

World War V, Anyone?

by Joe Sobran

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA- This country is still, so to speak, Bushed. We may need a generation or so to recover from the last administration. If you need to refresh your memory of it, you can't do much better than to read a new book, *The Transparent Cabal: The Neoconservative Agenda, War in the Middle East, and the National Interest of Israel*, by Stephen J. Sniegoski (Enigma Editions).

A mild word of warning: though the book is on the whole very well written, it has been abominably edited, and its index is nearly worthless. But this isn't the author's fault.

George W. Bush may not have been the worst American president, but he was surely the goofiest. At least his successor can speak in complete sentences. Not that this is any assurance that we will be governed better over the next four years. Nowadays, as I always say, the government is the wolf at the door -- taking our wealth and paying for it with counterfeit cash. And Barack Obama thinks the problem is that the government isn't taxing us enough -- or, in other words, extorting enough from us. (To a liberal, there is no such thing as "enough.")

The Bush era had a dialect all its own. We got accustomed to such phrases as "regime change," "rogue state," "Islamofascism," "weapons of mass destruction," "axis of evil," "pre-emptive war," and "cakewalk," to mention only a few. There were also memorable adages: "The risks of inaction are greater than the risks of action" (an argument for invading Iraq), and "The smoking gun may take the form of a mushroom cloud" (ditto).

Sniegoski reminds us of all the pundits who urged us to charge into Iraq with guns blazing: Charles Krauthammer, George Will, Cal Thomas, Victor Davis Hanson, David Frum, Richard Perle, Max Boot, David Brooks, Frank Gaffney, and dozens of other op-ed sages. None of these gents' careers appear to have suffered in the least as a result of their wildly optimistic prescriptions and predictions. Political commentators must have a powerful union that ensures their job security, no matter how grievously they err. Astrologers must envy them. George W. Bush, whom one wag has called "America's dumbest war criminal," finally lost his job, but he was the exception.

Most of these wonderful wizards, you may note, are self-identified "neoconservatives." As Boot has observed, support for the state of Israel is a "key tenet" of their peculiar creed, which, as Sniegoski notes, has very little to do with old-fashioned conservatism -- and is in fact nearly its opposite. They are constantly inflamed with war fever against the enemies of the Jewish state, even if no American interest is at stake. That is why American politicians, including Obama, swear their devotion to Israel and keep the United States constantly at war in and around the Middle East.

Among the many hawkish periodicals calling for war were *Commentary*, *The Weekly Standard*, *National Review*, *The Washington Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New Republic*. To which we may add Fox News. Traditionally conservative publications seemed to be taking their marching orders from the neocons, without pausing to ask critical questions of principle. One result of this passivity was to discredit the conservative movement as a whole, making conservatism a synonym for mindless militarism in the minds of many voters.

The neocons, as they are nicknamed, have reached new heights of absurdity. Perle and Frum together wrote a book apocalyptically titled *An End to Evil*, in which they forecast a "holocaust" of the U.S. population unless we went to war, pronto, against the Axis of Evil. Other neocons said we were already in "World War IV" and warned that the suicidal madmen ruling Iran were about to acquire nuclear weapons and take over the whole bloody world, unless we stopped them at once. Our next war will presumably be dubbed World War V.

And how do the neocons handle criticism? By the tried-and-true method of accusing their critics of anti-Semitism. But an ugly accusation isn't an argument.

The country has just come through a seven-year spell of temporary insanity, with the lunatics running the asylum. (At least let's hope it's only temporary.) The aforementioned Frank Gaffney surmised, in early 2001 (more than seven months before the 9/11 horrors), that Saddam Hussein "may have acquired atomic and perhaps even thermonuclear weapons."

With these guys, it's hard to say where the lies ended and the delusions began. Now our new president, who campaigned as an antiwar candidate, seems to want to withdraw from Iraq and repeat the experience in Afghanistan.

Sniegoski has been carefully keeping score of the neocons' mischief for many years, and he has given us a meticulous recounting of how they made the most of the opportunity they got so suddenly on September 11, 2009.

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