

“Neocon Creep” and the Trump Administration

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Those of us who closely observed, and tried to stop, the neoconservative takeover of the Presidency, and the nation's security and intelligence leadership between 1999 and 2004, may have thought it was so well publicized and so destructive that it couldn't happen again.

Others, while blaming the Bush and Cheney crowds for bringing cavalier interventionist chickenhawking perspectives into the White House, figured that at least it wouldn't happen again with an outsider like Mr. Trump.

Still others, falsely believing that the eight Obama years were years of neoconservative silence, may have thought, given Trump's non-interventionist America First campaign last year, that at least neoconservatism wouldn't be the main thing they'd need to worry about.

These days, most everybody is wrong when it comes to politics in the US.

The neoconservatives have already crept into key parts of the national security state decision-making process.

As pointed out by [The Guardian recently](#), we are seeing pressure from US political appointees on the intelligence agencies to produce data to support interventionist decisions already made. Honest men and women are again retiring and leaving their positions, rather than participate in the politicization of US intelligence.

The layman, perceiving the United States to be a democratic republic and a force for peace and goodwill around the world, may wonder why war decisions would be made before the intelligence case supporting those decisions had been put forth. But those less trusting souls, here and around the world, perceive correctly that the United States is a military corporate machine, and those who control its foreign policy not only get the chance to play war around the world, but to alter and create markets for goods and services, markets from which these individuals directly and indirectly benefit. Crony capitalism is far too kind a label for this system; it is very nearly the fascist-elitist Mafiosi-style kidnapping of the powerful and dangerous structural organs of a great empire.

When I mention fascist, many will think I am speaking of Mr. Trump himself. But he is far less fascinated by the sweet promises of a fascist state than have been most modern presidents, FDR, the Bushes, and Obama included. Elitist? Surely I am speaking of Mr. Trump again – but no, he is a striver, and a builder, a man who takes public pride in his straightforward and simplistic manner, and is deeply despised by the US elite for that reason, among others. When I mention mafias, I don't mean the New York mob that all builders and politicians in that city must deal with, but rather a certain private and clannish criminality, where threats, blackmail and deadly force are used, and the limelight is avoided.

But enough silliness. Let's talk about who is doing what and where, in the Trump White House, eight months into what had been a very promising presidency – for those who hate the centralized warfare welfare state circa 2016.

[Last fall](#), I observed reports of specific neoconservatives positioning themselves for places throughout the new Trump administration. Rest assured, these emplacements were already fixed for the expected Clinton win, but late in the race, signs of neoconservative bet-hedging were seen. Woolsey was one such potential appointee. Then, radio silence.

After the election, there was a lot of exposure of Trump's advisors, and the ever-present focus on something – anything – about Russia. I was happy to see General Flynn out regardless of the reason, but for every sacrificed appointee and advisor we found out about, it was those waiting in the wings we should have been screaming about.

Just like a cheap horror flick, the audience is advising the next hapless victim to “Look behind you!” or “Get out now!” to no avail. The script is written.

It is interesting that National Security Advisor McMaster is credited for changing the President's mind on Afghanistan. Was the reversal in Trump's thinking a ploy to gain time, a nod to the fantasy that this is a winnable war? Is he now convinced that the mineral, gas, and a strategic location for strikes against all other enemies makes Afghanistan a good occupation? Or was it a deal with the CIA and the money laundering global banks to keep the opium supply stable?

McMaster conducted a [devastating study of politicization of war](#), and was passed over for flag officer twice before finally being promoted above Colonel. He is rather a remarkable intellect, but he is perhaps human, fallible. But there's more.

Throughout the intelligence and strategic advisory arms of the federal government, key names are popping up as new appointees, many of them awaiting new clearances. The inner circle of Trump advisors includes not just Betsy DeVos in the education propaganda department, but DeVos's brother Erik Prince of Blackwater, Xe and Academi fame. Now owned by [Constellis](#), the security services firm is bigger than ever, and Erik Prince has been advising the president, although [according to him, not effectively](#). The sure to fail “new” policy in Afghanistan is already being blamed on McMaster and the generals. Hold that thought.

Richard Perle is reportedly ensconced in the Pentagon again, and neoconservative advisors like Paul Wolfowitz, who “[might have had to vote for Hillary](#)”, and a host of other interventionist chickenhawks may be found in the American Enterprise Institute lineup, incidentally including Erik Prince's brother-in-law, Dick DeVos as an AEI Trustee, along with Dick Cheney and others. Wayne Madsen also wrote about the [neoconservative invasion into the Trump administration](#) back in November. The only bright side of the story, as it unfolded, was that someone or some thing in the administration was pushing back – and some dangerous advisors like General Flynn were eliminated.

But the urge to shape and control US foreign and war policies is strong in neoconservative circles. The critiques from the AEI stable of advisors and op-ed writers alone on a Presidency under constant attack from the domestic left and a generally neoconservative TV, radio and print media, can be very effective. The center and left leaning thinktanks in D.C. all embrace aggressive interventionism abroad, and advocate for it.

Meanwhile, the neoconservative war drums beat steadily, messaging each other and any who care to listen, like those infamous aspens [in the letters of Scooter Libby](#). No one is calling out the cowards for what they are. War profiteers and globalists, they are just about back in power, and they have a long-term strategy that both enriches them and keeps them out of prison. We are not hearing enough about them, and in an age [where 25% of the population doesn't remember 9/11](#), a far smaller percentage remembers how the neoconservatives deceitfully engineered Iraq and Libya and Syria.

We might hope that the context of Trump's Afghanistan speech contained the makings of a deal with the warfare establishment, one where clear parameters of success were outlined, and the ball will be in Trump's court when they come back within months asking for more money, more troops, more time, and lowered expectations.

But given what we are seeing and what we all know about how policy is made, the neoconservative strategy in Washington is proceeding apace, with a B-team at the ready, including [at the very top of the political food chain](#). It may be that we can begin the official autopsy of the Trump promise to his America First, non-interventionist, hopeful beyond hope supporters – and it is not because Mr. Trump's instincts were wrong, but rather because he had no idea how the swamp operates and what was at stake for its reptilian inhabitants.

Am I suggesting that Trump will be taken down, and replaced by a neoconservative compliant elite government, one that will put the hammer down both at home via a militaristic surveillance state, and abroad in expanded war, leading to an America even the modern pessimists cannot imagine? [I only know what I read in the papers](#).

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