



A Strategy Foretold

By Tom Barry

September 11 did not change everything. It certainly did not change the security strategy that a network of hawks and neoconservatives has been promoting since the early 1990s.

One year after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington the Bush White House released its *National Security Strategy* document. The radical overhaul of U.S. defense posture as outlined in the strategy document was no surprise. High officials in the Pentagon have, since the beginning of the Bush administration, made clear their intent to overhaul U.S. foreign and military policy in the very ways outlined in the *National Security Strategy* statement of September 2002. During his commencement address at West Point in June 2002 President Bush himself spoke of a fundamental shift in the U.S. defense posture toward preemption and away from the collective security framework—one that abandoned the core operating principles of the past 55 years.

America's new *National Security Strategy* report is a succinct presentation of a strategy of military dominance that rejects the policies of deterrence, containment, and collective security. Instead, the new grand strategy stresses offensive military intervention, preemptive first strikes, and proactive counterproliferation measures against rogues and other enemies. Put simply, the U.S. security strategy is no longer one of defense and reaction but offense. As President Bush states in his introduction to the strategy document: "The only path to peace and security is the path of action."

The path of action as sketched out in this radical new view of what's needed to keep America secure echoes two earlier strategy documents. One was written in 1992 by Pentagon analysts Paul Wolfowitz (now Deputy Secretary of Defense) and I. Lewis Libby (now Vice President Cheney's chief-of-staff) called the *Defense Policy Guidance* (DPG) document, and the other more recent strategy document entitled

Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century was produced by the neo-conservative Project for the New American Century (PNAC).

When the excerpts of the draft version of the *Defense Policy Guidance* leaked to the *New York Times*, Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE) was horrified and denounced the document as a prescription for "literally a Pax Americana." Written by two relatively obscure political appointees in the Pentagon's policy department in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the draft DPG called for U.S. military preeminence over Eurasia by preventing the rise of any potentially hostile power and a policy of preemption against states suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. It foretold a world in which U.S. military intervention overseas would become "a constant feature" and failed to even mention the UN.

In 1997, the two authors of this military doctrine of military preeminence and preemptive strikes—Paul Wolfowitz and I. Lewis Libby—were among the 25 signatories of the *Statement of Principles* of the neoconservative front group called the Project for the New American Century. Other signatories who are now also prominent figures in the current administration included their boss, former DoD Secretary Cheney, Elliott Abrams, Zalmay Khalilzad, Donald Rumsfeld, Paula Dobriansky, and Peter Rodman. Concluding their statement calling for a bold U.S. foreign policy based on military domination, the PNAC signatories observed: "A Reaganite policy of military strength may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the U.S. is to build on the successes of this past century and ensure our security and greatness in the next."

In September 2000, PNAC issued its strategic plan on how America should exercise its global leadership and project its military power. In its forward, PNAC's *Rebuilding America's Defenses* notes that

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PNAC's plan "builds upon the defense strategy outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the waning days of the Bush administration." It credits the draft of the *Defense Policy Guidance* as providing "a blueprint for maintaining U.S. preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests." (Wolfowitz and Libby were the two dozen consultants involved in the report.) Among the key conclusions of PNAC's defense strategy document were the following:

- "Develop and deploy global missile defenses to defend the American homeland and American allies, and to provide a secure basis for U.S. power projection around the world."
- "Control the new 'international commons' of space and 'cyberspace,' and pave the way for the creation of a new military service—U.S. Space Forces—with the mission of space control."
- "Increase defense spending, adding \$15 billion to \$20 billion to total defense spending annually."
- "Exploit the 'revolution in military affairs' [transformation to high-tech, unmanned weaponry] to insure the long-term superiority of U.S. conventional forces."
- "Need to develop a new family of nuclear weapons designed to address new sets of military requirements" complaining that the U.S. has "virtually ceased development of safer and more effective nuclear weapons."
- "Facing up to the realities of multiple constabulary missions that will require a permanent allocation of U.S. forces."
- "America must defend its homeland" by "reconfiguring its nuclear force" and by missile defense systems that "counteract the effects of the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction."
- "Need for a larger U.S. security perimeter" and the U.S. "should seek to establish a network of 'deployment bases' or 'forward operating bases' to increase the reach of current and future forces," citing the need to move beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia to increased permanent military presence in Southeast Asia and "other regions of East Asia." Necessary "to cope with the rise of China to great-power status."
- Redirecting the U.S. Air Force to move "toward a global first-strike force."
- End the Clinton administration's "devotion" to the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty.
- "North Korea, Iran, Iraq, or similar states [should not be allowed] to undermine American leadership, intimidate American allies, or threaten the American homeland itself."
- "Main military missions" necessary to "preserve Pax Americana" and a "unipolar 21st century" are the following: "secure and expand zones of democratic peace, deter rise of new great-power competitor, defend key regions (Europe, East Asia, Middle East), and exploit transformation of war."

According to the PNAC report, "The American peace has proven itself peaceful, stable, and durable. Yet no moment in international politics can be frozen in time: even a global Pax Americana will not preserve itself." To preserve this "American peace" through the 21st century, the PNAC report concludes that the global order "must have a secure foundation on unquestioned U.S. military preeminence." The report struck a prescient note when it observed that "the process of transformation is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and

catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.”

Thomas Donnelly, the document’s principal author and recently PNAC’s deputy director (until he was recruited by Lockheed-Martin), expressed the hope that “the project’s report will be useful as a road map for the nation’s immediate and future defense plans.” His hope has been realized in the new security strategy and military build-up of the current Bush administration. Many of PNAC’s conclusions and recommendations are reflected in the White House’s *National Security Strategy* document, which reflects the “peace through strength” credo that shapes PNAC strategic thinking.

The Bush administration has opted for a security strategy that is aggressive and that prioritizes the use of the military to deliver weapons of mass destruction. In his introduction to the strategy document, President Bush states that this American peace will be maintained “by fighting terrorists and tyrants.” Moreover, “as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.” Echoing the conclusions of the PNAC’s document calling for increased U.S. military projection, the White House’s own strategy document focuses not only on rogues but also on great powers, particularly China, that are regarded as peer competitors.

Instead of the nonproliferation strategy, the new strategy document calls for “proactive counterproliferation” which “must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed.” This type of security strategy is described in the following ways in the *National Security Strategy*:

- “The U.S. can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past.”

as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. forces.”

The new security strategy did not emerge full-blown in reaction to the terrorism of September 11, 2001. That catastrophe did, however, open the door to this radical strategy of anticipatory self-defense and the global projection of U.S. military power. It also served as the

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- “We cannot let our enemies strike first.”
- “We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries.”
- “To forestall or prevent hostile acts by our adversaries, the U.S. will, if necessary, act preemptively.”
- “We must build and maintain our defenses beyond challenge” and “dissuade future military competition.”
- “To contend with uncertainty and to meet the many security challenges we face, the U.S. will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia,

catalyst for a major infusion of tax dollars into the Pentagon—with the DoD budget projected to increase from \$310 billion at the end of the Clinton administration to \$469 billion in 2007.

This new strategy of rapid militarization at home, a permanent and expanding U.S. military presence abroad, and a policy of first strike defense against perceived enemies is one that was foretold. The military strategists, neo-conservative analysts, and military-industrial lobbyists spent the 1990s preparing the strategy of U.S. military preeminence that the Bush administration is now implementing under their direction.

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