

**Behind Closed Doors  
Elite Politics, Think Tanks, and U.S. Foreign Policy**

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*“Of the many influences on U.S. foreign policy formulation, the role of think tanks is among the most important and least appreciated.”*

*Richard Haass  
Director of Policy and Planning  
U.S. Department of State*

U.S. foreign policy has undergone a dramatic shift. In response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the White House embarked on an aggressive and muscular foreign policy stance that may forever change the nature of international relations. Released in October of 2001, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America outlines a hegemonic foreign policy predicated on unilateralism, preemptive strikes, and the democratization of the world. “While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community,” the White House warns, “we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country” (White House, 2001: 6).

Using the National Security Strategy as its justification, the Bush Administration invaded Iraq, claiming Saddam Hussein was linked to the Al-Qaida terrorist network and,

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therefore, posed an eminent threat to the security of the United States. As the intelligence community began to solidly refute this claim, the administration looked again to the National Security Strategy. This time pledging the invasion of Iraq was purely a humanitarian effort to liberate the Iraqi people and spread the universal values of freedom and democracy. Where did this new policy originate? What role, if any, did elites have in the formulation of such a unique agenda? How did think tanks cultivate this new initiative?

This paper aims to illuminate the role played by think tanks in the development of public policy and planning. Employing the framework provided by William G. Domhoff and Elite Theory, we intend to explore the role elites play in the formulation of public policy in the United States through an understanding of the interplay between foundations, think tanks, and policy discussion groups. Using the current US foreign policy agenda as an example, we will examine how think tanks are, ultimately, the mouthpiece for the promotion of elite interests in the policy planning process.

### **Domhoff: Class and Power**

Contrary to the pluralist view of society, Domhoff understands politics in the US as class-based and unequal. Rather than a representative government of the people, Domhoff contends the ruling capitalist upper class shapes policy through its preponderate power and influence. He says: “the corporate community and the upper class are essentially the same in terms of people and objectives, ... they have the wealth, social cohesion, and awareness of their common interests to organize themselves well enough to dominate government” (Domhoff, 2002: 45).

Utilizing the groundbreaking research method of Floyd Hunter, Domhoff empirically demonstrates the existence of this elite-driven power structure. Domhoff's research used a tripartite structure in revealing the existence of a corporate-based ruling class. First, he established the ruling class is conscious of their elite status, evidenced by the existence of the Social Register, which is a veritable who's who for the upper class. Second, he confirmed the ruling class is cohesive. Sons and daughters of the upper class are socialized at the same prep schools, families congregate at the same clubs, and marriages typically occur within the upper class community. Finally, class interest is actively pursued, Domhoff recognized, by the shaping of public policy. The ruling class promotes its narrow, class-based interests through campaign finance, interlocking corporate board of directors, and think tanks (Domhoff 2002).

Domhoff's analysis of the corporate and ruling class is based on 'Elite Theory. This view maintains that very rich families are in power, people such as the Rockefellers, the Fords, and the Pews. They tend to live in the Northeast and attend exclusive prep schools and Ivy League universities. They tend to belong to mainline Protestant churches and they marry one another. These powerful groups and families are the largest financial contributors to the major think tanks in the U.S. As an example, the Nixon Center is funded almost exclusively by powerful business interests that are influenced by ruling elites such as the current CEO of AIG.

Members of the elite do not occupy governmental positions themselves, but depend on elected and appointed officials who do their work for them. It takes two or three generations of wealth before a family is considered to be among the elite. New members of the elite are socialized to one perspective and one set of interests, by the time

they reach the top. In particular, the members of the elite share a consensus on the importance of private property, limited government, individual liberty and the fact that change should be gradual rather than revolutionary. Big foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers, Ford, Pew, Johnson, etc. have the added benefit of keeping control of stock in the hands of the family and avoiding tax payments. The elite are able to also manipulate the masses, by exploiting symbols such as charity or democratic events like elections to their political and economic advantage. The Elite Theory believes that there is elite that runs the United States and holds positions of power. The economic elite are for the most part made up of the same people as the political elite. This elite exerts power downward on the masses. Such advocates of this theory include Marx, Mosca, Michels, and Mills. We now turn to the policy formulation process and the role of elites and think tanks.

### **Elites and the Policy Planning Process**

The process of policy formulation involves many different types of institutions in an almost linear progression, starting with the interests and ideas of elites and ending in the halls of Congress and the White House (Domhoff, 2002). Domhoff writes, the “process begins in corporate board rooms, social clubs, and informal discussions, where problems are identified as issues to be solved by new policies” (Domhoff, 2002: 71). Next, funding is mobilized through large foundations. This funding is then directed to think tanks, where policy experts are enlisted to draft specific policy proposals aimed at advancing the interests of the elite community. Lastly, policy experts, business leaders, and government officials congregate in policy discussion groups seeking consensus on new initiatives to be presented in Congress. Every step of the policy planning process

involves elites: from the recognition of issues and the blue blood money found in most foundations to the directorates of foundations, think tanks, and universities.

While, as Domhoff contends, policy planning begins in the minds of corporate and upper class elites, the true impetus comes from the large foundations who act as conduits for the vast wealth of the elite community (2002). Considering foundations are organizations that are not taxed, they effectively act as tax shelters for the wealthy. They are funded by tax-deductible donations from the elite community and some are the product of old family fortunes, such as the Mellons, Rockefellers, Fords, and Coors'. Foundations direct these funds to universities and policy planning organizations in the form of contracts, grants and endowments, which are then used for the research and formulation of new policy initiatives (Dye 2002). Corporate and ruling class elites not only fund the activities of foundations, but also maintain positions as Board members. In this capacity, the elite community controls who, and what projects, get funding.

Think tanks are the intellectual epic center of the policy planning process. These non-profit organizations provide the research and early policy proposals that eventually find a home on Capital Hill. According to Domhoff, for academics, the lure of think tanks is that they:

“provide settings for experts in various academic disciplines to devote their time to the study of policy alternatives, free from teaching, committee meetings, and departmental duties that are part of the daily routine for most members of the academic community” (2002: 71).

Unlike the academic community, however, researchers and fellows housed in think tanks do not have the liberty to pursue policy proposals of their own choosing.

Bruce MacLaury, former President of the Brookings Institution, admitted that board members maintain a significant voice regarding the direction of research, often rejecting projects proposed by researchers and fellows (Dye 2002). Again, corporate and ruling class elites occupy positions as board members within these institutions and have a prominent voice in the direction of research and policy proposals.

The last link in the policy planning process is the policy discussion groups. These institutions bring together business leaders, government officials, policy experts, lawyers, and journalists as a means to seek consensus and resolve differences regarding specific policy proposals as they relate to corporate and ruling class elites (Domhoff 2002). Additionally, these institutions provide forums wherein government and business officials can informally recruit the next generation of public officials (Domhoff 2002). Lastly, policy discussion groups serve as an avenue to shape public opinion through the publication of books, magazines, journals, and other channels. It should be no surprise that the board members for these groups are predominately from the class of corporate and ruling elites.

### **Think Tanks: An Overview**

‘Think-tanks,’ also called public policy research organizations play a key role in coming up with recommendations which influence U.S. foreign policy. Think tanks also have different political biases which play out in their recommendations to government. For example, an institute such as the Heritage has a more conservative bias in its policies than one such as the Brookings Institute. It depends very much on what the political orientation of the leadership in the organization is, as well as what their base of financial support is. There are often hidden interests, which play out in policy recommendations

that are made. These include the influence of big business, which takes place through membership of business leaders on the board of trustees of these organizations.

The role of think tanks in U.S. Foreign and domestic policy is to come up with ideas and recommendations for use by the different branches of government. In a sense, they conduct research and then act as ‘idea brokers’ communicating thoughts and policy direction to decision makers. They are idea brokers in the sense that their principal business is to research policy issues and events, and then communicate the results of this research recommendations to decision-makers. These recommendations are never value-free. Both the subject that a particular organization chooses to look at and the way in which it is examined determine what issues are considered important, and what direction the recommendation will take. Richard Haas, Director of Policy and Planning at the U.S. Department of State describes this role in the following way,

“Today's think tanks offer five principal benefits - they generate “new thinking” among U.S. decision-makers, provide experts to serve in the administration and Congress, give policy-makers a venue in which to build shared understanding on policy options, educate U.S. citizens about the world, and provide third-party mediation for parties in conflict” (Haas 2002).

According to this definition from one of the key decision-makers in today's political arena, think tanks are involved in every aspect of policy formation; from education of US citizens to the direct involvement in political dispute resolution, to advisement of the current administration. It is necessary to understand therefore how the think tank works, what types of think tanks exist, and what their orientations are regarding the creation and formation of US Foreign Policy.

### **Think Tanks in Action**

We now turn to the policy planning network in action. First, we examine the oldest think tank in the U.S., the liberal Brookings Institution. Second, we will demonstrate the conservative rebuttal to the alleged dominance of Brookings. Here, a concerted and unified conservative movement to shape public policy is explored. This movement started with extremely conservative foundations and resulted in the rise of the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. Lastly, we will examine the role of think tanks in the application of US foreign policy.

### **Brookings Institution**

The Brookings Institute, based in Washington D.C., traces its beginnings to 1916 with the founding of the Institute for Government Research, the first private organization devoted to public policy issues at a national level. In 1922 and 1924, the Institute was joined by the Institute of Economics and the Robert Brookings Graduate School. In 1927, with generous gifts from Brookings, Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Eastman (Kodak), these three groups were consolidated into one institution, named after the businessman Robert Somers Brookings (Dye 2002). As such, it is the oldest Washington based think tank (Smith 1991)

After World War II, the Brookings Institute fostered Republican support for the Marshall Plan, which the Institute helped to develop. By the 1960s, Brookings was linked to the Democratic Party, backing Keynesian economic policies. The liberal slant began under leadership of Robert D. Calkins, former Dean of the School of Business at Columbia (Dye 2002). The Institutes influence on the operations of the federal government, at times, has been substantial. In the 1920s, Brookings was largely

responsible for the creation of the federal budget. In the 1970s the Brookings Institute pushed for the creation of the Congressional Budget Office, and then provided its first head, former senior fellow Alice Rivlin (Dye 2002). During the 1980's, Brookings experienced a decline in relative influence, due in part to the rise of neoconservatives, the renunciation of Keynesianism, and, most significantly, the incoming Reagan administration (Dye 2002).

Brookings is comprised of three research divisions: economic studies, foreign policy studies, and governmental studies. Despite the recent growth of conservative influence, James A. Smith contends that Brookings continues to make significant contributions to policy debates “for its analyses of the federal budget and studies of economic growth and productivity” (Smith 1991: 272). Moreover, Brookings is still a “dominant policy planning-group for American domestic policy”, maintaining significant influence on areas of policy concerning “war on poverty, welfare and health care reform, deficit reduction, and taxing and spending policies” (Dye 2002: 184). Indicative of Brookings unrelenting impact on policy debates is its staggering budget, \$40 million (Brookings 2003b), and assets, \$236 million (Brookings 2003c), for fiscal year 2002.

By analyzing the Board of Directors for Brookings, as well as who funds the institution, it is easily understand how the institution—and others like it—has become a pawn for corporate and ruling class elites. Therefore, we will list some of the prominent figures involved in the institution and those who fund it. The current Chairman of the Board is John L. Thornton, President of Goldman-Sachs (Brookings 2003a). Thornton is also a board member of Ford Motor Company, British Sky Broadcasting Group, Hotchkiss School, Morehouse College, Yale School of Management, and a member of

the Council on Foreign Relations. The President of Brookings is Strobe Talbott, former Deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration. A former Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, Talbott is a close friend of Bill Clinton. Other significant Board members include William A. Haseltine, Ph.D, Chairman and CEO of Human Genome Sciences, Inc.; Lawrence K. Fish, Chairman and CEO of Citizens Financial Group, Inc.; Lawrence H. Summers, President of Harvard University; and James D. Wolfensohn, President of The World Bank.

Funding for Brookings Institution in 2002 came from a diverse group of sources. The Annie E. Casey Foundation donated \$1.6 million to go towards research on the impact of welfare reform on cities. \$1 million for research on ensuring equitable school choice was donated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Haim Saban, a Jordanian businessman, donated \$3.3 million for the creation of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy. Other donors include Ford Foundation, State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, Verizon Communications, AT&T, Alcoa, Exxon Mobil Corporation, J.P. Chase Morgan, American Express, Bank of America, and General Motors (Brookings 2003d). The multiplicity of interests present here should not be underestimated. Brookings must balance the interests of telecommunications, aluminum, petroleum, financial, insurance and automobile industries as exhibited by the breadth of their donors.

### **The Conservative Response**

By the 1970's conservatives had grown weary of "big government" and Keynesian policies, and were, thus, eager to change the liberal agenda that had dominated U.S. politics since the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But Conservative ideologues never felt welcomed in the policy circles of Washington, dominated by the Brookings

liberals (Ricci 1993). Nonetheless, conservatives from the corporate class slowly realized that an institutional base in Washington was necessary to mount an assault on the liberal dominated policy network and the welfare state. Their feelings were best depicted in this account from the Heritage Foundation:

“In those days (1975) we jokingly used to say a phone booth was just about big enough to hold a meeting of conservative intellectuals in Washington...we were considered irrelevant by the “opinion-makers” in the media and the power-brokers in the Congress ignored us...A conservative “think tank,” they said, was a contradiction in terms; conservatives had no ideas. History, of course, has proven them wrong” (As quoted in Dye 2002: 189).

As such, conservatives went about constructing a solid institutional base predicated on their ability to raise large amounts of money through foundations that could support their burgeoning empire of think tanks. The 1970’s experienced a dramatic increase in the number of conservative, especially ultra-conservative, think tanks. As previously noted, foundations provide a way for elites to funnel their vast wealth into the policy planning process, with the aim of advancing their narrow interests. What follows is an overview of the dominant, highly conservative foundations that fueled the conservative think tank insurgency and, then, two examples of think tanks that appeared at this time: Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute.

### **Conservative Foundations**

The John M. Olin Foundation was established in 1953 by John Merrill Olin, inventor, industrialist, conservationist, and philanthropist. The Foundation is financed by the Olin chemical and munitions fortune with assets estimated at \$90 million, \$3 million

of which goes to conservative advocacy groups (John M. Olin Foundation 2003). In 2001, the Foundation expended \$20,482,961 to fund right-wing think tanks including the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Brookings Institution, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Heritage Foundation, the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, and the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) (Media Transparency 2003a)

The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation is another large funder of right-wing policy initiatives. Brothers Lynde and Harry Bradley made a vast fortune selling their electronics business to defense contractor, Rockwell International (Dye 2002). The organization, according to The Bradley Foundation 2002 Annual Report, was giving away more than \$53 million per year (2002). From 1996 to 2001, the Bradley Foundation donated \$14.5 to AEI, \$1.8 to the PNAC, and \$1.2 million to the Heritage Foundation (Media Transparency 2003b).

The Scaife Foundations are financed by the Mellon industrial, oil, and banking fortune. The Foundation commenced funding conservative causes in 1973 when Richard Mellon Scaife became the foundation's chairman. During the 1960s, Richard inherited an estimated \$200 million from his mother, Sarah (Kaiser and Chinoy 1999). His net personal worth was estimated at \$1 billion by Forbes magazine, which would make Richard the 38th richest person in the United States . Richard controls the Scaife, Carthage, and Alleghany foundations. Between 1985 and 2001, the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation donated \$15 million to the Heritage Foundation; \$6 million to the CSIS; and \$4 million to AEI (Media Transparency 2003c)

The Smith Richardson Foundation is financed by the Vicks Vaporub fortune. The Foundation reported assets of \$494 million in 2001 and gave away \$23 million. The Foundation became active in supporting conservative causes in 1973 when R. Richardson Randolph became its president (Smith Richardson Foundation 2003). Conservative think tanks that received substantial sums were CSIS, \$3 million; the AEI, \$3 million; the SAIS; \$2.6 million; and the Brookings Institution, \$2.6 million (Media Transparency 2003d).

### **The Heritage Foundation**

Heritage was started to counter what it perceived as the liberal intellectual climate of Washington in the 1970s. The Heritage Foundation's mission is to "formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense" (Heritage Foundation 2003a). The creation of the influential Heritage Foundation was probably the single most important event in the development of a national network of conservative policy-oriented institutions. Heritage was founded in 1973 by brewery magnate Joseph Coors together with prominent right-wing activist Paul Weyrich and wealthy right-wingers Richard Scaife and Edward Noble. Large corporations, including Gulf Oil, Amoco, General Motors, and Chase Manhattan Bank also made early contributions (Ricci 1993). By 2001, it had an annual budget of \$32 million (Heritage 2003a).

Heritage's Board of Directors is dominated by several people connected to the most influential conservative foundations. The Vice Chairman of the Board is Richard Scaife, Chairman of the Scaife Family Foundations. Scaife is also the owner of Tribune

Review Publishing Co. Inc., and he sits on the Board of the Hoover Institution and Pepperdine University. The Honorable Holland Coors also serves on the Board of Trustees. Coors, the wife of Joseph Coors, is also a board member of the Adolph Coors Foundation and the Castle Rock Foundation. Steve Forbes, President and CEO of Forbes, Inc. is a Board member, as is the Honorable Frank Shakespeare, a former US Ambassador to the Vatican and Board member at the Bradley Foundation (Heritage Foundation 2003b). Heritage is well connected and well funded as evidenced by the three board members from the highly influential conservative foundations. These connections to the foundations have attributed to serious financial gains. The three foundations represented on the Board of Heritage have donated a combined \$7 million from 2000-2002 (Media Transparency 2003f).

#### **American Enterprise Institute**

As an instrument of the ruling elite, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) is the one the most important and influential think tank in the United States today. As an example, before and during the Iraq War, American Enterprise Institute played the pro-war role and influenced Bush administration. Richard Perle and Laurie Mylroie became a fellow of AEI. Perle and Mylroie are the most leading pro-war figures on the Iraq war. Christopher DeMuth is the president of AEI, and guides the institute's daily operations. The Institute was established in 1943, has approximately 50 resident scholars and fellows, and maintains a network of more than 100 adjunct scholars at American universities and policy institutes. According to Domhoff, in the early days of the institute when AEI existed as an adjunct body to the Chamber of Commerce of the United States,

“It had little money and no influence until the early 1970’s, when a former chamber employee began selling the need for a new think tank to corporate executives by exaggerating the liberal inclinations of the Brookings institution. His efforts received a large boost in 1972 when the Ford foundation gave him \$300,000 grant, which has viewed as a turning point by the institute’s staff because of the legitimacy a Ford grant conferred for the future fund raising. The Institute went from a budget of \$1.1 million in 1971 to over \$10 million in the 1980s” (Domhoff 2002: 134).

The initial growth of AEI was therefore facilitated by corporate interests in a less liberal agenda. In 2001, the AEI budget was \$23.6 million dollars, not including the money used towards investment. They invested in stock market with their surplus. A twenty-four member board of trustees, composed of leading business and financial executives currently governs the institute. Its research agenda and appointments are reviewed by a council of academic advisors. These twenty-four board members are interestingly, also either the CEO or chairman of multi million dollars companies in the US.

“Multimillion dollars budgets enjoyed by a handful of American think tanks and the many prominent and distinguished business leaders and former policy makers who serve on their boards of directors also help to reinforce the image of think tanks as policy elites.” (Abelson 2002)

To be more specific, the following CEO’s are currently on the board of trustees of American Enterprise Institute; CEOs of American Express Company, Exxon Mobil Corporation, Caxton Associates, Motorola, State Farm Insurance Companies, American Water, The Dow Chemical Company, MeadWestvaco Corporation, Exelon Corporation,

Friedman Fleischer & Lowe LLC, Geneva Steel Holdings Corp, Alliance Capital Management Corporation, Merck & Co., Inc, Spirit Finance, Anthem, Ameritrade Holding Corporation, Gemplus International SA and Colson Associates, Inc.

The American Enterprise Institute sends many scholars, fellows and activists to work with the Bush administration. These people work in the Department of Defense, State Department and the White House. The most famous of these people is Dick Cheney, once an employee of AEI, today he is the vice president. Basically, AEI is a favorite think tank of the Bush administration. Scholars and fellows of the institute belong to the neo-conservative school of Leo Strauss. The most famous one is Richard Perle. Vice president Dick Cheney was a vice chairman of AEI's board of directors. Twenty years ago, conservative thinkers in the Reagan administration regarded the Heritage foundation as the most influential think tank in Washington. But today, AEI replaces the role of the Heritage as a premiere advisor to the American government. One additional role of think tanks is to act as a type of job away from their 'real job', or a type of cocoon for government officers,

“Think tanks may also provide a ‘government in exile’ in which officials of the party whose presidential candidate has been defeated can seek employment while they lick their wounds, wait for their party to come back to power, and (hopefully) come up with new ideas.”

In this way, while the ideas may shift in response to changing political issues, the general core of interests and contacts may stay very much the same.

### **Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy**

Think tanks have come to play a prominent role in the formulation of American foreign policy. Below is a sampling of the prominent think tanks that have come to play significant roles in the development of U.S. foreign policy.

#### **The Nixon Center**

President Richard Nixon announced the creation of The Nixon Center on January 20, 1994. Dimitri Simes is a current and founding president of the Nixon Center. Simes has been an “informal” foreign policy and national security advisor of many United States presidents for many years. The Nixon Center is also the Publisher of the National Interest. The National Interest has been influential foreign policy journal since the second half of 1990s’ in Washington. The chairman of the board of directors in the Nixon Center is former secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger. The biggest financial supporter of the Nixon Center is the American International Group, Insurance Company, it is called AIG. CEO of AIG is Maurice R. Greenberg, he is also chairman of the Nixon Center. The Nixon Center is one the most conservative and influential think-tanks in the national security circle today. Most of the Nixon center funding comes from AIG.

The president of the Nixon Center, Dimitri Simes served as Chairman of the Center for Russian and Eurasian Programs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where he was also a Senior Associate. Earlier, he was the Director of the Soviet and East European Research Program and a Research Professor of Soviet Studies at the neo-conservative Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of the Johns Hopkins University. Prior to his work at SAIS, he was a Senior Research Fellow and subsequently the Director of Soviet Studies at the Center for Strategic and International

Studies. Dimitri Simes is cold war thinker and these cold war thinkers are known to be very conservative.

### **CSIS-the Center for Strategic and International Studies**

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) was founded in 1962 by former Assistant Secretary of State, David Abshire, and former chief of naval operations, Arleigh Burke. CSIS has ninety policy experts, eighty support staff and seventy interns. The think tank budget is \$17 million. CSIS carries out research in the foreign policy area. CSIS is an important institution among Washington political elite, because the institution does more academic type of research than its other counterparts. CSIS often works closely with incoming administrations to outline foreign and defense policy issues. In many respects, CSIS functions both as a research institution and as an advocacy think-tank.

CSIS plays a key role in assisting incoming presidential administrations as they make the transition to power. Foreign policy seminars are organized by CSIS for new administration officials. The Washington Political Quarterly is a journal of CSIS, and represents its political view on foreign policy issues. CSIS scholars and fellows usually appear on television and comment on foreign policy issues to carry out the CSIS mission. As William J. Taylor Jr, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) freely admits, he takes advantage of every opportunity to appear on television, not so much for personal reasons “but for the glory of CSIS and its mission of informing the public” (Abelson 2002).

CSIS is led by John J. Hamre, formerly Deputy Secretary of Defense, who has been President and CEO since April of 2000. It is guided by a board of trustees chaired

by former senator Sam Nunn. Sam Nunn is the current president of CSIS. Nunn served for 24 years as a U.S. senator for Georgia (1972-1996). He is also good friend of Dick Cheney and Ted Turner, owner and CEO of Time Warner. Henry Kissinger, Harold Brown, Bill Brock, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and James Schlesinger are some of the CSIS fellows.

CSIS finances come from contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals constitute 85 percent of the revenues needed to meet CSIS's budget, which in 2001 was \$17 million. The remaining funds come from endowment income, government contracts, and publication sales.

The CSIS staff of 190 researchers and support staff focus primarily on three subject areas. First, CSIS addresses all new challenges to national and international security. Second, they employ experts on all of the world's major geographical regions. Third, they work to develop new methods of governance for the global age, which encompass its programs on technology and public policy, international trade and finance, and energy.

### **Washington Institute for Near East Policy and JINSA-Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs**

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) was founded in 1985. WINEP is similar to the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs (JINSA), because compared to the other think-tanks, they are small, but just as influential. There are many famous names on the WINEP's board of trustees, such as Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Henry Kissinger. The same people also worked or are working with JINSA and AEI.

These institutes also receive financial support from the exact same sources: the business elite from New York, especially big financial companies.

Included in its Board of Advisors are such figures as, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Alexander Haig, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Samuel W. Lewis, Edward Luttwak, James Roche\*, George P. Shultz, and Paul Wolfowitz. In this cast of characters, there are also clear business interests at work. David Steinmann is Chief of Staff and Management Executive for the William Rosenwald Family Organization which is located in New York. However Steinmann is also Chief of Staff, Managing Director and Treasurer of American Securities, L.P., a merchant and investment banking firm in New York City. Additionally, he serves as a director of Ametek, Inc., a New York Stock Exchange diversified manufacturing company. The second person 'in command' at JINSA is Stephen D. Bryen. Dr. Bryen pioneered the field of technology security as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense from 1981-1988. He was responsible for technology security policy and high-tech trade matters affecting national defense, and worked on national policies to protect U.S. military and commercial products, know-how, intellectual property, goods and services. Dr. Bryen founded the Defense Technology Security Administration (DTSA) and served as its first Director. These two figures are important, because they have very deep ties with business community and elite interests.

### **Project for the New American Century**

The neoconservative agenda is the dominant ideology driving the policies of the Bush administration. Perhaps the most succinct expression of the neoconservative agenda is laid out by the right-wing think tank PNAC. PNAC's membership includes people such prominent neoconservatives as Richard Perle, Dick Cheney, I. Lewis Libby,

Elliot Abrams, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and William Kristol, many of whom are recycled Reaganites. In the neoconservative worldview, the entire future of America and the world revolve around multiple wars fought to defend a perpetually expanding US empire around the world as the US armed forces continue their mission as the "cavalry on the new American frontier" (Project for A New American Century 2000: 9) The neoconservatives basically come right out and say that their goal is world domination. The "pre-emption doctrine", the desire for war, the multiple war-fighting scenarios outlined by Rumsfeld, and the push for Star Wars and the weaponization of space all come out of this shared ideology.

PNAC was created because neoconservatives believe the US must seize the opportunity the US now faces to takeover and conquer the world. The founders of PNAC contend that the United States has been foolish not to take advantage of the global power vacuum that was a result of the fall of the Soviet Union (Project for a New American Century 2000c). In the think tanks' guiding principles they unabashedly state their goals:

“we need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future; we need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values; we need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad; we need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles” (Project for A New American Century 2003c).

Funding for the PNAC has come predominately from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (\$1.3 million since 1997), the John M. Olin Foundation (\$160,000

since 1997), and the Sarah Scaife Foundation \$50,000 (Media Transparency 2003e). Unlike other think tanks, PNAC does not require much money because it is not involved in projects that are very large. Rather, the organization writes briefs a couple times a year and posts most of its literature on its website. PNAC is closely related to the American Enterprise Institute, where the PNAC offices are housed.

The truly intriguing component of the PNAC is the involvement the group has had with the Bush administration, in general, and the country's new foreign policy stance and the invasion of Iraq, more specifically. The story of PNAC and that of the Bush administration's bold new foreign policy stance are one in the same. As such, the invasion of Iraq was not about terrorism, or weapons of mass destruction, or of liberating the Iraqi people. The muscular foreign policy of the US and the invasion of Iraq is part of this neoconservative cabal's vision of US global supremacy.

The march to invade Iraq began in 1992 Department of Defense under the Bush administration. What was the world like then? Communist Russia had fallen, the Cold War was over, and Saddam was challenging the US by invading Iraq. In that same year, Wolfowitz (Undersecretary of Defense for Policy), at the request of Cheney (then Secretary of Defense) drafted the Defense Planning Guidance document (Barry and Lobe 2002). The two considered the ending of Gulf War premature and drew up plans for military intervention in Iraq as an action necessary to assure access to vital raw material, primarily Persian Gulf oil and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and threats from terrorism (Bookman 2002). The document also called for preemption, unilateralism and prevention of challengers to US hegemony. This sounds eerily familiar to the "Bush Doctrine."

Eventually this document was leaked to the press and then President Bush was so embarrassed that he lambasted the document and its authors (PBS 2002). Needless to say, Bush was not reelected that year and the neoconservatives fell into deep despair. The possibility of President Clinton carrying out the neoconservative agenda was an impossibility.

In September 2000, Project for the New American Century produced a report by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Jeb Bush, and Lewis Libby. The report, entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, was nearly identical to the document produced by Wolfowitz in 1992. The themes of global domination, preemptive strikes, unilateralism, rogue states, transforming the US military, and the need for a missile defense shield were all present.

When Bush II entered office in 2000, the figureheads of PNAC found a home for their ideology in the Bush White House and Pentagon. The revolving door, the movement of figures from the think tank to public office, was incredible. Prominent figures from PNAC found very significant positions in the Bush administration. Dick Cheney was now Vice President. Secretary of Defense was granted to Don Rumsfeld. Paul Wolfowitz was now Deputy Secretary of Defense. I. Lewis Libby had become Cheney's Chief of Staff, and Elliot Abrams sat on the Presidents National Security Council. PNAC was moving much closer to what they felt was destiny.

Then, September 11, 2001. The day that changed the world forever. A day that must have been bittersweet for the neoconservative cabal. The terrorist attacks provided the neoconservatives within the administration an opportunity to push their agenda into the National Security agenda. Shortly after the terrorist attacks the administration drafted

a new National Security Strategy that was based almost entirely on the PNAC document, *Rebuilding America's Defense's* (Barry 2002). What we call the “Bush Doctrine is actually the “Wolfowitz Doctrine.”

### **Conclusion**

The success of conservative think tanks has been predicated on their ability to organize a collective agenda and securing tremendous funding from conservative donors. Liberals must do the same to maintain a progressive vision in the American political system. While the picture painted here is somewhat bleak, it is the reality of our political climate and political system. Hope should not be lost, however. Financial genius and billionaire extraordinaire, George Soros has come to the rescue. Not only has he stated that “[i]t is the central focus of [his] life” to unseat Bush, but he has donated \$3 million to help start the Progressive Center for American Progress (Von Drehle). If liberals hope to regain the backing of the American populous, they must begin by winning the war of ideas. Progress is possible only through the creation of more high profile, progressive think tanks.

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