

Bush Doctrine

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The **Bush Doctrine** is a phrase used to describe various related foreign policy principles of former United States president George W. Bush. The phrase initially described the policy that the United States had the right to secure itself from countries that harbor or give aid to terrorist groups, which was used to justify the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.^[1]

Later it came to include additional elements, including the controversial policy of preventive war, which held that the United States should depose foreign regimes that represented a potential or perceived threat to the security of the United States, even if that threat was not immediate; a policy of spreading democracy around the world, especially in the Middle East, as a strategy for combating terrorism; and a willingness to pursue U.S. military interests in a unilateral way.^{[2][3][4]} Some of these policies were codified in a National Security Council text entitled the *National Security Strategy of the United States* published on September 20, 2002.^[5]



President Bush makes remarks in 2006 during a press conference in the Rose Garden about Iran's nuclear ambitions and discusses North Korea's nuclear test.

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National Security Strategy of the United States

The main elements of the Bush Doctrine were delineated in a document, the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, published on September 17, 2002.^[6] This document is often cited as the definitive statement of the doctrine.^{[7][8][9]} It was updated in 2006^[10] and is stated as follows:^[11]

“ The security environment confronting the United States today is radically different from what we have faced before. Yet the first duty of the United States Government remains what it always has been: to protect the American people and American interests. It is an enduring American principle that this duty obligates the government to anticipate and counter threats, using all elements of national power, before the threats can do grave damage. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of

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inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD.

To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising our inherent right of self-defense. The United States will not resort to force in all cases to preempt emerging threats. Our preference is that nonmilitary actions succeed. And no country should ever use preemption as a pretext for aggression.

Components

The Bush Doctrine has been formulated as a collection of strategy principles, practical policy decisions, and a set of rationales and ideas for guiding United States foreign policy.^[12] Two main pillars are identified for the doctrine: preemptive strikes against potential enemies and promoting democratic regime change.^{[12][13]}

The George W. Bush administration claimed that the United States is locked in a global war; a war of ideology, in which its enemies are bound together by a common ideology and a common hatred of democracy.^{[12][14][15][16][17][18]}

Out of the *National Security Strategy*, four main points are highlighted as the core to the Bush Doctrine: Preemption, Military Primacy, New Multilateralism, and the Spread of Democracy.^[19] The document emphasized preemption by stating: “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few.” and required “defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders.”^[20]

Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, in 2006 stated that: “If I were rating, I would say we probably deserve a D or D+ as a country as how well we’re doing in the battle of ideas that’s taking place. I’m not going to suggest that it’s easy, but we have not found the formula as a country.”^[17]

Unilateralism

Unilateral elements of the Bush Doctrine were evident in the first months of Bush’s presidency. Conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer used the term, unilateralism, in February 2001 to refer to the president’s increased unilateralism in foreign policy, specifically regarding the president’s decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty.^{[21][22]}

There is some evidence that Bush’s willingness for the United States to act unilaterally came even earlier. The International Journal of Peace Studies 2003 article *The Bush administration’s image of Europe: From ambivalence to rigidity* states:^[23]

“ The Republican Party’s platform in the 2000 presidential elections set the administration’s tone on this issue. It called for a dramatic expansion of NATO not only in Eastern Europe (with the Baltic States, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania) but also, and most significantly, in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The purpose is to develop closer cooperation within NATO in dealing with geopolitical problems from the Middle East to Eurasia. The program therefore takes a broad and rather fuzzy view of Europe.

It would be premature at this stage to say that the US administration has had a fundamental change of heart and shed its long-ingrained reflexes in dealing with Russia.

When it comes to the future of Europe, Americans and Europeans differ on key issues. The differences seem to point toward three fundamental values which underpin the Bush administration’s image of Europe. The first is unilateralism, of which the missile shield is a particularly telling example. The American position flies in the face of the European approach, which is based on ABM talks and multilateralism. An opposition is taking shape here between the leading European capitals, which want to deal with the matter by judicial means, and the Americans, who want to push ahead and create a fait accompli. ”

Attacking countries that harbor terrorists

The doctrine was developed more fully in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks. The attacks presented a foreign-policy challenge, since it was not Afghanistan that had initiated the attacks, and there was no evidence that they had any foreknowledge of the attacks.^[24] In an address to the nation on the evening of September 11, Bush stated his resolution of the issue by declaring that “we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”^[25] This policy was used to justify the invasion of

Afghanistan in October 2001,^[1] and has since been applied to American military action against Al Qaeda camps in North-West Pakistan.

President Bush made an even more aggressive restatement of this principle in his September 20, 2001 address to the United States Congress.^[26]

“ We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime. ”

Preemptive strikes

President Bush addressed the cadets at the U.S. Military Academy (West Point) on June 1, 2002, and made clear the role Preemptive war would play in the future of American foreign policy and national defense.^[27]

“ We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long — Our security will require transforming the military you will lead — a military that must be ready to strike at a moment’s notice in any dark corner of the world. And our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives. ”

Two distinct schools of thought arose in the Bush Administration regarding the question of how to handle countries such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea (“Axis of Evil” states). Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, as well as U.S. Department of State specialists, argued for what was essentially the continuation of existing U.S. foreign policy. These policies, developed after the Cold War, sought to establish a multilateral consensus for action (which would likely take the form of increasingly harsh sanctions against the problem states, summarized as the policy of containment). The opposing view, argued by Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and a number of influential Department of Defense policy makers such as Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, held that direct and unilateral action was both possible and justified and that America should embrace the opportunities for democracy and security offered by its position as sole remaining superpower. President Bush ultimately sided with the Department of Defense camp, and their recommendations.

Democratic regime change

In a series of speeches in late 2001 and 2002, President Bush expanded on his view of American foreign policy and global intervention, declaring that the United States should actively support democratic governments around the world, especially in the Middle East, as a strategy for combating the threat of terrorism, and that the United States had the right to act unilaterally in its own security interests, without the approval of international bodies such as the United Nations.^{[2][3][4]} This represented a departure from the Cold War policies of deterrence and containment under the Truman Doctrine and post-Cold War philosophies such as the Powell Doctrine and the Clinton Doctrine.

In his 2003 State of the Union Address, President Bush declared:^[28]

“ Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world, it is God’s gift to humanity. ”

After his second inauguration, in a January 2004 speech at National Defense University, Bush said: “The defense of freedom requires the advance of freedom.”

Neoconservatives and the Bush Doctrine held that the hatred for the West and United States in particular, is not because of actions perpetrated by the United States, but rather because the countries from which terrorists emerge are in social disarray and do not experience the freedom that is an intrinsic part of democracy.^{[12][17]} The Bush Doctrine holds that enemies of United States are using terrorism as a war of ideology against the United States. The responsibility of the United States is to protect itself and its friends by promoting democracy where the terrorists are located so as to undermine the basis for terrorist activities.^{[12][17]}

Influences on the Bush Doctrine

Neoconservatives

Central to the development of the Bush Doctrine was its strong influence by neoconservative ideology,^{[29][30]} and it was considered to be a

step from the political realism of the Reagan Doctrine.^{[29][31]} The Reagan Doctrine was considered key to American foreign policy until the end of the Cold War, just before Bill Clinton became president of the United States. The Reagan Doctrine was considered anti-Communist and in opposition to Soviet Union global influence, but later spoke of a peace dividend towards the end of the Cold War with economic benefits of a *decrease* in defense spending. The Reagan Doctrine was strongly criticized^{[32][33][31]} by the neoconservatives, who also became disgruntled with the outcome of the Gulf War^{[30][29]} and United States foreign policy under Bill Clinton,^{[30][34]} sparking them to call for change towards global stability^{[30][35]} through their support for active intervention and the democratic peace theory.^[34] Several central persons in the counsel to the George W. Bush administration considered themselves to be neoconservatives or strongly support their foreign policy ideas.^{[30][36][37][38][39][40]}

Neoconservatives are widely known to long have supported the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and on January 26, 1998, the PNAC sent a public letter to then-President Bill Clinton stating:

“ As a result, in the not-too-distant future we will be unable to determine with any reasonable level of confidence whether Iraq does or does not possess such weapons. Such uncertainty will, by itself, have a seriously destabilizing effect on the entire Middle East. It hardly needs to be added that if Saddam does acquire the capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction, as he is almost certain to do if we continue along the present course, the safety of American troops in the region, of our friends and allies like Israel and the moderate Arab states, and a significant portion of the world’s supply of oil will all be put at hazard. As you have rightly declared, Mr. President, the security of the world in the first part of the 21st century will be determined largely by how we handle this threat. ”

Among the signatories to Project for the New American Century’s original statement of Principals is George W. Bush’s father’s Vice President Dan Quayle, his (Bush Jr.’s) defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, his deputy defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz, his Vice President Dick Cheney, and his brother Jeb Bush.^[30]

PNAC member and the chairman of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee (DPBAC), Neoconservative Richard Perle, later expressed regret over the Iraq invasion and ultimately put the blame for the invasion on President George W. Bush;^[41] while other renowned neoconservative ideologists like Joshua Muravchik and Norman Podhoretz claim that neoconservatives must take intellectual leadership^{[42][43]} and that traditional conservatives lack the insight on how to solve terrorism.^[43] Muravchik called former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (a traditional conservative^[43]) a neoconservative hero and champion of military strategy, but that the strength of neoconservatives is their ideology as foundation for policies,^[42] and this strength is also recognized by political scientists.^[44] Muravchik claims these strengths are present in the case of the Reagan presidency as well as the Bush presidency, and that Bush unlike Reagan has contributed to the “fundamental solution” to the Middle East.^[45]

Other than Bush and Rumsfeld, other traditional conservatives who are thought to have adopted neoconservative foreign policy thinking include Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.^[46]

The Bush Doctrine, in line with long-standing neoconservative ideas, held that the United States is entangled in a global war of ideas between the western values of freedom on the one hand, and extremism seeking to destroy them on the other; a war of ideology where the United States must take responsibility for security and show leadership in the world by actively seeking out the enemies and also change those countries who are supporting enemies.^{[18][12][17][47]}

The Bush Doctrine, and neoconservative reasoning, held that containment of the enemy as under the Realpolitik of Reagan does not work, and that the enemy of United States must be destroyed before he attacks — using all the United States’ available means, resources and influences to do so.^{[18][12][17]}

On the book *Winning the War on Terror* Dr. James Forest, U.S. Military Academy Combating Terrorism Center (<http://ctc.usma.edu/>) at West Point, comments: “While the West faces uncertainties in the struggle against militant Islam’s armies of darkness, and while it is true that we do not yet know precisely how it will end, what has become abundantly clear is that the world will succeed in defeating militant Islam because of the West’s flexible, democratic institutions and its all-encompassing ideology of freedom.”^[18]

Natan Sharansky

Another part of the intellectual underpinning of the Bush Doctrine was the 2004 book *The Case for Democracy*, written by Israeli politician and author, Natan Sharansky, and Israeli Minister of Economic Affairs in the United States, Ron Dermer, which Bush has cited as influential in his thinking.^[48] The book argues that replacing dictatorships with democratic governments is both morally justified, since it leads to greater freedom for the citizens of such countries, and strategically wise, since democratic countries are more peaceful, and breed less terrorism, than dictatorial ones.

Expanding United States influence

Princeton University research fellow Dr. Jonathan Monten, in his 2005 *International Security* journal article "*The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy*",^[49] attributed the Bush administration's activist democracy promotion to two main factors: the expansion of material capabilities, and the presence of a nationalist domestic ideology. He claims the Bush Doctrine promotion of democracy abroad is held vital by the George W. Bush administration to the success of the United States in the war against terrorism. It is also a key objective of the administration's grand strategy of expanding the political and economic influence of the United States internationally. He examines two contending approaches to the long-term promotion of democracy: "*exemplarism*," or leadership by example, and "*vindicationism*," or the direct application of United States power, including the use of coercive force. Whereas exemplarism largely prevailed in the twentieth century, vindicationism has been the preferred approach of the Bush administration.

Criticism and analysis

The Bush Doctrine has resulted in criticism and controversy.^{[23][50]} Peter D. Feaver, who worked on the Bush national security strategy as a staff member on the National Security Council, said he has counted as many as seven distinct Bush doctrines. One of the drafters of the National Security Strategy of the United States, which is commonly mistakenly referred to as the "Bush Doctrine," demurred at investing the statement with too much weight. "I actually never thought there was a Bush doctrine," said Philip D. Zelikow, who later served as State Department counselor under Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. "Indeed, I believe the assertion that there is such a doctrine lends greater coherence to the administration's policies than they deserve." Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, said he thought there was no "single piece of paper" that represents the Bush doctrine.^[51]

Experts on geopolitical strategy note that Halford Mackinder's theories in *The Geographical Pivot of History* about the *Heartland* and world resource control are still as valid today as when they were formulated.^{[52][53][54]}

In his 2007 book, *In the Defense of the Bush Doctrine*,^[12] Robert G. Kaufman wrote: "No one grasped the logics or implications of this transformation better than Halford Mackinder. His prescient theories, first set forth in *Geographical Pivot of History*, published in 1904, have rightly shaped American grand strategy since World War II. Mackinder warned that any single power dominating Eurasia, "the World Island", as he called it, would have the potential to dominate the world, including the United States."^[55] Kaufman is a political scientist, public policy professor and member of The Shadow Financial Regulatory Committee. He said in an interview about the book: "*I wrote this book because of my conviction that the Bush Doctrine has a more compelling logic and historical pedigree than people realize.*"^[14]

The Bush Doctrine has been polarizing both in domestic policies and internationally.^[56] Anti-Americanism has been rising, and as of 2008, polls show there is more anti-Americanism than before the George W. Bush administration started forming the Bush Doctrine; this increase is probably, at least partially, a result of implementing the Bush doctrine and conservative foreign policy.^{[57][58]}

Foreign interventionism

Main article: Foreign policy of the George W. Bush administration

The foreign policy of the Bush Doctrine was subject to controversy both in the United States and internationally.^{[23][49]}

Critics of the Bush Doctrine were suspicious of the increasing willingness of the United States to use military force unilaterally. Some published criticisms include Storer H. Rowley's June 2002 article in the *Chicago Tribune*,^[59] Anup Shah's at Globalissues.org,^[60] and Nat Parry's April 2004 article at ConsortiumNews.com.^[61]

Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson argued that it reflects a turn away from international law, and marks the end of American legitimacy in foreign affairs.^[62]

Others have stated that it could lead to other states resorting to the production of WMD or terrorist activities.^[63] This doctrine is argued to be contrary to the Just War Theory and would constitute a war of aggression.^{[64][65]} Patrick J. Buchanan writes that the 2003 invasion of Iraq has significant similarities to the 1996 neoconservative policy paper *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm*.^[66]

Political scientist Karen Kwiatkowski, in 2007 wrote on her article *Making Sense of the Bush Doctrine*: "*We are killing terrorists in self-defense and for the good of the world, you see. We are taking over foreign countries, setting them up with our favorite puppets "in charge," controlling their economy, their movements, their dress codes, their defensive projects, and their dreams, solely because we love them, and apparently can't live without them.*"^[67]

Radical departure

According to Buchanan and others, the Bush Doctrine was a radical departure from former United States foreign policies, and a continuation of the radical ideological roots of neoconservatism.^{[29][68][69][70][42][71]}

Initially, support for the United States was high,^[71] but by the end of the Bush administration, after seven years of war, anti-Americanism was high and criticism of the Bush Doctrine was widespread,^{[72][71]} nonetheless the doctrine still had support among some United States political leaders.^[72]

The representation of prominent neoconservatives and their influences on the Bush Doctrine had been highly controversial among the United States public.^{[31][43][46][72]}

Critics, like John Micklethwait in the book *The Right Nation*, claim that George W. Bush was deceived by neoconservatives into adopting their policies.^{[73][74][46]}

Polarization

Anti-war critics have claimed that the Bush Doctrine was strongly polarizing domestically, and has estranged the allies of the United States,^[67] despite Bush's often-stated desire to be a "uniter, not a divider".^[56]

Compassionate belief and religious influence

President Bush often talked about his belief in compassionate conservatism^{[75][76]} and liberty as "God's gift".^[28] In his Claremont Institute article *Democracy and the Bush Doctrine*,^[70] Charles R. Kesler wrote, "As he begins his second term, the president and his advisors must take a hard, second look at the Bush Doctrine. In many respects, it is the export version of compassionate conservatism."

Sociopsychological strategy and effects

There is also criticism on the Bush Doctrine practices related to their sociopsychological effects saying they create a culture of fear.^{[77][78][79][80]}

Author Naomi Klein wrote in her book *The Shock Doctrine* about a recurrent metaphor of shock, and claimed in an interview that the Bush administration has continued to exploit a "window of opportunity that opens up in a state of shock", subsequently followed with a comforting rationale for the public, as a form of social control.^[81] Her 2008 book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* further elaborates on her impressions on the Bush Doctrine and throughout the George W. Bush administration.

Spreading democracy

Some commentators argue that U.S. intervention has not aimed to support genuine democratic regimes driven by local peoples, but rather US-friendly regimes installed by diplomats acting on behalf of the United States, and intended only to seem democratic to U.S. voters.^[82] For example, in the case of Afghanistan, it is argued that parliamentary democracy was downplayed by the US and power concentrated in the hands of the Afghan president Hamid Karzai, a U.S. ally.^[83] The election of Karzai has been described as the result of manipulation on the parts of the U.S. government and U.S. policy maker Zalmay Khalilzad. At the same time, these commentators draw attention to the number of unpopular (but U.S.-friendly) warlords achieving "legitimizing" positions under U.S. supervision of the elections. Some commentators interpreted voter turnout figures as evidence of "large-scale fraud".^[84] Sonali Kolhatkar and James Ingalls have written, "It remains to be seen if U.S. policy makers will ever allow anything approaching democracy to break out in Afghanistan and interfere with their plans."^[85]

Of the elections in Afghanistan, Sima Samar, former Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs stated.^[86]

“ This is not a democracy, it is a rubber stamp. Everything has already been decided by the powerful ones. ”

Most studies of American intervention have been pessimistic about the history of the United States exporting democracy. Tures examined 228 cases of American intervention from 1973 to 2005, using Freedom House data. A plurality of interventions, 96, caused no change in the country's democracy. In 69 instances the country became less democratic after the intervention. In the remaining 63 cases, a country became more democratic.^[87]

See also

- Carter Doctrine
- Clinton Doctrine
- Jus ad bellum

- Powell Doctrine
- Reagan Doctrine
- The One Percent Doctrine
- United States Presidential doctrines
- War on Terrorism
- Wolfowitz Doctrine

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