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War, Peace, and the Struggle for Liberty

by Justin Raimondo

The following is a transcript of a speech given at The Future of Freedom Foundation's June 2007 conference, "Restoring the Republic: Foreign Policy & Civil Liberties" held in Reston, Virginia.

Jacob Hornberger: Our next speaker, Justin Raimondo, is the Editorial Director of Antiwar.com, which is the leading Libertarian antiwar site on the Internet. If you're not familiar with Antiwar.com you should get yourself acquainted because it is absolutely fantastic.

Jacob Hornberger: It is constantly updated with news articles, commentaries, editorials; it's clear that they look at every one of these articles that they link to and they're virtually all from a Libertarian perspective, but many conservatives, many Leftists; it's a fantastic site and one of the reasons it's so fantastic is because of Justin's column. You owe yourself a real treat to look at his archives. His columns are hard hitting. They're hardcore but also very, very entertaining, and you can't get through one of his articles without cracking a smile. They're very, very nice. He's the author of three books, including his most famous one: *Reclaiming the American Right, the Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*. He's a regular contributor to *American Conservative* and *Chronicles* magazine. His talk is entitled "War, Peace, and the Struggle for Liberty." Justin Raimondo.

Justin Raimondo: Thank you Bumper. To listen to the public spokespersons of the War Party, one would think that the 9/11 attacks tore a hole in the space-time continuum.

Justin Raimondo: And landed us in an alternative universe, a world where World War II never ended. Where Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, and most of all Hitler seem not to have died, where the atmosphere of crisis, of intellectual conformity, and of outright panic that suffuses the

air in wartime has been lovingly recreated, like a remake of an old war movie. There is a reason why they constantly invoke the imagery of that global catastrophe, hailing the alleged heroism of Churchill, deriding the supposed cowardice of Neville Chamberlain, and promoting the weird cult of Franklin Delano Roosevelt amongst ostensible conservatives. After all, if you want to start a World War it seems wise to recall and refit the tactics and maneuvers that led to the last one, and the parallels are striking.

Once again, the coalition of foreign lobbyists and domestic interests has coalesced around a program of World War. Once again, a president has openly signed onto their agenda and is implementing it without regard to the domestic consequences, or the true nature of American interests abroad. It is a replay of history that for all its variations and idiosyncrasies extends to the political scene, where a movement that spans both Left and Right has arisen to oppose a policy of perpetual war and the ruthless abrogation of civil liberties.

On the Left, all the best instincts of a liberalism that once we thought was lost are being revived. Once again, we are seeing the skepticism of government and hatred of war that caused Randolph Bourne to declare in the title of his essay, "War is the Health of the State." This brand of liberal thought was nearly extinguished by the modernizing managerial statism of the New Deal and almost made us forget that the Democrats are, after all, the party of Jefferson. This is not to say that the antiwar "net roots," so called, are self-conscious Jeffersonian Democrats, but they are getting there. In the face of a systematic assault of Bush and his party on the very foundations of our old Republic, rank and file Democrats and liberals of every description are rapidly recovering their long-lost antiauthoritarian, antiwar heritage.

Another sort of heritage, albeit one that is not unrelated, is being rediscovered on the Right. Since the first Gulf War, we have seen the rise of what has come to be called "the Old Right," that is, the pre-World War II conservative ethos of such forgotten figures as Garet Garrett, John T. Flynn, Rose Wilder Lane, Robert A. Taft, and the America First Movement. This was a coalition of conservative Midwestern businessmen, Libertarians, and old style liberals who rose in opposition to Roosevelt's drive to war and to the more authoritarian aspects of the New Deal.

The America First Committee, founded in the heyday of the Old Right's influence, was up until the Vietnam War the biggest antiwar movement in American history. Culturally, however, it was a very different antiwar movement from the sort we have today, in that it was driven by conservatives, protolibertarians, Midwestern progressives such as Senator Burton K. Wheeler, and liberals of "the old school" such as John T. Flynn. These people were all united in the fear that we would fight National Socialism overseas, only to wake up one morning to find ourselves with saddled with an American version of the same supercentralizing, warmongering regime on our own shores. Politically, the demands of the old America First movement find their echo in

today's coalition of anti-interventionist critics of the so-called war on terrorism, particularly in its Republican so-called "realist" wing.

A recitation of the America First Committee's founding principles gives us a sense of déjà vu. This is from their founding principles, quote: "The United States must build an impregnable defense for America. No foreign powers or group of powers can successfully attack a prepared America. American democracy can be preserved only by keeping out of a European war. Aid short of war weakens national defense at home and threatens to involve Americans in war abroad." Now if we apply this credo to the situation we find ourselves in today, we find that they make a pretty good summary of anti-interventionism on both the Right and the Left.

The first principle of building both "an impregnable defense for America's interests" presents, in brief, the realist school's primary emphasis on putting the defense of America first, over and above all considerations of collective security, and ruling out completely such idealistic concepts as "spreading democracy throughout the world." The second principle of a prepared America prefigures not only the Republican realist perspective but also that of a national security Democrats, as they call themselves, who criticize the Bush regime's lack of focus on the specific threat of Al-Qaeda, as opposed to the diversion, as they see it, of regime change in Iraq. The third principle is really the essence of the Old Right's critique of the war in Europe, statism at home program of the Roosevelt administration and anticipates as well the paleoconservative and Libertarian fear of what Lew Rockwell has so trenchantly described as "Red State Fascism."

The America Firsters clearly saw the link between war abroad and creeping socialism and authoritarianism right here at home—a connection that our fake conservatives of the Rush Limbaugh, Ann Coulter type just don't get. Conversely, a growing number of liberals, including Democratic Party activists, do get this connection and are gradually or in some cases very rapidly moving toward what might be termed "a Libertarian position."

Now the concept of aid short of war doesn't really translate into the contemporary idiom, having to do with aid to beleaguered Britain during the blitz. But in general it does relate to the larger issue of collective security, another concept that today's conservatives embrace wholeheartedly and which was anathema to their much wiser ancestors. The America First Group also declared in its founding statement that its purpose was "to urge Americans to keep their heads amid rising hysteria in times of crisis," a sentiment that unfortunately not many conservatives, or liberals for that matter, shared on 9/11 and its aftermath, while all around them the liberals and the procommunist Leftists were calling for intervention in the European war.

These conservative realists of yesteryear resisted the urge to jump on the war bandwagon. As Hitler's armies overran Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, Belgium, and Holland and then turned on the Soviets, their former allies, the America Firsters kept their cool and analyzed the crisis in

terms of what would serve our distinctly American interests rather than emotional attachments to the embattled British or any nonsensical idea that we would have to fight for Germans over there, or else battle the Wehrmacht in the streets of Des Moines.

Justin Raimondo: In our own time, the analog to Pearl Harbor is of course the 9/11 attacks and it's sad to say, all too many so called "Libertarians," not to mention conservatives, succumbed to the hysteria. In a speech given to a special Cato Institute Donor's Conference, held on September 20th of that fateful year, Cato bigwig Tom G. Palmer attacked what he called the "blame America" response to the attacks that he claimed was coming from the American Left and from some sectors of the Right. Now he spent most of his time during his eleven-minute talk going after straw men such as an editorial by Robert Kaiser in the *Washington Post*, which in typical woolly-headed liberal fashion tried to link the attacks to our failure to sign the Kyoto Accord.

Justin Raimondo: Whatever. <Laughs> But then Palmer somehow linked this to former Libertarian John Gray's indictment of the Free Market, although the connection between Gray's economic views and 9/11 is very vague, if not nonexistent. Señor Palmer then turned his sights on the attacks themselves, and here is where he lost his head and succumbed to hysteria. He described the attacks as "an attack upon civilization itself." To hear him tell it, at the time, none of this had anything to do with American foreign policy, it was all about our character as a people. The World Trade Center was to his mind "the perfect target for our enemies," and that they are or were "symbols of commerce and prosperity," supposedly the objects of Osama bin Laden's unrelenting hatred and the real reasons for the attacks.

Now oddly there is no reference in his peroration to the Pentagon, which as we all know was also hit that day. And that was truly the crowning shock of that dramatic day that the epicenter of American militarism and our foreign policy of global intervention proved to be so vulnerable, the sight of Pentagon employees running in panic for safety was surely one of the most memorable images of 9/11, one that the citizens of Washington, D.C. would not soon forget. And yet Palmer doesn't mention this at all, perhaps because it undermines his "they hate us because we're so rich and fabulous" thesis.

Justin Raimondo: The very myth by the way pushed by President Bush and now Rudolph Giuliani against all evidence to the contrary. As Ron Paul has pointed out to Mr. Giuliani, our wealth, our freedom, or now the remnants of our freedom had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda. It was blowback from the Middle East that was a direct consequence of our interventionist foreign policy. Palmer might say, or rather, he might have said at the time that this was "just another Leftist variation of the 'blame America' analysis" of 9/11; but it is based firmly on the old, conservative idea that one has to take responsibility for one's actions, and that actions, along with the ideas which they are based on, have consequences.

Palmer and some others at Cato, including Brink Lindsey, their trade analyst, took this critique of the so-called “blame America Left” and used it as a bludgeon against the antiwar movement. While Palmer never openly endorsed the invasion of Iraq and spent most of the time attacking Antiwar.com, Lindsey did. Based on the utterly wrong idea that the 9/11 attacks were “an attack upon civilization itself,” a number of alleged Libertarians took up the cause of Bush’s war to transform the Middle East as the only way to “drain the swamp,” as they put it, “of Islamic radicalism and eliminate the security threat to America, once and for all.” Ron Bailey, the science correspondent for *Reason* magazine, even undertook to construct a theory of Libertarian Trotskyism: the idea that Libertarianism in one country could not long survive and in order to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our progeny, it was necessary to launch a worldwide effort to export the American system at gunpoint; this in a Libertarian magazine, a disgrace.

In the broader world of ideological opinion, long-time liberals caved in and cowered in fear as the War Party strode triumphantly over the political landscape, meekly endorsing the invasion of Afghanistan as “just retribution for the attacks.” Their congressional wing gave the president a blank check, which he naturally cashed immediately and which we are still paying for today in spite of a liberal’s belated attempts to rein him in. In the runup to the invasion of Iraq, both parties jumped on the prowar bandwagon, and any attempts to question the rationale for war were denounced as “unpatriotic”: at best “proterrorist,” at worst and certainly an example of the so-called, “blame America” attitude condemned by Tom Palmer in his talk to the Cato money bags. After all, was this not a war on behalf of our civilization against evil men who hate us? Not for anything our government has done, but simply because we exist?

This hysteria in retrospect has certain darkly comic aspects, especially when we look at the pronouncements of certain high-profile intellectuals and bloggers who signed onto Bush’s war, indeed who egged the War Party on toward unprecedented heights of folly and hubris, and who today are now recanting and denouncing the very president they once valorized as a heroic figure. Andrew Sullivan epitomized the hysterics of the War Party when he suggested that the anthrax attacks sent to various news outlets and the offices of two senators were certainly the work of Saddam Hussein, and that this justified the dropping of a couple of nukes on Iraq. He has never retracted that statement, yet today he masquerades as an antiwar blogger. Give us a break, Andy. Gee, it’s a good thing he wasn’t in any position to implement his proposal of nuclear holocaust as retribution for an attack that had nothing to do with either Saddam Hussein or the hapless Iraqi people; otherwise, Iraq today would be a molten puddle of glass. But this is a perfect example of the temper of those times, of the witless hysteria that permeated the intellectual atmosphere in which people were allowed to get away with such over the top exclamations of outrage and emotionalism, and which encouraged the War Party to launch what General William E. Odom has rightly called the biggest strategic disaster in American military history, which is the invasion and occupation of Iraq by American forces.

Justin Raimondo: The intellectuals lost their heads, and that there were some ostensible Libertarians among them should come as no great surprise. The modern Libertarian Movement has always been afflicted by a certain prowar element. It was true during the Cold War era and it's even more true today, when the hysteria level has reached fever pitch and the careers and incomes of so many policy wonks, particularly here in the Imperial City, are dependent on going with the flow and remaining respectable even at the cost of their intellectual integrity. The reasons for their capitulation to war hysteria are not entirely mercenary, however, or due to only a lack of intellectual integrity. A lot of it was and is based on real fear, on the fear that, as Palmer put it, while the ruins of the World Trade Center were still smoking, we must "resolve not to allow that to be the fate of our civilization itself."

While in retrospect it seems slightly absurd that Al-Qaeda could destroy American civilization and in effect overthrow the U.S. government, you have to remember that certain people are very prone to hysteria in a crisis. The emotional fallout of 9/11 had a big impact on these types and seemed to validate their worse fears and the doubts of the most committed Libertarians. In those dark days Right after September 11, 2001, the Antiwar Movement and by extension the Libertarian Movement contracted considerably. Against the overwhelming tide of prowar opinion, that giant tsunami of self-Righteous belligerence very few could stand, but stand they did, confident in the knowledge that once the emotionalism of the moment washed over them, they would be proven Right in their opposition to the war party's agenda.

In the meantime, however, the warmongers were in the saddle, and they used their political preeminence to take us a long way down a road we have since had good reason to regret traveling. If we can liken the 9/11 attacks to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and analogize the capitulation of all too many otherwise sensible conservatives and Libertarians to the America Firsters who decided at that point to pack it in, disband their organization, and abandon their long-standing opposition to overseas interventionism, then we can see how this was replicated in our own day in so far as its methods are concerned. Intellectual and even physical intimidation and shameless fear mongering are among the weapons in the War Party's arsenal, and in this sense very little has changed since World War II.

Today, however, in terms of its composition, we are talking about a horse of a very different color. As America teetered on the brink of entering World War II, Charles A. Lindbergh gave a fateful speech that did more damage to the America First Movement for peace than all the propagandistic efforts of the prowar groups he named in Des Moines that day. In his oration the great aviator and American hero sought to define who and what had brought us to the point of no return, and I quote, "The three most important groups," said Lindbergh, "who have been pressing this country toward war are the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt Administration. Behind these groups but of lesser importance are a number of capitalists, Anglophiles, and intellectuals who believe that the future of mankind depends upon the domination of the British Empire. Add

to these the Communistic groups who were opposed to intervention until a few weeks ago, and I believe I have named the major agitators in the war in this country.”

Now as Hitler was rampaging throughout Europe bent on enslaving and exterminating the Jewish people, wherever his minions met them, it is no wonder that a great many American Jews were plumping for war and Lindbergh said as much. However, where he crossed the line and gave the War Party a very effective bludgeon with which to beat him and America First was when he went on to say the following, and I quote: “Their greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government.”

Now I agree with John T. Flynn, a member of the America First National Committee and a leading light of the Old Right. He was furious upon hearing Lindbergh’s remarks. In a letter to Lindbergh he wrote that although the responsibility for the tactic of smearing opponents of war as anti-Semites should be brought home to Jewish leaders, “This is a far different matter upon the public platform and denouncing the Jews as war makers.” “No man,” said Flynn, “can do that without incurring the guilt of religious and racial intolerance.”

In his speech, Lindbergh protested that, “I’m not attacking either the Jewish or the British people, both races I admire, but I am saying that the leaders of both the British and the Jewish races, for reasons that are as understandable from their viewpoint as they are inadvisable to ours, for reasons which are not American, wish to involve us in war.” In spite of this very bad faux pas, however, Lindbergh’s speech is a rather perceptive albeit flawed analysis of the War Party. Its methods and its various components, if we take it as our baseline, we can see. But here is where the analogy between World War II and what the neocons call World War IV begin to diverge.

In our own time, the foreign interests described by Lucky Lindy no longer include either the British or the Communists, and as for the Jewish people, Jews overwhelmingly oppose the Iraq war and no doubt view a potential conflict with Iran in the same skeptical light. The War Party today is an amalgam of elements that include foreign interests, notably the pro-Israel lobby, which has taken the place of the Anglophiles as one of the chief pillars of the interventionist leadership. Smearing peace advocates as anti-Semites has indeed been a recurring theme of the new war propaganda, especially when war critics point out that this campaign to transform the Middle East through military force has served Israeli and not American interests. What is notable, however, is that American Jews have not been taken in by this propaganda and remain opposed to the militaristic foreign policy of this administration, perhaps more so than any other single group in America.

The War Party is now reduced to its core elements. They don’t have the over 60% of the American people who think the Iraq war was a mistake. They certainly don’t have the Brits, who

recently threw out their Prime Minister on account of his subservience to the War Party's agenda. Even a number of neocon intellectuals such as Francis Fukuyama have jumped ship. The War Party today consists of three main groups: the ultranationalist faction of the GOP that profits politically from our policy of perpetual war; the military industrial complex that profits economically; and Israel's lobby in the U.S., which uses its considerable leverage in American politics to keep us embroiled in the Middle East.

The power of the ultranationalists in the GOP is rapidly waning, as is the appeal of the cult of George W. Bush. Blowhards like Giuliani and Sean Hannity, Ann Coulter types to the contrary notwithstanding, the red state fascist ideology underlying this political trend has really been discredited, not only by the war but by its own inner contradictions. The Republicans are supposed to be the party of smaller government, lower taxes, and individual Rights. And yet, as Ron Paul has pointed out, these people have lost their way. We have Republicans spending like drunken sailors: no tax relief in sight, and a party that views individual Rights with the same jaundiced eye as Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition.

The party of individualism, free markets, and the Right of the people to remain free of government of coercion has been transformed into an organization whose main platform plank seems to be the glories of group think: the alleged Right of big oil companies to exploit foreign interests on the American taxpayer's dime, and the moral necessity of torture. That some Republicans remember a time when a Bizarro World Conservatism did not rule the roost is doubtless a factor in the decline of the ultranationalists and provides a fertile group for Paul to garner support and make the case for a return to ideological sanity. The Libertarian critique of neoconservatism is no longer restricted to the people sitting here in this room. As Victor Gold, a long-time GOP operative and deputy speechwriter to Barry Goldwater, put it in his recent book, *Invasion of the Party Snatchers*--

Justin Raimondo: Great title--Neoconservatism of such avatars of the War Party as Irving Kristol is "merely a recycled model of the old, liberal politics that led to the decline and fall of the Democratic party in the 1960s, a fiscally irresponsible, ever-expanding federal government presided over by an Imperial Executive imbued with a messianic view of America's Right to democratize the heathen, or as Irving's neocon son William, editor of the *Weekly Standard*, prefers, 'our moral duty to actively pursue policies leading to Woodrow Wilson's dream of a benevolent, global hegemony.'" Translated from a neocon, this means, "Today we own Washington; tomorrow the world."

Justin Raimondo: And he's not a speaker at this conference; that's amazing. The ultranationalists are closely aligned, the second component of the War Party, which is the military-industrial-national security complex. It is after all the moneymaking branch of the War Party, the Treasury as it were, that funds the rest of the apparatus. Prowar think tanks like the

American Enterprise Institute, the Center for Security Policy, and other neocon outfits get a great deal of their money from those who profit from our foreign policy of relentless aggression and from the burgeoning 9/11 industry. And you can see that this is part of the personal style of many of the most prominent warmongers, notably for example Richard Perle, whose business dealings and ideological concerns have always worked in perfect harmony, and Rudy Giuliani, whose company, Giuliani Associates, has a very dubious record, has made major profits in this area.

But this is just the icing on the cake; the real meat and potatoes of the military industrialists is in the constant demands by both parties to build an every bigger U.S. military regime, one that has a bigger budget than the top thirty military budgets on the planet combined. Chalmers Johnson in his brilliant trilogy on the origins and development of American militarism has described this as “an empire of bases,” and he does a great job of showing how it works politically and economically. Suffice to say here that this base building, weapons making, extravagantly expensive apparatus is of course all funded out of the U.S. Treasury, and it’s rapid expansion with almost no opposition in the U.S. Congress serves the class interest of a rising sector of elites that derive their income directly or indirectly from administering, maintaining, and expanding America’s overseas empire. In considering the makeup of the War Party circa 2007, we have to examine the key role played by its third component, which is the Israel lobby.

Referring back to Lindbergh’s speech, the first thing that he said is that “Israel has taken the place of Britain as the most powerful foreign interest goading us into war.” As Professors John J. Mearsheimer and Steven Walt put it in their title-busting study, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, “The U.S. national interest should be the primary object of American foreign policy. For the past several decades however, and especially since the Six Day War in 1967, the centerpiece of U.S. Middle East policy has been its relationship to Israel. The combination of unwavering U.S. support for Israel and the related effort to spread democracy throughout the region has inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardized U.S. security. This situation has no equal in American political history. Why has the United States been willing to set aside its own security in order to advance interests of another state?”

Mearsheimer and Walt spend the rest of their 5,000-word essay answering this question, which boils down to the very effective tactic of smearing any and all opposition as “anti-Semitic.” Or as in the Stalinesque phrase of Ryan Sager, the alleged Libertarian who now supports Rudolph Giuliani, “objectively anti-Semitic,” by conflating the government of the state of Israel with all Jews everywhere. Ideologues such as Sager control the terms of the debate and thus keep a lid on any inquiry into how and why U.S. foreign policy has become so distorted. The lobby’s record of uninterrupted victories is due in no small part to their hegemonic grip on the policymaking process.

Congress, in the view of Mearsheimer and Walt, is practically Israeli-occupied territory, to borrow a trenchant phrase from Pat Buchanan. “The bottom line is that AIPAC, which is a de facto agent of a foreign government, has a stranglehold on the U.S. Congress; open debate over U.S. policy toward Israel does not occur there.” Mearsheimer and Walt also detail the efforts of the pro-Israel lobby to gin up a war with Iraq and furthermore, document the current attempt to replicate their success in the case of Iran. And while the lobby’s efforts alone would not have been enough to lure us into the Iraqi quagmire without the lobby, we most certainly would have refrained from launching that futile crusade. While the efforts to get us involved in Iraq were relatively low key, the campaign to target Iran as the next candidate for U.S.-sponsored regime change is the occasion for the lobby to brazenly flex its political muscles.

One example: the provision in the recently passed Iraq war funding bill that would have required the president to come to Congress before attacking Iran was stripped from the final version at the lobby’s insistence by the Democrats, of course, and Nancy Pelosi, my Congressman. Like the British in the runup to U.S. involvement in World War II, the Israelis have set up an extensive propaganda and covert action operation in the states: a network that has a hand in policing the media, academia, and the two major political parties to make sure that Israel’s interests are served, and more than that, to ensure that no substantive debate over the premises of American foreign policy ever takes place.

This network has penetrated not only the top echelons of the U.S. government and its policymaking apparatus, but also the opinion-making elite networks represented by the major think tanks and the major media outlets, which are under tremendous pressure to conform to the lobby’s party line. In much the same way as the Soviet Union was pretty much exempt from too much scrutiny or criticism by the major media when we were allies with Uncle Joe Stalin in World War II, so today Israel enjoys the same immunity in the name of an unspoken but ruthlessly enforced form of political correctness. The entire neoconservative Bushian project of exporting democracy to the Middle East, starting but not ending with Iraq, was launched to advance Israeli interests in the region. All the palaver about democracy has been merely a thin veneer of ideological cover for a ruthlessly executed geopolitical ploy to take the pressure off of Israel, beleaguered as it is by hostile forces on every side, and a demographic problem, by the way, that only gets worse as time goes on.

The “Clean Break” policy paper prepared for then and probably future Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by a number of U.S. policymakers, including Richard Perle and former Pentagon policy honcho Douglas Feith, details the rationale behind regime change in Iraq as a way to neutralize Syria, ensure Israeli domination of Lebanon, and pave the way for an open confrontation with Iraq. With Netanyahu primed to succeed Ehud Olmert as the next Israeli prime minister, he will take office with nearly every element of the Clean Break plan either accomplished or ready to be implemented. I urge you to go to the Internet and look up “A Clean Break.” You can Google it and see it’s a policy paper. It was signed and published by an Israeli

think tank and signed by Mr. Feith, Mr. Perle, and three others, including David Wormser, who is a chief aide to Dick Cheney, his Middle East specialist.

When it comes to Iraq, George W. Bush made a fool of himself with his declaration of “Mission accomplished,” and yet that assertion has a ring of truth about it when it comes to the lobby’s role in provoking the conflict. In unleashing the dogs of war in the Middle East, the lobby certainly has accomplished its mission of advancing its version of Israel’s legitimate interests in the region. The only problem is that America’s interests have been ill served and perhaps irreparably damaged for many years to come. I have to point out that the views of the Israel lobby and most American Jews are poles apart, and this has been one of the big problems of the lobby, especially recently. Americans of a Jewish faith are sick and tired of having some war-crazed loon who believes that Israel must eternally confront its enemies militarily and without benefit of nuance or negotiation represent the interests of Israel in America. The lobby’s claim to speak for American Jews is a lie and one that is fast coming unraveled as more and more Americans, many of them true friends of Israel, are dissenting from the extremist views of her so-called “leadership.”

The replication of the World War II scenario of an alleged “Islamofascist” danger, the demonization of war opponents as fifth columnists and probable anti-Semites, the attempt to scare the populace into going along with the most intrusive and authoritarian measures in the name of “national security,” have been pretty successful. All the elements, as I have noted, are there. But there is just one problem: there is no Hitler. Oh yes, of course, we’ve heard for years that the latest targets of the U.S. government—Manuel Noriega, Milošević, Saddam Hussein, and right now I guess it must be Mahmoud, I can’t say his name, the President of Iran—are the modern equivalent of Hitlerian evil, yet none of these rather loose characters quite measures up to the real thing. Hitler commanded the mightiest war machine of his time. His armies decimated Europe, thrust into Eurasia, and nearly took the British Isles. None of these other characters has even come close in terms of representing a credible military threat.

At least back in the 1930s the War Party could make a credible case that the Axis powers posed a threat to the continental U.S. and certainly to the other Western democracies. But does anyone seriously believe that Iran is about to invade France and occupy Paris? Or that Saddam Hussein was a threat to anyone outside of Iraq? This is really the Achilles heel of the War Party. The alleged threat that is supposedly looming over our heads like a nuclear sword of Damocles is a fraud. It has been exposed as such by the complete absence of those infamous “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq. The entire rationale for the invasion and occupation of a country that had never attacked us was centered around the existence of nascent Iraqi nukes which the Iraqi dictator was supposedly planning to pass off to various terrorist groups who would then hit the United States; this turned out to be pure malarkey.

In lieu of any real evidence of a danger to the U.S. they simply made it all up, and people are mad about it. Which is why the administration's efforts to paint a similar picture as far as Iran is concerned, is meeting with some pretty stiff skepticism. These people are utterly discredited when it comes to making such allegations. The debunking process, in which I'm proud to say "Antiwar.com" played a major role, has been enough to hold them off, at least so far. These are the dog days of the War Party. Their cadre are deserting them in droves, the public hates their guts, and members of their own party—I refer of course to the Republican Party—are rising in rebellion, if only out of fear of the public's wrath. The investigation into their shenanigans has hardly begun with the indictment and conviction of Scooter Libby, and the prospect of jail time for a few more of the War Party's leading figures cannot fill them with anything other than trepidation.

The American people are waking up, and their awakening has been rude in the extreme and is bound to get ruder with each passing day as the so-called "surge" yields a higher casualty rate and the Iraqi insurgency plays havoc with our pretensions of being the new Rome. Yet the War Party has a few cards to play. The trump card is held by the president of the United States, who is, sadly, the Commander-in Chief and has the power ceded to him by our complacent and complicit Congress to launch a war on his own authority. George W. Bush could at any moment launch an attack on Iran that would spark a regional war, the consequences of which would be unimaginably grave not only for the peoples of the Middle East but for Americans as well. Whether he is unbalanced enough to do it depends, one supposes, on many factors, one of which is the personality of a man who seems at times to be not quite in control of his own presidency.

It also depends on the amount of pressure that the War Party can exert. The future as always remains a dim shadow, and yet of one thing we can be fairly certain: the war party's tireless efforts to recreate the conditions leading to World War II have been dealt a significant setback. Six years ago, the day after 9/11, "World War IV," as the neocons like to call it, seemed inevitable. Today there are many factors militating against it, not the least of which is rising public opposition to our foreign policy of perpetual war, and for that we must all be grateful. So let us keep our fingers crossed and our polemics dry and trust in the gods to guide us through this latest and darkest chapter in the struggle against war and for liberty. Thank you.

Justin Raimondo: Is there time for questions? Okay, over there.

Lawrence Ludlow: I am Lawrence Ludlow from San Diego. Justin, I really want to thank you by the way for featuring the writings of Ran HaCohen, from Israel, on your Web site. It really helps keep us informed about the uniformity that's imposed here on these issues which is not shared in Israel, and it's really—Ran HaCohen's pieces are wonderful to read. I have a question for you though. Maybe you should give us a clue to this, but I recall in the 9/11 attack, there

were two things that showed up and disappeared off the news, and both of these hit the major media. One was the dancing of the so-called art students, Mossad agents or whatever, they were in Jersey City, and that was covered in a major Jersey paper, the *Newark Star Ledger*. I used to live there, it was like two million subscribers, and that made national news for like a second. And the other one that disappeared also was all that news about the short selling of stocks, if you recall, on United and American Airline stocks, and that was again reported in the major media and all of a sudden it disappeared and we never heard from this again. I'm just wondering, how does this kind of stuff happen?

Justin Raimondo: The short selling of stocks, I think that was debunked. There was an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* about it and then there was some sort of explanation for it. I wouldn't put too much credence in that. The dancing Israelis, this is a far more serious thing. I wrote a book about that, a short booklet rather, and you can get it off the Internet. It's called "The Terror Enigma." It seems to me clear that certain intelligence agencies knew that something was going to happen on 9/11 and that the Mossad was following the hijackers. That is their job after all, to follow extremists, especially in America, and there was a four-part series on Fox News about it that dropped down the "memory hole." You can access that on YouTube and on the Internet, it's there. Carl Cameron who is no radical Leftist and certainly not an anti-Semite and certainly not anti-Israel, Fox News ran this four-part series about this. And yet we've heard nothing since then. They have not disavowed it though; they've tried to take it off the Internet and they've been very vehement about that. I would simply answer that, read my book. It's very short; it costs ten bucks, and look at the Fox News four-part series by Carl Cameron, very good reporting. They just dropped it like a hot potato. I wonder why. Next?

Linda: Hello, I'm Linda from Macon, Georgia, Republican, staunch conservative, but reading on Antiwar.com, donating to Antiwar.com to the horror of bloggers in Georgia, when I write on there. But in light of what's been said about who knew what, when, about our attack on 9/11, by watching various media outlets Right after the attack, I was able to put together that Alan Greenspan was out of the country. Bill Clinton was out of the country. Al Gore was out of the country, and I just recently found out that the Axis of Evil writer, Frum, was also out of the country. I'm trying to piece all of this together and what I want to know is, this cannot be a coincidence.

Justin Raimondo: Well here's another coincidence, I was out of the country.

Justin Raimondo: I was on my way out of the country. I was on my way to Yugoslavia, and then, I thought I'll stop and visit my parents in New York City. Mistake; well actually maybe it was a good thing. Of course, we never got out of the country. It didn't seem like a question. I'll just let your statement hang out there in the air and take the next one over here.

Dennis Kilcorn: Dennis Kilcorn from Alexandria, Virginia. Given all you've written on the history of the conservative movement and its character, I wonder if you could comment on the following. It's really astounding that we now have conservatives aggressively defending this notion that there's an inherent authority that presidents make war, to kidnap, and send off and torture and so forth, to spy on us without warrants. These are the same people of course; they would have impeached and convicted Clinton if he had done any of the same. They also say that there is no inherent right in the Constitution of abortion, but it's all from the same kind of school of jurisprudence. Is this hypocrisy or what does it say about the real priorities of modern conservatives?

Justin Raimondo: Well look, I don't think there are any real conservatives left. You're going to see these people change their minds when Hillary Clinton is elected president. Do they want her to have the power of rendition? I don't think so.

Justin Raimondo: This is partisan conservatism, it's not the old ideological conservatism of the old *National Review* days that I remember and perhaps you do too. It all depends on whose ox is being gored. These people have no principles. They have no memory. It's like they're stuck in the present. Three Americans now! Who's president now? What benefits me now? Next year, next week, next month, it doesn't matter to them, it's just, can they get some immediate advantage; which hardly seems a conservative thing to do, but then, so it goes.

Bob Schlereth: I'm Bob Schlereth, from Lake Zurich, Illinois and I'm wondering about this most recent funding bill that the Senate has passed; I think \$100 billion to get us through September.

Justin Raimondo: Yes.

Bob Schlereth: Is that \$25 billion a month? Wasn't the original figure \$5 billion a month? What am I missing here, why hasn't anybody pointed that out on the national news? They talk in terms of \$100 billion, it doesn't mean too much, but \$25 billion a month, is that what it's costing?

Justin Raimondo: Right. Yes, and plus you have to remember that it's not just a funding bill for Iraq; there's always stuff in there that the Democrats got in there, pork, for their home district. It's all kinds of stuff, but it's just thrown in there, that is essentially a bribe to antiwar liberal Democrats, saying, "Look, we'll give you this Head Start Program. We'll give you this subsidy, whatever. Forget your antiwar principles, remember you're a statist, and we'll give you this money." It's logrolling, basically. Next.

Sam Bostaph: Sam Bostaph, at the University of Dallas. I'm concerned about the people that you pointed out, of the conservative people, like the Kristols, who argue for this transformation of the Middle East, and how they square that with actually what's being done in Iraq with the creation of the socialist economy. With the police state that's being put in place, the billion dollar permanent embassy, and all the bases all over the country. How does this square with exporting Americanism? Is this the Americanism that they visualize for our future?

Justin Raimondo: You have to understand. We don't have time to answer his question, but there's what they say they believe and what they really want to. What the real objective is and what the ideological veneer is. The exoteric and the esoteric meaning of what their program is are two very different things. Read your Strauss, that's all I can say. There's my answer, that's it.

Justin Raimondo: One more? Is there one more?

Male: Yes. I wanted to ask, we have this constant fear mongering in the government and media, and as a result of it the public perception of the threat from the terrorists is just wildly out of proportion to the actual threat, which I think is about the same as slipping in your bathtub and dying. My question is, can this issue be framed effectively, and if so, how can we do it? Because fear is really the basis of how they're compromising our liberties.

Justin Raimondo: Remember how they ginned up the war against Iraq and the nuclear cloud imagery. It's all about imagery. It's not about "ideas," it's about images that they evoke. Remember Condi was saying, "Well, we don't have to wait for a mushroom cloud to" blah-blah-blah, whatever, and then Dick Cheney gets on TV: "nuclear." Just keep repeating the same word; people are very afraid of a nuclear war. I remember when I was a kid, we used to play games, let's pretend there's been a nuclear war. It was like the worst thing in the world. Nukes! Americans are very afraid of radiation and nuclear anything. Against that kind of irrational fear, I'm not sure off the top of my head what the answer is. I think that really we have to teach people that the main danger really is in Washington and it's not coming from abroad. If there's going to be a nuclear attack in America it's probably going to be an accident at a nuclear power plant. That's it. Thank you.

Jacob Hornberger: We've got a two-hour break since CSPAN is covering tonight's proceedings. Would you mind being in your seats for dinner, pre-dinner, a little bit before six? Maybe ten minutes before 6:00 or five minutes before, because we're going to start promptly at 6:00, in a couple of hours.

