather, these two are synthesizers of various trains-of-thought, discourses and paradigms that circulate among the political and economic elites of developed nations. They synthesize ideological positions into narratives that can then function as ideological fulcrums around which to strategize the longevity of their power.

Zakaria's contribution to the public discourse surrounding Bush's war on terror cannot be undersold. He was a visible proponent of Bush policies and advocated regime change from the earliest days of the administration. Zakaria is well placed in a network of think-tanks, societies, committees and organizations that share a common pragmatism that undercuts strategies for maintaining US hegemony in the world. Yet, Zakaria's realism too is infused, as we will see, with a fecund Islamophobia that functions to bind political pragmatists like himself and Islamophobic idealists like Bernard Lewis. Zakaria's position within this complex network of influential actors and institutions provided the "realists" and "pragmatists" within both parties with a coherent, "practical" narrative for necessities of regime change in the Middle East. Zakaria, in this regard, synthesized pragmatism with moral idealism and paleoconservatism with neoconservatism.

The Institutional Network of Bernard Lewis

While Zakaria may have prominence in the mainstream and the network of the power elite, Bernard Lewis is the consummate neo-Orientalist denizen of the neoconservative Right and pro-Israel community in North America. While his network might be smaller, it is more powerful. If he is not on the same number of boards or committees as Zakaria, his close ideological comrades are often leaders or participants within those institutions and organizations. By the late 1990s and the Bush years, any reference to Lewis and his Islamophobic *oeuvre*

served as a mark of erudition in the mainstream media as much as right-wing circles and activist groups.

Reuel Marc Gerecht testifies to Lewis' presence among the group of ideological zealots that would become known as the Vulcans.³⁰ Upon Lewis' 90th birthday, Gerecht wrote a well-circulated panegyric entitled "The Last Orientalist." The former CIA operative and former director of the AEI Middle East program was also a student of Lewis. He zealously lobbied the White House to invade Iraq and was at Wolfowitz's brainstorming conclave with Zakaria and Lewis. He gained some notoriety after a well-publicized statement about Iran on PBS's program *Frontline*, where he said that "one of the reasons [Iranians] want to have nuclear weaponry anyway is because they have terrorism in their DNA."³¹

While hardly qualified to judge academic scholarship, the ex-Iran-spy correctly locates Lewis' true influence within the Beltline. In the article, he states that the Princeton professor's "two short but compendious, bestselling books that appeared after 9/11—*What Went Wrong?* and *The Crisis of Islam*—played a part in helping senior administration officials better understand the historical context of radical Muslims who had embraced terrorism as a means of expressing their faith." Gerecht continues to praise the span of Lewis' influence:

His seminal essays on Islamic militancy in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Commentary*, and the *New Republic* also worked their way into the foreign-policy establishment... Lewis's nuanced writings on democracy in the Muslim world, and his former students and his many friends... have probably helped to flesh out the administration's rapidly evolving understanding of Middle Eastern politics and faith after 9/11.³²

Lewis' role as the Bush administration's academic face cannot be downplayed. But moreover, Lewis had an impact by providing an important historic, cultural and social narrative along which lines the Bush-Cheney war dirge could be composed. His narrative along with Zakaria's will be examined in Chapter Two. For now, this chapter highlights that Lewis was no stand-by man like small potatoes Ajami, there to testify only to the machinations of the neocon cabal that had taken over Washington. Lewis was an intimate part of that cabal itself.

Just as Zakaria participated in Wolfowitz's post-9/11 Iraq "brainstorming" session, Lewis also participated in a workshop, entitled "Iraq: Looking Beyond Saddam," in November 2002. Lewis' presence at the Iraq workshop was to be expected. The workshop was organized by the same group of neocon and pro-Israel cronies that had authored Benjamin Netanyahu's "Clean Break" paper in 1996, who now made up the Defense Policy Board on Iraq. Technically called the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee, this group of outside advisors helps the Pentagon to formulate policy. The leaders of the Board and coordinators of the workshop were Richard Perle and Douglas Feith, the former Under-Secretary of Defense. Like Perle, Feith is a notorious, right-wing Zionist whom then Commander of the US Forces in the Middle East, General Tommy

Franks, called "the dumbest guy on the planet."³³ The six-page workshop report states that the two-day event "brought together more than seventy scholars, experts and practitioners to discuss post-intervention challenges confronting U.S. policymakers in Iraq."³⁴ This workshop was the brainchild of Cheney himself as much as his, Andrew Card and Karl Rove's White House Iraq Group, which, Thomas Ricks notes, needed the justifications that only academics and "intellectuals" could provide.³⁵

The Master's Discourse and the Students' Vision

Lewis is a longtime friend of Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle as well as of Zalmay Khalilzad. In fact, Perle considered Lewis his mentor on Middle East affairs. During the Bush years, the professor himself boasts how he had cultivated key players in Defense and the White House. This includes the neocon and Zionist zealot, Harold Rhode, a Lewis protégé and close friend. Rhode was a resident "Islam" analyst in the Department of Defense during the darkest days of the Bush administration. Some report that a phone call from Lewis to Perle secured the Defense position for Rhode. At Defense, Rhode worked closely with Douglas Feith and David Wursmer to purge non-ideological Defense specialists from key positions and bring in similarly anti-Arab and anti-Muslim ideologues who would arrange a plan to reorganize power in the Arab world, starting with the formation of a new Iraq.³⁶ Rhodes, who had his security clearance suspended in the 1990s under suspicion of passing secrets to Israel, was investigated by the FBI in 2004 for relaying highly classified military information to the Mossad.

Yet Rhodes is only one player in a larger network of neocon political operatives, lobbyists and think-tanks that form the network of the Bush cabal. Lewis' role in this network did not begin in the aftermath of 9/11. Rather, the relationship between Lewis and the neoconservative movement reaches back to the 1980s when he acted as a point-man in trying to discredit Edward Said. This, of course, was a part of a larger campaign against the eminent Palestinian-American scholar and activist. By the 1990s, Lewis befriended Wolfowitz and other prominent insiders after a young Richard Perle "introduced the Englishman to Washington."³⁷ Within this circle, Lewis made the acquaintance of powerful pro-Israel conservatives who would eventually make up the Bush posse. Lewis' position in the Wolfowitz-Perle coterie was not centered only on business but on the fact that they shared a general ideological zealotry. The loyalty and depths of the connections between Lewis and this group expresses itself in the fact that the professor took a leading role in "Scooter" Libby's defense committee.³⁸

Confirming his intimate relationship with the highest echelons of policy makers, Lewis was awarded the Irving Kristol Award in 2007 by the American Enterprise Institute. Previous awardees have been Robert Bork, Dick Cheney, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, neo-con hawk and advisor Michael Novak, neo-con guru Norman Podhoretz, and Ronald Reagan.³⁹ Friends and former students attending the ceremony included Gerecht, Richard Perle and John Bolton. Vice President Cheney, in fact, delivered the keynote speech.⁴⁰ In honoring Lewis, Cheney

demonstrated his admiration for Lewis as the moral guru for the White House's civilizational approach. Specifically, he stated that,

Bernard Lewis knows the greatness of Islamic civilization... He understands, as well as any man alive, the nature of the present struggle between freedom and fear, justice and cruelty. He understands, also, that freedom is not an affliction—it is a right that belongs to men and women half a world away every bit as much as it belongs to us. And as the ancient struggle for liberty and equality is played out in our own time, we'll continue to rely on Bernard Lewis's rigorous thinking.⁴¹

In this speech, like others by the then Vice President, Cheney clearly locates the White House policies in the region in Lewis civilizational narrative that will be examined in the next chapter.

More important than Lewis' friendship with Wolfowitz, or his mentorship of Perle, is the fact that his circulation within this community resulted in a relationship with Dick Cheney. Bob Woodward calls Lewis "a Cheney favorite."⁴² The Vice President regularly deferred to Lewis for advice and, like Ajami, frequently called him "a friend." In fact, while Cheney was in hiding in the weeks after 9/11, Lewis had several private one-on-one dinners with him in "undisclosed locations." Lewis provided Cheney and the network of neoconservatives, Zionists and Islamophobes not only with a narrative for interventionism, but also for a moral imperative of militarism, imperialism and indeed a new Crusade.⁴³

Lewis' reputation was routinely used to substantiate policies that had already incubated in the Vice President's mind. For example, Cheney followed Lewis' longtime suggestion that the US needed a potent propaganda outlet in the Arab world to spread the White House's "true" message and to combat the misperceptions of American democracy. In a speech to the conservative Hudson Institute, the Vice President spoke of the need for the US to reach the elites and masses of the Arab world. He stated that he had "talked to Bernard Lewis about that very subject," about the lack of freedom in Arab societies, which leads to a misrepresentation of the US in the Arab street. Cheney continued, "He is eloquent on it. I agree with him. I think one of our major problems in the past has been a lack of, sort of, open, honest flow of information for the people in that part of the world." He said in concordance with Lewis, "we need to continue to work it very aggressively. We need a very active, sort of, public information campaign on what we're doing, on what our goals and objectives and purposes are there."⁴⁴ To this end, Lewis functioned as a clear authoritative touchstone for Cheney. He shared Lewis' advice on the need to liberate Arabs from their own despots and ignorance with an audience of "experts." These experts would be consulted about Middle East policy.

At the same time that Ajami and Lewis were receiving State awards, Vice President Cheney was quoting Lewis to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the pro-Israeli think-tank that held significant influence in the Clinton

administration. Cheney warned this largely Democratic audience to learn from the mistakes of the past. Here, the figure and advice of Lewis offered a unifying platform where officials like Dennis Ross and Dick Cheney could meet. Cheney reminded the audience of one famous claim by Lewis in the 1990s. Namely, Lewis had stated that the United States was paying the price for a past failure; a failure attributed to America's tragic flaw—its seemingly permissive stance towards the Middle East. From Lewis' perspective, benevolent Cold War policies in the Middle East were perceived as weaknesses by Arab radicals and rogue regimes; the restraint used in responding to terrorists in the past convinced these extremists that the United States was soft. This is in contrast to the Soviets and their allies in the region whose brutality inspired respect.⁴⁵ The lesson was evident but unstated: the Arabs only understand force.

Open Letter to President Clinton

In 1998, Bernard Lewis was invited to participate on the Committee for Peace and Security in the Middle East. The committee is the brainchild of and organized by Frank Gaffney's Center for Security Studies. The center's explicit "philosophy of 'Peace through Strength' is not a slogan for military might but a belief that America's national power must be preserved and properly used, for it holds a unique global role in maintaining peace and stability."⁴⁶ As a member of the committee, Lewis signed a petition calling on President Clinton to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Among the other familiar signatories were, in order given by the petition, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Bill Kristol, Elliot Abrams, Richard Armitage, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, National Security Advisor Richard Allan, future Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the American Enterprise's Michael Ledeen, the *New Republic* editor-in-chief Martin Peretz, President Carter's Special Assistant Robert Pastor, Project for a New American Century's Max Singer and David Wurmser, then an AEI fellow.

The petition criticizes Clinton's "containment" policy (in fact, initiated by Bush Sr.). In it, the signatories appeal for the effective *militarization* of Middle East foreign policy, stating, "What is needed now is a comprehensive political and military strategy for bringing down Saddam and his regime." The document provides a very specific blueprint to foment political unrest in Iraq—a blueprint that would be followed religiously by Bush Jr. The initial step, the letter states, should be to "recognize a provisional government of Iraq... based on the leaders of the Iraqi National Congress." In reality, the INC was a creation of the CIA. After the first US invasion of the Gulf, George Bush Senior charged the CIA with the responsibility of creating an opposition front that would foster the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The CIA, in turn, hired the shady "strategic consultancy" public relations agency, Rendon Group, to create the shadow-Iraqi government in exile. The INC was less an independent opposition than a shell of an organization used in the CIA propaganda warfare against Hussein. Rendon Group orchestrated its actions, events, membership and statements by means of its Middle East advisor Francis Brooke, who acted as Chalabi's "public relations"

advisor and accompanied him at all times. The INC was launched in coordination with a mass-propaganda campaign waged through the multiple media and public relation venues underwritten by the Department of Defense and the CIA. This included the establishment of "Radio Free Iraq" and lobbying groups that would influence policy on the Hill.

In this regard, the petition signed by Lewis and his AEI friends worked in tandem with the CIA's propaganda program. The petition was explicit about subsequent steps. After recognizing the INC, the administration should "help expand liberated areas of Iraq by assisting the provisional government's offensive against Saddam Hussein's regime logistically and through other means." This support included "launching a systematic air campaign against the pillars of [Hussein's] power—the Republican Guard divisions which prop him up and the military infrastructure that sustains him." Finally, the petition stated that the US must "position U.S. ground force equipment in the region so that, as a last resort, we have the capacity to protect and assist the anti-Saddam forces in the northern and southern parts of Iraq."⁴⁷

This blueprint demonstrates how academics like Lewis provided an air of credibility to a group of hawkish militants who envisioned the reorganization of the Middle East as early as the 1990s. But also, the signatories and architects of the petition began to organize as an ideological coterie that would serve as the basis of the Bush administration. The 1990s allowed these political operatives, ex-Cold War warriors, hard-line Zionists, bi-partisan hawks, ideological journalists and rogue academics to form a cohesive foreign policy based on unchallenged US hegemony. The petition to President Clinton resulted in the passing of the Iraq Liberation Act in 1998, which explicitly commits the United States to lend military, logistical and humanitarian aid in order "to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power in Iraq and replace it with a democratic government."⁴⁸ The act was signed into law by President Clinton. More important, the petition coalesced an ideological position and pushed it to the center of US foreign policy. It was a successful coordination between a web of think-tanks, media and political relationships that would underscore the shock-and-awe policy that hit the Arab world with the ascension of Bush.

The direct ties between Lewis as a progenitor of the brain trust must be acknowledged. The professor's rise to mainstream prominence can be ascribed to the fact that he is ensconced in the network of neoconservative and pro-Zionist movers and shakers far more than even Zakaria and Ajami. A central ideological plank of the neoconservative network of the 1990s and Bush administration was a virulent distrust of Muslims and Arabs. Lewis provided them with an ideological, seemingly idealistic, factual and academic narrative on which the neocons and American Zionists could hang their hate.

Bush's War Network

On September 19, 2001, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle held the first of a handful of high-powered brainstorming sessions regarding

how to respond to the events of 9/11. By the conclusion of this first meeting, the response to the attacks on 9/11 from this close-knit group of neoconservative ideologues was decided: A "war on terror" must be waged. It will be as just as it will be protracted. It will be multi-pronged, beginning in Afghanistan, pursuing regime change in Iraq militarily, and re-engineering civil and criminal laws at home to stamp out Islamic terror. The meeting was a continuation of similar cabalistic séances that this group of ideologues had had since the fall of Bush Senior. Much has been written about this group and how the Bush years were marked by a coup led by the Vulcans. While the Vulcans regularly drew on personalities from the Defense Department, and the media, academic, think-tank and policy institute industry, it was a clique, which intended to sway the President and form new Middle East and domestic policies, all the while explicitly excluding State Department officials.

While Secretary of State Colin Powell was excluded from this meeting, Zakaria, Lewis and Fouad Ajami, by some accounts, were not. In fact, Lewis played a central role in the meeting where Rumsfeld challenged the room of advisors and officials to anticipate the ways that the international community and domestic political scene would protest an invasion of Iraq. The gathering was to contrive ways to preempt and derail domestic and international resistances to the White House policies. Some reports assert that Lewis, in fact, led the meeting with his good friend and aspiring Iraqi puppet, Ahmad Chalabi.⁴⁹

Chalabi was a former banker and mathematics professor, a convicted felon on thirty-one counts of embezzlement, theft and forgery in Jordan. Chalabi's association with Lewis started at the same time the CIA had organized the INC. Chalabi was Perle and Wolfowitz's choice "future leader" of Iraq since their notoriously right-wing mentor, Albert Wohlstetter, had introduced them to the pet Iraqi. Wohlstetter also introduced Chalabi to Lewis, who became his most noted "expert" advocate.⁵⁰ Eminent scholar Richard Bulliet states that Chalabi was to be the Iraqi Ataturk.⁵¹ In actuality, he was part charlatan, part US government functionary, a self-promoting opportunist who insinuated himself into conservative circles following Desert Storm by facilitating relations between Kurdish groups and the Pentagon.⁵² The INC was the US government's go-to "opposition" group—and rightfully so. Despite the Bush administration's abandonment of Chalabi, Lewis remains his advocate. In fact, the emeritus professor continued to call for "self-rule" in Iraq during the Bush years as a reply to the chaos brought on by the invasion. However, Lewis explicitly meant self-rule led by Chalabi, who could cautiously and carefully guide Iraq towards democracy but not "prematurely."⁵³ Not so ironically, many on both sides of the aisle, including Secretary of State Clinton, endorsed Lewis' call for Iraqi "self-rule" and Senators Lieberman and Bob Kerry supported legislation to support the INC.

One day after the notorious Wolfowitz White House meeting, a letter to the President appeared in *The New York Times* calling for the targeting of Hizbullah as a virulent international terrorist organization, putting pressure on the Palestinian authority to stop attacks on Israel, and pushing to "remove Saddam Hussein from power" even if no links existed between him and the attacks of

September 11. Despite their central role in the discussion, neither Chalabi nor Lewis appeared as signatories. Rather, the letter appeared under the sponsorship of the right-wing think tank, the Project for a New American Century. The letter included names that will be often repeated in this book: Richard Perle, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Frank Gaffney, Reuel Marc Gerecht, William Bennet, Jeffrey Bell, Francis Fukayama, Norman Podhoretz and Charles Krauthammer.⁵⁴ Despite the strong undertow within the Bush cabinet to overthrow Saddam Hussein and install Chalabi as a “democratic” ruler, the President rejected the letter’s suggestions, as no direct evidence between Hussein and international terrorism was established—or could be.⁵⁵

The failure of the Vulcans, Lewis, Zakaria, Ajami and Chalabi, to convince the White House to go to war with Iraq started a more famous chain of events that flew easily in the post-9/11 Islamophobic scare. President Bush’s rejection of the Iraq option in favor of the Afghanistan option was impetus for Wolfowitz to seek and eventually fabricate evidence between Hussein, al-Qa’idah and WMDs. Indeed, the Vulcans, Lewis and Zakaria were not dissuaded from their quest to overthrow Saddam Hussein and install a pliable puppet who would be friendly to US interests and normalize relations with Tel Aviv. This quest had been in motion since the end of Operation Desert Storm. Lewis would follow up his series of meeting with the Vulcans with a steady stream of highly visible opinion pieces (usually in the *Wall Street Journal*). His commentaries were not mere cheerleading for Bush’s militarism domestically and in the Middle East. They were an ideological necessity. Apart from disseminating Islamophobic talking points on which foreign policy could be academically justified, Lewis’ commentaries intended to terrify the American public. Here was an established scholar on the Muslim world, a Princeton University professor, warning them of the potential consequences if the United States lost the resolve to prosecute what must eventually be a long global war on terror, a global war on the survival of “our way of life.” Likewise, Lewis’ articles intended to keep the focus on the Arab world, to put pressure on the Palestinians, but most of all to keep American eyes focused on Saddam Hussein’s patronage of terror against Israel and his threat to regional (i.e. oil) security.⁵⁶

Fouad Ajami as [White] House Arab

Despite the failure of the September 19th meeting, Wolfowitz and company pursued their long held desire for regime change in Iraq. While Powell’s State Department impeded neocon machinations for an Iraq invasion, the Rumsfeld-Perle-Wolfowitz clique continued to convene in secret meetings (that excluded the State Department). They produced policy papers and initiatives based on the fear of a muscular Iraq, a virile Palestinian resistance movement, a formidable Hizbullah and a viral al-Qa’idah. The meetings continued to exploit the familiar network of friends within the media, academic, government and policymaking world.

In November 2001, Wolfowitz and Christopher DeMuth, head of the

American Enterprise Institute, conspired to form a group of players that would reach across various fields and sectors in order to compose an Iraq war portfolio. Bob Woodward notes that Wolfowitz convened the group with DeMuth and Zakaria, Lewis and Ajami in attendance. The meeting produced an important but “secret” statement that pleased the Vice President and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice who found its message communicating the “malignancy” of the Middle East “very, very persuasive.”⁵⁷ Woodward also informs us that the American Enterprise Institute [and the prestigious Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)] are “just blocks from each other,” and “were the forum for lots of intellectual cross-pollination... The AEI was practically the intellectual farm team and retirement home for Washington conservatives.”⁵⁸ DeMuth was an old friend of Wolfowitz from the days when the latter was Dean of Johns Hopkins’ SAIS.

Not coincidentally, Fouad Ajami is a permanent fixture at SAIS and an old hack within the Beltline. While his work will not be examined in this book, he is significant because of his role as an early native informant and rogue academic. In fact, Ajami rose to national visibility as a CBS commentator with Dan Rather during the first Iraq war. He vocally supported that invasion, encouraging Bush Senior to continue to Baghdad and “finish the job.” In 2007, he and Lewis established the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa. The ASMEA is intended to sidestep the Academy’s preeminent professional association, the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). Indeed, neither Ajami nor Lewis have credibility or credentials in MESA due to their weak scholarship and political activism for Israel and US militarism as well as their unwaveringly racist stances against Arabs, Iranians and Armenians.

In contrast to MESA, ASMEA’s mission is to “build a new generation of scholars” sympathetic to Israel and US foreign policy. Since its inception, it has been little more than a shell for right-wing academics and extremist pro-Israel “scholars.” Its Academic Council includes former Secretary of State and ex-head of Bechtel, George Schultz, and Kenneth Stein, an apologist for Israel who resigned as head of the Carter Center when the former president later accused the Zionist state of apartheid practices. Ajami is a “close friend” of Paul Wolfowitz and is said to have been an “advisor” to Condi Rice.

Despite the fact that his work is not respected among scholars of the Middle East, Ajami’s position at SAIS had positioned him well in the policymaking community, landing him seats on the Board of Advisors of *Foreign Affairs* and the editorial board of *Middle East Quarterly*, a journal published by the prominent pro-Israel think-tank, the Middle East Forum. Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice would frequently drop Ajami’s name as an authority on the Middle East and as a scholarly reference to give credibility to Bush’s failed policies. Most infamously perhaps, Cheney referenced Ajami in a speech to justify the impending invasion of Iraq.⁵⁹

In the waning years of the Bush administration, Ajami’s name was frequently heard in White House officials’ replies when asked about the progress in Iraq and the possibilities of confronting Iran.⁶⁰ For example, Tony Snow,

former White House spokesman, stated, "We had [retired four-star general] Wayne Downing, [retired General and former Drug Czar] Barry McCaffrey, Michael Vickers, Amir Taheri, Fouad Ajami and Raad Alkadiri" in the meeting on Iraq and Iran. Indeed, these types of meetings between the White House, senior Pentagon officials and their "academic" coterie are not rare. For decades, the Defense and State departments frequently would invite area specialists from all political persuasions to provide their own analysis of particular regions, policies and events. However, the Bush administration ended the era of area studies specialists on the Arab world or "Arabists," a term, in fact, disparaged by many in the administration and the neoconservative and American Zionist movements.⁶¹ Rather, the Bush administration relied on functionaries who coordinated the CIA's arming of the mujahidin such as Vickers, hack "commentators" such as Taheri, or rogue academics such as Ajami. In this particular instance Snow confidently touted Ajami's optimism about the surge and the occupation. He cited the professor's visits to Iraq and meetings with Iraqi Grand Ayatullah Ali Sistani as proof that conditions on the ground were improving.⁶² Ironically, Ajami's visit coincided with the horrific rise of violence and the virtual disintegration of Iraqi political and civil society in the spring of 2006. This demolition of Iraqi life included the death of more than a thousand civilians in April alone of that year.

That same bloody year, Ajami published his panegyric on US policy in the Middle East, focusing particularly on its "noble" endeavor in Iraq. His press junket for the book, *The Foreigner's Gift*, coincided with the downward spiral of popular support for the war and, subsequently, the planning and implementation of "the Surge."⁶³ As Ajami acted effectively as a governmental operative during the Bush years, one easily sees why Dick Cheney refers to Ajami as his "good friend." Indeed, he was a good friend to Cheney's policies throughout the duration of the administration. The following year, after the release of the Petraeus report, Cheney cited another Ajami visit to Iraq to talk with tribal leaders, religious personalities and political figures. He told his audience that this pet professor assured him that although "all its furies have not burned out . . . a measure of order has begun to stick on the ground" in Iraq.⁶⁴

Unlike pragmatist Zakaria, Ajami was true to his neocon patrons throughout the darkest years of the Bush administration. In the face of failure after failure, he made certain to remind the American audience that the Middle East was a "dangerous neighborhood," a foreign one, not to be trusted, but rather to be dealt with by an iron hand. He argued for a "hard power" strategy toward the Middle East, remaining a loyal salesman of Bush's disastrous "freedom agenda." Consequently, as soon as Barack Obama took the oath of Presidency, Ajami loudly vocalized the *ancien régime's* opposition to the President's "open hand" policy toward the Muslim world. This permissive attitude, Ajami argued, coddles dictators and "reassures despots." He inadvertently accused the new president of failing to seize the moment and recognize, let alone capitalize on, the "revolutionary impact [on "Muslim lands"] of his predecessor." In his recent writings, he effectively calls on President Obama to "acknowledge the 'foreignness' of foreign lands" and to use force and coercion when needed, so as not to repeat

the appeasement policies of President Carter.⁶⁵

Ajami's intimacy with Bush White House officials is surpassed only by that of his idol, Bernard Lewis. Indeed, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt bring their names together, stating that "Bernard Lewis of Princeton and Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins reportedly played important roles in persuading Cheney that war was the best option . . ."⁶⁶ The two form a complementary pair, frequently attending the same governmental functions and ceremonies. They participated in the same workshops organized by members of the network examined in this chapter. They have received the same awards of the imperial realm. In fact, the Bush White House recognized their service to the regime on several occasions. On one occasion, they were two among only seven university professors out of 120 guests invited to dinner with President Bush to celebrate the 40th National Endowment of the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities.⁶⁷ Ajami's discipline (political science) is in the social sciences yet he and Lewis were recipients of the National Humanities Medal one year later.⁶⁸ Fellow recipients that year were the notorious Hoover Institute—being neither an institute for humanities nor for humanistic studies—and the right-wing Classicist Mary Lefkowitz. Indeed, the list of medalists that year reveals this award was a politicized cookie rather than any reputable recognition of academic achievement in the humanities.

Conclusion

Indictments, insults and superior attitudes are nothing new to the Muslim world. Colonialism and the age of expansion was underwritten by voluminous works demarcating, defining, measuring, weighing and poking colonial subjects and lands. The study of the Orient, Orientalism, functioned to form discourses and collect knowledge on the peoples of the global South and, effectively, justify colonial rule. But Orientalism, as Edward Said has shown us, is not a static discipline.⁶⁹ Orientalist knowledge grew and paradigms shifted to accommodate new global realities, most notably the rise of the United States and Soviet Union as superpowers. Ironically, as soon as Orientalism as a discipline started to lose traction and credibility due to Said's groundbreaking work, a new strain of Orientalism appeared, one that seems to be built from the debris of its deconstructed paradigms.

Following Desert Storm (aka, the First Iraq War), Islamophobia appeared as an amalgam of Orientalism's most racist and reductionist analysis. If Orientalism created a body of knowledge that was essential to create an object of study so as to subsequently create a subject of domination, Islamophobia arose, first, from the think-tanks and commentators of Washington's Beltline. Islamophobia is not a discipline like Orientalism. It does not require education or training in languages, philology, textual analysis, history or anthropology. Islamophobia is an ideological formation that would travel from the think-tanks to lobbyists and political action groups, and then eventually to all branches of federal, state and local government to directly isolate, demonize and target

Muslims in the United States and in the Muslim world. With the collusion of the mass media, these interest groups, commentators and talking heads, pundits and think-tanks transformed prescriptive ideological commentary into a generally-accepted, descriptive "analysis" of the realities of Arab and Muslim culture, society and religion.

Under presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama, rampant Islamophobic paradigms accompanied a new level of aggressive US foreign policy—if not gunboat diplomacy—in the Arab world. In the United States, Islamophobia would serve as the ideological justification for stripping of civil liberties of tens of thousands; profiling and illegal detaining of thousands of legal residents; condoning and practicing the torture and kidnapping of suspects; legalizing the spying, surveillance, and entrapment of American citizens; and setting the precedence for the assassination of American citizens. Islamophobia has become the cultural justification for the sanctioned intimidation of intellectuals, scholars and student activists and the proactive silencing of political dissent in the United States. Despite Obama's personal velvet glove approach, the ACLU has shown that past policies, perceptions and paradigms of the Bush administration regarding the Muslim world not only continue under the current president but that his administration has moved to institutionalize the previous administration's civil rights violations.⁷⁰ This could only have been accomplished if Islamophobic paradigms had been disseminated and naturalized throughout the United States civil society and political sphere.

While accusations and stereotypes of Arab backwardness have underscored US foreign policy since the First Barbary War, Islamophobia has pathologized Muslims and Arabs as a "nemesis" to modern normative behavior.⁷¹ Such a construction, this book argues, is not coincidental nor is it a consequence of misunderstanding, ignorance or American cultural isolation, nor even a routine socio-psychological tendency to project negative images onto an alien "other." We have seen that the network of the prime ideologues and architects of Islamophobic justifications for US Empire reaches deeply into the media, board rooms and political chambers that form US policy. Therefore, Islamophobia is not a universalized Western or Christian prejudice that stretched back to the Byzantines or Crusaders. Quite to the contrary. It is cobbled together through various interests, various organizations, and various political groups and given voice though a plethora of visible ideologues, who themselves are reinforced by a wall of white noise provided by junior hacks, amateurs, evangelical converts, and bloggers.

The "Freedom Agenda" was created in the 1990s by a concoction of Cold War hawks, right-wing Zionists and neoliberal crusaders. With the ascendancy of George W. Bush to the presidency, key players from the movement that coalesced around the Project for a New American Century and the American Enterprise Institute, as well as the Council on Foreign Relations, could normalize their designs to match American economic preeminence with American political control of the Middle East. As we have seen, the network of inter-relationships between intellectuals, media, policymakers, lobbyists and politicians conspired to

justify the invasion of Iraq as a means to crush a "rogue regime" to insinuate US political and economic interests even deeper into Middle Eastern political reality.

Barack Obama assumed the presidency with a global and regional reality that was created by the Bush regime. The reality of enmity between the West and Muslim world arose not from centuries of mistrust but the dissemination and institutionalization of Islamophobia as the ideological justification for US policies. Indeed, Obama's own network pushed aside many of Bush's coterie while still participating in the same venues as their predecessors. As such, Obama has continued, we will see, to prosecute and promote Islamophobia as a justification for domestic and foreign policies, increasing the atmosphere of siege that Muslims feel in the United States.

This book contends that Islamophobia is an ideological formation specific to the "unipolar moment." We will see that it has many modulations and sub-discourses that facilitate and activate a regime of official and unofficial, sanctioned and illegal acts against Muslims in the United States and globally. Despite its various schools and hues, it is underscored by racism and a desire to control and manage dissent. This book will map the discursive curvatures of Islamophobia not as an academic exercise but to show its very real and material effects. It will relate Islamophobic works of rogue academics, pundits and opportunistic journalists to the policies and actions of the United States government, political action groups, think-tanks and lobbies. The rise of Islamophobia in the age of globalization then should not be ascribed to the Bush administration's exploitation of those latent and manifest sentiments within North American media and policy circles. Obama's own virulent, but veiled fear of Muslims, demonstrates something else. Islamophobia has emerged as the dominant ideological foil that has underwritten US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. This chapter has demonstrated how the connections of prime ideologues of Islamophobia are ensconced in the political culture and topography of the United States and how this network successfully assisted in establishing the tenets of Islamophobia as natural and putative talking points and frameworks for discussing the Middle East and the United States domination of it.