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# H-Diplo

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Introduction by Kyle Longley, Arizona State University

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Introduction by Kyle Longley, Arizona State University

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In August 2011, I chaired and commented on a roundtable discussion of Terry Anderson's *Bush's Wars* at the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association (AHA) meeting in Seattle. Terry Anderson joined David Anderson, David Schmitz, and myself to discuss the work whose release corresponded closely with the final draw down of U.S. combat troops in Iraq and a surge in Afghanistan. The roundtable drew a very large crowd and ultimately the History New Network created a podcast for its website, one also included on the AHA site. It proved a very stimulating exchange that produced positive and insightful feedback from the participants and the audience.

I opened my comments with the point that the book bore a striking resemblance to that of George Herring's seminal work, *America's Longest War*, published only a couple of years after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Like Herring's book, Terry Anderson's is an opening salvo in the endless rounds of historiographical debates that will undoubtedly follow the controversial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much like the reviewers in this roundtable, I praised significant elements of the book including the background chapters on the long history of Iraq and Afghanistan. Also, I noted I would have liked more on Afghanistan which disappeared to a large degree in the text after the start of the Iraq War, and I wondered aloud about how the narrative might change with the release of new documents, both from the U.S. side as well as the allies like Britain and France in combination with those of the Iraqis and Afghans. I question whether these two wars will become a cottage industry like Vietnam; nonetheless, I also recognized the invaluable contribution of *Bush's War*.

Two of my fellow panelists agreed to participate in this roundtable, building off their contributions in August. David Anderson, a Vietnam veteran and distinguished author, acknowledges that Terry Anderson "is a smart historian who reaches the only conclusion that one can from the record of President George W. Bush's war. It was an unnecessary and justifiable war with profound implications for the future of the United States." While focusing on the strengths of the work, he notes a few ideas to consider. These include an important question as to whether Bush's viewpoint was so fundamentally different from that of others in Congress and the media. In addition, he calls on Terry Anderson to consider the effects of the war on the presidential and congressional elections, but concludes that that "Anderson's history of Bush's war should be required reading for all presidents."

David Schmitz, the other panelist on the roundtable, also praises the book, stressing "this is the finest examination of both the origins of George W. Bush's war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the fighting of those wars, to date." He underscores the strength of Anderson's "historiography and interpretative framework." Yet, Schmitz wisely suggests that Anderson could have explicitly tied Bush's wars to the larger sense of the struggle of dealing with globalization, the maintenance of empire, and the ongoing changes in American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world. He closes, "Bush's Wars will shape

and influence the scholarship and teaching of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq for decades to come.”

Lloyd Gardner shares Schmitz’s praise for the book, noting that the book, “should be required reading for courses in American diplomatic history.” While acknowledging that longer and more archival based works will appear in the future, nonetheless, “it will be very hard to displace this book on the shelf of ‘must-reads.’” Like the other reviewers, he ties the book to the Vietnam War (noting the “echoes of McGeorge Bundy and Pleiku”) and places it within the concepts of American idealism and western imperial ambitions, providing a succinct overview of the major points of the book.

Paul Chamberlin, who has studied the Middle East in great detail, stresses that the book’s “greatest value . . . is in providing a compendium of existing works on the two wars and distilling the large journalistic literature on the period into a single volume.” Chamberlin highlights that a major accomplishment of the book lies in the fact that Anderson highlights a whole series of missteps of the Bush administration (a “spectacular record of failure”) from allowing Osama Bin Laden to escape Afghanistan as the emphasis shifted to Iraq and the failure to plan for the postwar period in Iraq. While generally laudatory, Chamberlin raises some good questions, admitting that they “stem more from omission than anything else.” They include not examining important issues such as the privatization of the war in the hands of those such as the “Cheney-Halliburton-Blackwater complex” and also the historical implications for the launching of “Global War on Terror.” In his concise overview, Chamberlin acknowledges that *Bush’s Wars* did what any good book on such a big topic should do, leaving the reader wanting to know more.

Sean Kalic of the U.S. Command and General Staff College commends the “phenomenal introduction” as a clear f the book, principally the two background chapters that provide the context for the U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq during the Bush Administration. He also notes Anderson’s ability “to methodologically recount the major decision points,” particularly those of the neo-conservatives including Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Cheney, and Paul Wolfowitz. However, Kalic finds that the “book falls short” after the initial stages when Anderson charges into the Bush administration’s focus on the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. He questions whether this is really the “first history” of Bush’s wars as Anderson claims and most importantly raises some good questions about Anderson appearing to absolve military leaders of much of the blame (something of an echo of H. R. McMaster regarding Vietnam).<sup>1</sup> Still, he concludes that the book is a very good start to the debates and that it will remain the source from which people can develop their understanding of the conflicts and begin asking new questions about how the United States got into Afghanistan and Iraq and what resulted from these interventions.

In contrast to the nearly universal praise for the book, Andrew Bacevich offers a more critical review, observing that the book, “offers no startling revelations. It breaks no fresh

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<sup>1</sup> H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper, 1998).

interpretive ground” and that those who have read diligently on the topic since 2001 will find familiar topics. In the end, he notes that those who have not, including many college students (and the vast majority of Americans ) “may well find *Bush’s Wars* invaluable.” He also calls into question Anderson’s use of the term “neoconservative” and the emphasis on Iraq at the expense of Afghanistan after 2003. More important, he cites “W fatigue” as a reason to let the topic go for the moment until the private papers and archives open (a suggestion that many might question since that will leave the historiography to develop in the hands of non-historians, many tied to the administration). Finally, he raises good points on extending the analysis back to others who have “left fingerprints on the bizarre escapade that eventually matured in the Global War on Terror” including Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton.

One wonders whether scholars will maintain the preoccupation with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as we have with Vietnam (the constant reference point for most of the reviews). Anderson’s book has started a process of examining what undoubtedly will be controversial wars, particularly the one in Iraq. The narrative he presents opens up many new avenues of research, the ultimate goal of any good synthesis. He has done his part in not letting the war disappear into oblivion like the Filipino War, Banana Wars, and Korea. Let’s hope the debates are only beginning and historical record just starting to be written.

#### **Participants:**

**Terry H. Anderson** published *The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War, 1944-47* (1981); co-authored *A Flying Tiger’s Diary* (1984) with fighter pilot Charles R. Bond, Jr; authored *The Movement and The Sixties* (1994), *The Sixties* (4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2011); *The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action* (2004); and most recently, *Bush’s Wars* (2011). He has taught in Malaysia, Japan, and has been granted Fulbright Awards to China, Ireland, and Indonesia. For spring semester 2012 he is teaching Major Moments in U.S. History and The U.S. and the World in the Graduate School of American Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He is Professor of History and Cornerstone Faculty Fellow at Texas A&M University.

**Kyle Longley** is the Snell Family Dean's Distinguished Professor of History and Political Science at Arizona State University. He is the author or editor of five books including *In the Eagle's Shadow: The United States and Latin America, Senator Albert Gore, Sr.: Tennessee Maverick*, and *Grunts: The American Combat Soldier in Vietnam*. He is currently completing a manuscript, *The Houses of the Purple Hearts: The Morenci Nine, Small Town America, and the Vietnam War*.

**David L. Anderson** is Professor of History at California State University, Monterey Bay. His books include: *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam* (1991), *Shadow on the White House: Presidents and the Vietnam War* (1993), *Facing My Lai: Moving Beyond the Massacre* (1998), *The Human Tradition in the Vietnam Era* (2000), *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (2002), *The Vietnam War* (2005), *The War That Never Ends: New Perspectives on the Vietnam War* (2007), *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War* (2011), and *The Lowdown: A Short History of the Origins of the Vietnam War* (2011).

**Andrew J. Bacevich** is professor of history and international relations at Boston University, retired from the U.S. Army with the rank of colonel. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, he received his Ph.D. in American Diplomatic History from Princeton University. Professor Bacevich's previous books include *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (2002); *The Imperial Tense: Problems and Prospects of American Empire* (2003); *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (2005); *The Long War: A New History of US National Security Policy since World War II* (2007); *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (2008); and *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (2010).

**Paul Chamberlin** is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Kentucky. His doctoral thesis, completed at Ohio State, won the 2010 Oxford University Press prize for the best dissertation in international history. His first book, entitled *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the New International Order, 1967-75*, will be published in 2012. His next book project is an international history of the Cold War in the Middle East, which traces the evolution of the superpower struggle in the region with particular attention to its impact on local states and peoples and the roles that these local actors played in the conflict.

**Lloyd Gardner** has just completed a trilogy on American Relations with the Middle East, *The Long Road to Baghdad*, *Three Kings: The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East after World War II*, and *The Road to Tahrir Square*, all published by the New Press. He has taught at Rutgers since 1963, and lives in Bucks County in Pennsylvania.

**Sean N. Kalic** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is a Cold War historian with specialties in nuclear strategy, military theory, and Terrorism. In addition to his research interests, Dr. Kalic has written *Combating a Modern Hydra: Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism*, as well as the chapters "Reagan's SDI announcement and the European Reaction," in *Helsinki to Détente* and "Blurring the Line Between War and Peace: The Global War on Terrorism" in *Waging War for Peace*. Dr. Kalic is also the author of a forthcoming text on the development of U.S. national space policy from 1945 to 1967 to be published in spring 2012.

**David F. Schmitz** is the Robert Allen Skotheim Chair of History at Whitman College. He is the author of *Brent Scowcroft: Internationalism and Post-Vietnam War American Foreign Policy* (2011), *The Triumph of Internationalism: Franklin D. Roosevelt and a World in Crisis, 1933-1941* (2007); *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965-1989* (2006); *The Tet Offensive: Politics, War, and Public Opinion* (2005); *Henry L. Stimson: The First Wise Man* (2001); *Thank God They're on Our Side: The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1921-1965* (1999); and *The United States and Fascist Italy, 1922-1940* (1988). He is currently writing on Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War and a book on nationalism and American foreign policy.

Review by David L. Anderson, California State University, Monterey Bay

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**A**s a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War and a historian who has spent more than thirty-five years studying and writing about that tragic conflict, I never thought I would say that Vietnam was anything other than the worst public policy decision that Washington had ever made. The negative impact of the Vietnam War on the United States was and remains enormous. Over two million Americans served in Vietnam, and more than 58,000 of them never returned home. The more than \$20 billion that the war cost the U.S. Treasury left the dream of a Great Society for America's poorest and least-educated citizens largely unfulfilled. Along the way, 'imperial' presidents lied to Congress and the voters about the reasons, methods, and costs of the war, which created long-lasting public cynicism about politics and politicians. The violence that the Vietnam War inflicted upon Americans and Vietnamese alike led many thoughtful Americans to question what their country had become. Deep divisions over the meaning of the war and the definition of patriotism severely damaged the national consensus of support for America's global leadership role that had emerged after World War II and continued through the Cold War. Yet, despite all the self-inflicted costs of the Vietnam War to the United States, the country escaped from the conflict still a great nation with its institutions, economy, and global respect bruised but intact.

The Iraq War has now earned the sad distinction of being the worst public policy decision in the history of the United States. Terry Anderson is a smart historian who reaches the only conclusion that one can from the record of President George W. Bush's war. It was an unnecessary and unjustifiable war with profound implications for the future of the United States. As a historian, not a fortune teller, Anderson makes no attempt to predict the future, but the long-term consequences of the misbegotten military adventure are distressing to contemplate. The lives lost, the huge monetary cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the trillions of dollars, the diversion from the focus on al Qaeda terrorists and the actual increase in world terrorism, the American loss of credibility in the Muslim world, the tensions with traditional allies, the exploitation of the loyalty of the all-volunteer military services and their commanders, and the disregard for constitutional processes are as damaging or more damaging to the American nation than the Vietnam War. Combined with the structural weakness of the American economy and the partisan gridlock in American politics (both with roots in the Bush administration), the toll of the Iraq War today dwarfs the conditions in the United States in the 1970s as the Southeast Asian war ended.

Anderson's harsh indictment of the Bush administration's decision for war in Iraq is not new. He acknowledges that his book is a work of synthesis of the vast outpouring of criticism, largely from journalists and memoirists, of Bush and his closest advisors. Consequently, Anderson's argument is a familiar one. Afghanistan and Iraq are places with complex histories that had their internal affairs. Following the 9/11 attacks, the administration's prompt action to pursue al Qaeda in Afghanistan was a merited and even mandatory defensive response to a violent assault on the United States. Saddam Hussein in Iraq was also a dangerous U.S. adversary in an unstable region important to U.S. interests. The Bush administration was not wrong to formulate forceful policies toward both

countries, but it was wrong in many ways to fashion the particular policies that it did for the reasons it did, as many astute observers have well recorded.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson's primary sources are largely the Bush administration's public papers, and he does not add to the story from new archival sources. Many questions for future research remain. Was Bush's perception so different from members of Congress and the media? Are Bush's wars his responsibility, or is the accountability for allowing the wars to happen also shared by people and institutions who did not effectively challenge his policies? There are, for example, only brief discussions of two key U.S. elections (for president in 2004 and Congress in 2006) in which the war was a central issue (185-86 and 201-2).<sup>2</sup> Anderson's book will not be the last word on Bush's wars, but it effectively captures the current orthodox interpretation of the impact of those wars on U.S. international relations.

Anderson does not frame his argument around explicit references to the Vietnam War, but implicit parallels are present throughout. Much has been written on the comparisons and contrast between the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, and certainly there are similarities and differences. When asked in July 2003 about comparisons between Iraq and Vietnam, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld brushed the question aside. "It's a different era. It's a different place," he asserted.<sup>3</sup> It is true that U.S. troop levels at any one time in Iraq or Afghanistan did not reach the half million that were in Vietnam in 1968-1969 (half of whom were draftees). Consequently and fortunately, the U.S. deaths in the Southwest Asian war have been a tenth of those in the Southeast Asian war. Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan have had a Ho Chi Minh figure, that is, a charismatic national leader backed by an alliance with a nuclear superpower leading the fight against American-supported regimes. Furthermore, in Iraq the American involvement went from a conventional invasion under the leadership of General Tommy Franks to counterinsurgency warfare with General David Petraeus, and in Vietnam it was the reverse. In the Vietnam War, the United States went from Kennedy's counterinsurgency operations with U.S. advisers and Green Berets to Johnson's and Nixon's air bombardments of North Vietnam and creation of a South Vietnamese military of one million men by 1971 (much of it on paper, of course).

The parallels for U.S. involvement in both conflicts, however, are so striking that the lessons of the first should have instructed the second. They did not. A favorite political cartoon of mine, which I like to share with students, is from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August

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<sup>1</sup> John Gaddis, for example, has argued that there is room for praise and blame in Bush's reaction to the global terrorist threat presented by the 9/11 attacks. See his *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 80-113.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Ian McAllister, "A War Too Far: Bush, Iraq, and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36 (June 2006): 260-80, for one study of why Bush had public support for his actions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in David Elliott, "Parallel Wars? Can 'Lessons of Vietnam' Be Applied to Iraq?" in *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, How Not to Learn from the Past*, edited by Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young (New York: New Press, 2007), 17.

23, 2007, shortly after President Bush had given a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The speech was intended to convey the message that the administration intended to stay the course in Iraq and not yield to growing congressional pressure for withdrawal. In the cartoon, there is a scholarly-looking gentleman with a pointer standing in front of an easel with a map of Vietnam on which is printed "Vietnam Quagmire." The scholar is wearing a button labeled "Historian," and he is saying: "The lesson is, we NEVER should've gotten . . ." At that point his sentence is interrupted by a small figure with large ears sitting in a huge chair behind a large desk with an American flag next to it. The caricature of the president completes the historian's sentence by adding the last word: "The lesson is, we NEVER should've gotten OUT."

As Terry Anderson points out, the Iraq War seems to have begun in a different context than Vietnam. Emotions after the 9/11 attacks remained high based on fears of more attacks from unseen terrorists, the administration's repeated insistence that Saddam Hussein was connected with those attacks, and the terrifying proposition that Saddam had chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons at his disposal. As Anderson and others have documented, the Bush team's inordinate attention on Saddam was their own creation with no basis in reality. It was clear to many realists before the March 2003 invasion of Iraq and obvious to most others soon after the total anarchy that ensued in that country, that Iraq was indeed a reprise of Vietnam. As Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara came to learn (and Rumsfeld was unwilling to admit), "military force—especially when yielded by an outside power—just cannot bring order in a country that cannot govern itself."<sup>4</sup> In both the Vietnam War and the Iraq War, public unrest emerged in America, though muted in the case of Iraq by the absence of a draft and no demand on individual Americans for sacrifice. In both wars, no definition of victory appeared tenable, there was little allied support for the United States, and the duration and cost of the war grew far beyond predictions. Yet, in both wars, presidents stubbornly persisted in the military campaigns they had initiated. Mark Twain said: "All you need in life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure." The ignorance, hubris, and bravado of American presidents were common themes in both wars.

The Bush administration was no more inclined to acknowledge error, or seek an escape from a doubtful adventure, than were the administrations that pursued the Vietnam War to its final disaster. It is not easy for a country's leaders to admit mistakes when the experiences and costs of war comprise evidence that opposing realist predictions were right. Edmund Burke wrote that prudence was the highest standard of political and moral virtue. What mattered most in the moral imperative of prudence was a sense of limits. U.S. power was not remotely sufficient to reshape the world; the extension of democracy with force had no precedent. The challenge lay in avoiding actions, based on good intentions, which failed the test of prudence and proper statecraft. That lesson was clearly evident in Vietnam and was repeated many times over in the excellent historical and political studies of that conflict published in the almost forty years that separated the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964 and the Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed

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<sup>4</sup> Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 261.

Force against Iraq in 2003. One Vietnam War should have been enough, but President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld, and their aides chose to define their own reality. Perhaps the message is that leaders ignore historians at their own and the nation's peril. Terry Anderson's history of Bush's wars should be required reading for all presidents.

Terry Anderson, professor of history at Texas A & M, has written a compact primer that reprises what we know thus far about America's principal post-9/11 military misadventures. *Bush's Wars* offers no startling revelations. It breaks no fresh interpretive ground. Readers who have diligently followed the course of U. S. policy over the past decade will find little with which they are not already familiar. On the other hand, those who have not – for example, most young undergraduates – may well find *Bush's Wars* invaluable.

The book opens with not one but two introductions. The first provides a synoptic, but useful history of Iraq and Afghanistan, leaping across several centuries in a mere fifteen pages. The second succinctly reviews U. S. relations with Saddam Hussein and American jousting with Al Qaeda prior to 2001. With the stage now set, the narrative begins, Anderson devoting one chapter each to the events of 9/11 and the initial U. S.-led intervention in Afghanistan; the run-up to the Iraq War; the actual invasion through the fall of Baghdad; and the occupation of Iraq through the “surge” of 2007-2008. A ten-page epilogue covering the first year or so of the Obama administration follows, with “Concluding Remarks and Legacies” closing out the book.

If *Bush's Wars* has an overarching theme, it is one of advantage recklessly squandered. Anderson emphasizes the nearly universal condemnation of the 9/11 attacks, coming even from quarters not necessarily friendly to the United States, along with the outpouring of sympathy for all those affected. When after overthrowing the Taliban and putting Osama bin Laden to flight, the administration of George W. Bush trained its sights on a country uninvolved in the 9/11 conspiracy, that sympathy began to ebb. Once events demolished the chief rationale for invading Iraq – Saddam's reputed weapons of mass destruction turning out not to exist – sympathy soon all but disappeared. By the time the Iraq occupation descended into a chaotic civil war/insurgency that left the Americans looking incompetent or worse, the United States had transformed itself from victim into perpetrator.

Anderson recounts this dismal tale crisply and competently. In assessing the Bush administration's management of policy he is relentlessly (and to my mind appropriately) critical. That said, there's not a lot new here.

Anderson follows others in both the questions he asks and the answers he offers.

*What role did the neoconservatives play after 9/11?* Anderson: having infiltrated the upper ranks of the national security apparatus and being quick to recognize opportunity handed them by Osama bin Laden, they all but dictated Bush administration policy.

*Why exactly did the U. S. invade Iraq?* Anderson: for a mix of reasons, among them, genuine fear unleashed by 9/11, dreams of spreading democracy across the Islamic world, and the temperament of a commander-in-chief prone to “impatience, bravado, and unwavering

personal certainty.” (233) Throw in expectations that winning was going to be cheap and easy – who, after all, was going to stop the greatest military machine the world had ever seen? And, oh yes, let’s not forget that black gooey stuff: “Petroleum was a fundamental prerequisite for the invasion.” (231)

*In making the case for war against Iraq, did the Bush administration lie?* Anderson: In portraying Saddam as boogey-man, senior U. S. officials routinely made innumerable claims that were unsupported by facts. Yet facilitating administration efforts to market the war were “hyperventilating cable news networks,” along with a gullible population “eager for revenge against someone, anyone for 9/11.” (124)

*Why did the Iraq occupation turn into such a disaster?* Anderson: Because the Bush administration in its arrogance – having “constructed its own reality and expect[ing] everyone else ... to behave accordingly” -- had not adequately prepared for what would follow Saddam’s defeat. (p. 141). Compounding the problem was the spectacular incompetence of the American viceroy L. Paul Bremer and the cadre of would-be nation-builders assigned to assist him.

*What explains the decrease in violence achieved by the so-called Iraq surge?* Anderson: a shift in tactics, the U. S. military abandoning the aggressive pursuit of insurgents in favor of protecting the Iraqi people. More or less simultaneously alert American field commanders began exploiting internal divisions within the enemy camp, “paying former insurgents who had fought and killed U. S. troops” and thereby converting them into “temporary, paid allies.” (203)

*Was the surge an epic victory?* Anderson: that depends on how you define victory. The surge prevented Iraq “from falling further into civil war and curtailed [i. e., did not defeat] the insurgents and militias.” It bought time for the Iraqi government to get its act together. Above all, it allowed the United States to disengage. Violence “had decreased. But so had American aims.” (210)

Most of this is unexceptionable. Much of it is commendable. Inevitably, of course, there is cause to quibble.

Some will call Anderson to task for his promiscuous use of the term “neoconservative,” which he assigns to most everyone he considers a villain. Yet to identify the likes of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld as neocons is to stretch the term beyond recognition. Although every neoconservative is a militarist, not every militarist is a neoconservative. The problem with the Bush administration was that it was infested with people possessing unbridled faith in the efficacy of American military might and keen to put it to work.

Others will complain that by focusing so intently on Iraq, Anderson leaves much out. With the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan disappears from this account, reappearing only in the brief overview of the Obama years. The activities of U. S. special operations forces and CIA paramilitaries in lesser theaters such as Pakistan, Yemen,

Somalia, and the Philippines are nowhere to be found. In that sense, *Bush's Wars* fails to encompass the full panoply of Bush's wars.

My own larger complaint stems from what might be called W fatigue. At least for the moment – until archives and private papers open up many years from now -- we have gotten about all there is to get about a presidency that, as Anderson writes, is likely to rank alongside (if not below) those of James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, and Warren G. Harding. Journalists have provided a very commendable “first draft” of history. Insider memoirs offer little value added. Having slogged through the self-serving accounts penned by Rumsfeld, Douglas Feith, and a couple of eminently forgettable Iraq War generals, I will allow others the pleasure of reading the memoirs written by (or for) the likes of Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, and Bush himself. My conviction that I am missing little of consequence may be mistaken, but I'll take my chances. I am sick of these people.

In other words, my vote is for allowing the Bush era to marinate for awhile, circling back around for a fresh look a couple of decades from now. Rather than directing more kicks at Bush and his associates, historians would be better served at rousing dogs that have been too long allowed to slumber. Much as every administration since Franklin Roosevelt had its fingerprints on the Vietnam War for which Lyndon Johnson took most of the blame, so too every administration since Jimmy Carter (if not since FDR) has left fingerprints on the bizarre escapade that eventually matured into the Global War on Terror. It's time to give the likes of Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton their due.

In October 2006, George W. Bush famously announced that he was “fully prepared to accept any mistakes that history judges to my administration.” (227) With the publication of *Bush's Wars*, the first judgment is in, a bit sooner than Bush probably expected, and it is harsh. With his latest book, Terry Anderson does a fine job of recounting the familiar story of Bush II's unlikely presidency, the September 11 attacks, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq from an American perspective. This story is both recent and complicated, and Anderson is to be commended for tackling it in a format that is likely to be useful in the undergraduate classroom. This year's incoming class of college freshmen were only eight years old in 2001 and the memory of September 11, so vivid to many of the people reading this review, is somewhat distant for them.

From a historiographical standpoint, the publication of *Bush's Wars* marks the beginning of what future diplomatic historians might very well refer to as the orthodox interpretation of the George W. Bush administration. Much like the orthodox histories of the Vietnam War, Anderson's account locates the United States at its center and focuses on the missteps and misrepresentations leading up to the conflicts and then turns to Washington's mistakes in carrying out its counterinsurgency efforts. *Bush's Wars* thus serves to establish the basic narrative of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the underlying framework which future scholars – revisionist, post-revisionist, and others – will likely challenge. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the book is neither a definitive history of the Bush administration's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan nor is it a nuanced analysis of the impact of the wars on the ground. This is not to say, however, that Anderson's book lacks value. Quite the contrary; *Bush's Wars* represents the first book-length account of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to be written by a historian. In this, it is a useful contribution to what is sure to be an extensive literature on the subject. Anderson's book is a welcome addition to the list of titles from journalists like Dexter Filkins, Bob Woodward, Thomas Ricks, George Packer, and others.<sup>1</sup> Its greatest value then, is in providing a compendium of existing works on the two wars and distilling the large journalistic literature on the period into a single volume.

To this end, Anderson takes the reader down a well-trodden path, recounting many of the best-known episodes from the Bush years. The book has a curious organization consisting of a preface, two introductions, four chapters, an epilogue, and a conclusion. Anderson starts things rolling in his first introduction with Alexander the Great's conquest of Mesopotamia in 334 BCE. Alexander's story also provides an introduction to Afghanistan, seven pages later. In short order we meet another would-be conqueror of the two regions, George W. Bush, the presidential candidate that – ironically – expressed skepticism about

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<sup>1</sup> Dexter Filkins, *The Forever War* (New York, 2008); Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, (New York: Simon and Schusters, 2002); Bob Woodard, *Plan of Attack*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Bob Woodward, *State of Denial*, (Simon and Schusters, 2006); Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Thomas E. Rick, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure In Iraq, 2006-2008*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2009); George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* (New York, 2005).

nation-building and called for less partisanship in Washington. September 11<sup>th</sup>, of course, changed all this and set Bush on the path to Afghanistan and Iraq. The author describes how the White House ignored warnings from Richard Clarke and others to take the threat from Al Qaeda seriously, fixated on Iraq immediately following the 9/11 attacks, cooked intelligence to exaggerate the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and then rushed to war despite the misgivings of the international community.

In the process, the administration did its best to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, allowing Osama Bin Laden and top Al Qaeda leaders to escape from Afghanistan and devoting massive resources to the disastrous situation it had created in Iraq. When American forces failed to find WMDs, a new rationale for the war was manufactured and the real experiments in nation-building began. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld emerges as a particularly unlikable character in *Bush's Wars*, and Anderson seems to place the lion's share of blame for the bungled occupation on him and Paul Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority. American officials in Baghdad and Washington did nearly everything wrong in the months following "victory" in Iraq as an insurgency erupted throughout the country. It was only with the overdue ouster of Rumsfeld, the arrival of General David Petraeus, who had served as commanding general of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the adoption of a new counterinsurgency strategy that complete disaster was averted. Herein lies one of the other accomplishments of the book: by systematically laying out this series of missteps, Anderson spotlights the Bush administration's spectacular record of failure. Unfortunately, *Bush's Wars* made it to press before the Arab Spring and the killing of Osama Bin Laden. Surely we will see a discussion of these events in the paperback edition.

The book is not without its flaws, however, which stem more from omission than anything else. I suspect that the most obvious criticism of *Bush's Wars* is not something for which Anderson can be blamed: the book suffers from an irritating shortage of endnotes. For example, chapter one, which runs nearly forty pages contains only thirteen notes; chapter two contains only ten. Though I am aware that this approach to endnoting probably serves the publisher's interests, it hurts the value of the book for scholars and educators who might like to use *Bush's Wars* as a guide to the existing literature on the topic or track down some of the juiciest quotations that appear in the narrative. There are other minor issues that might have been caught before the book went to press: the use of the outdated and somewhat problematic "Moslem" instead of the preferred "Muslim," a reference to Hamas as the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood rather than as an offshoot, etc.

Also, while it provides a valuable single-volume summary of the subject matter, the book's format as a sweeping survey assures there are a number of issues that might have received greater treatment and deeper analysis. For instance, the Cheney-Halliburton-Blackwater complex that signaled an important shift toward the privatization of American global military power remains largely unexamined; the historical implications of the United States launching something so profound as a 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT) also receive only a brief discussion. The book's relatively short length also seems to preclude a more systematic analysis of code-words like 'terrorism,' 'Axis of Evil,' and 'the enemy' that served

to bolster the us-versus-them mentality so prevalent during the period. The question of what exactly ‘terrorism’ is and perhaps more importantly who is allowed to define it is raised briefly, but is not explored in depth. Likewise, one wonders if *Bush’s Wars* could have done more to challenge the Neo-Orientalist depictions of the Middle East and its peoples – as violent, fanatical, hate-filled, prone to anarchy and tribalism, and largely unchanging over time – that were so often employed by U.S. policymakers and pundits to justify military operations in the region. As scholars like Doug Little, Salim Yaqub, Nate Citino, Matt Jacobs, Ussama Makdisi, and others have shown, these motifs remain essential to any understanding of the troubled relationship between the United States and the Middle East, especially in the wake of 9/11.<sup>2</sup> Finally, this reviewer would have preferred to have read a bit less narrative summary and a bit more of the historical analysis to which we are treated in the book’s conclusion. It is in his conclusion that Anderson is at his best, providing a historian’s perspective on the Bush presidency, and offering a discussion that left this reader hungry for more.

Such criticisms aside, this reviewer is happy to see the appearance of this first round of historiography on Bush’s wars. No doubt future foreign relations historians will revise and complicate our understanding of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the release of official U.S. documents will shed new light on the period. So too will area studies specialists as they bring their deep knowledge of the region and its peoples to bear on the analysis of U.S.-Middle East relations in the twenty-first century. Cultural historians are likely to deconstruct Bush’s discourse and rhetoric and the impact of the GWOT on American society. Meanwhile, Bush revisionists will surely defend the administration’s record in preventing another major attack on American soil and toppling Saddam Hussein’s regime. Thus, with *Bush’s Wars*, Anderson has launched will likely be remembered as the first salvo by an academic historian in the battle over the foreign policy legacy of George W. Bush. As the former-president might himself say, “Bring ‘em on.”

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<sup>2</sup> Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Chapel Hill, 2008); Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism; The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill, 2004); Nathan J. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC, second edition: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Bloomington, Indiana, 2010); Matthew Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill, 2011); Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (New York, 2008).

Review by Lloyd Gardner, Rutgers University

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Terry Anderson's concise history of the George W. Bush Administration's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq can be boiled down, as he does, to this one sentence: "In both cases it constructed its own reality and expected everyone else ... to behave accordingly." (141) The line reminds one of George Frost Kennan's realist classic, *American Foreign Policy 1900-1950*, especially the passages where Kennan talked about the moralism in American foreign policy that ran like a red skein throughout the first-half of the previous century, or other lines about how the interests of other nations were regarded as inferior to American aims and should therefore rightfully take second place.

Anderson's admirable book in less than 250 pages of text puts the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq not only into the framework of misconceived American idealism (or perhaps better said, idea-ism), but also into a much larger framework of Western imperial ambitions stretching back beyond the Victorian pretensions of the British, back indeed to Alexander the Great. Indeed, it is a mark of our ambiguous intellectual engagement with Bush's ambitions and his successor's efforts to rescue American policy that authors such as Peter L. Bergen somehow feel compelled to argue that the Greek conqueror did not, as many say, fail in Afghanistan. A supporter of President Obama's two ramp-ups of American forces in Afghanistan, Bergen took strong issue with the claim that the West could not win there. Alexander won military victories in Afghanistan, and so did the British, he argues in *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and al-Qaeda*: "The graveyard-of-empires metaphor belonged in the graveyard of clichés." (316)

Robert Gates, who bridged the two administrations as Secretary of Defense, argued after Obama took over that the United States had not, in fact, been fighting in Afghanistan for nearly a decade without success, but rather had fought nine different one-year wars. Reading Anderson restores a needed skepticism into claims that all that was wrong was the way the wars were fought. He begins his discussion of the Bush Administration with comments on the presidential campaign and the Republicans' promise to move the country away from nation-building as a foreign and military policy. Then he moves neatly to a brief discussion of the tax-cuts and rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, substituting Bush's "Healthy Forest Initiative," which opened national forests to more intensive logging, and the "Clear Skies Initiative," which rolled back EPA pollution control requirements for power plants.

These Orwellian deceptions well prepare the reader for what is to come on the path to war with Iraq. Months before 9/11, indeed at the first meeting of the National Security Council, Iraq was the key subject discussed. A few days later at another meeting, the one where Secretary of State Colin Powell argued for "targeted sanctions" as the way to contain Saddam Hussein, he was interrupted by Defense Secretary Don Rumsfeld, "Sanctions are fine. But what we really want to think about is going after Saddam." (59) These early confrontations, at the very time that Vice-President Dick Cheney was settling in to work out a new energy policy with the help of American oil companies, etc., suggest that an important decision had already been made by at least two of the leading figures in the Administration. The Cheney-Rumsfeld consensus that somehow nothing could go forward

until Washington had made up its mind about a resolution – and how that would be accomplished -- of the Iraq-Iran dilemma, was not declared out loud, but it provides an essential clue to understanding American policy. After all, both men had been involved in what had not worked in previous years. From Irangate to Rumsfeld's famous handshake with Saddam Hussein, the quest had been to find a way to restore predictability to Middle Eastern Affairs.

The alacrity of Rumsfeld's response to 9/11 on the afternoon of the attack, "Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not" – with its dramatic recommendation to go all out -- not just against Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda -- but against Saddam Hussein with the goal of a general solution to America's fears about the future Middle East can be viewed as revealing the intensity of pre-9/11 debates. (70) Here are echoes of McGeorge Bundy and Pleiku, and streetcars that come along all the time, if one waits long enough. Inevitably, the Bush Administration would have found a way to implement 'regime change' but the Rumsfeld memo clarifies the situation and the desire to seize the moment. He was, of course, seconded by Cheney who insisted that al-Qaeda could not have carried out such an attack on its own.

It all seemed to play out as if pre-ordained in the weeks after 9/11. The United States swept the Taliban regime aside and began planning immediately for war against Iraq. Anderson brings us the voice of the CIA's Hank Crumpton, who warned Bush and Cheney that the chance to catch Osama Bin Laden was fast fading as matters stood. His White House briefing failed to stir the president to action. How bad off were the Afghan forces, Bush asked? Were they up to the job? "Definitely not, Mr. President," replied Crumpton. "Definitely not." (86) But the White House took no serious steps to reinforce the Afghan troops. "To put this in perspective," writes Anderson, "the commander-in-chief dispatched fewer troops to kill bin Laden, al Qaeda, and the Taliban regime harboring them, than the number of police officers assigned to any large American city, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, or Houston." (87)

In some ways, as I have written elsewhere, Bin Laden alive, but presumably pinned down in Pakistan, served the useful purpose of a dangerous interim enemy until the case for war against Saddam Hussein could be developed, beginning with Cheney's efforts to tie the Iraqi leader both to the 9/11 attacks through a shadowy set of contacts in Prague, and the still not fully explained anthrax attacks in the weeks following. In other words, Bin Laden alive was for the moment, more useful than Bin Laden dead. That depended, obviously, on making a solid connection between the al Qaeda leader and Saddam Hussein. Anthrax, of course, qualified as a WMD, and especially if it could be shown that al Qaeda agents working in team with Iraqi suppliers were on the loose in the United States.

General Tommy Franks – in charge of developing new war plans – went to Crawford, Texas after Christmas 2001 to update the President on his progress. "Mr. President," Anderson quotes the general, "if we want to execute something like this, then what we're going to need to do is we're going to need to start posturing and building forces." (96) Anderson slyly interprets "posturing" to mean what Bush did in the 2002 State of the Union Address with its 'Axis of Evil' central image. That speech inaugurated the campaign that continued

throughout the next year with its “mushroom cloud” exclamatory (or inflammatory) utterances by Condi Rice and others high in the Administration.

Confronted in the last days before the American attack on Iraq by the Air Force and Army secretaries, who warned that Iraq could be another Vietnam, Rumsfeld blew his stack. “Vietnam?” he roared. “You think you have to tell me about Vietnam? Of course it won’t be Vietnam. We are going to go in, overthrow Saddam, get out. That’s it.” (109) That was the plan. And if it had succeeded there would have been no serious debate when the supposed WMD never turned up. Bush tried to fudge the results of a futile search by insisting that Saddam Hussein retained the capacity to build the weapons – an argument regurgitated by Senator Joe Lieberman in January 2011 to defend his votes for war. But there never would have been an issue if Rumsfeld had been right and ‘Mission Accomplished’ had really been the end of the fighting.

Rumsfeld’s insistence that the invasion did not need more than 125,000 troops, against the Pentagon generals’ projections of upwards of 350,000, was of a piece with the lack of serious planning for postwar Iraq’s reconstruction. “There was no real plan,” Anderson quotes one general. “The thought was, you didn’t need it. The assumption was that everything would be fine after the war, that they’d be happy they got rid of Saddam.” (142) What makes this so curious was that Rumsfeld’s viceroy in Baghdad was ordered to carry out a de-Baathification policy on the order of the de-Nazification of Germany. The question of the thoroughness of that policy in Germany aside, how could one imagine that such sweeping changes could be accomplished in a thrice?

Even more amazing, Anderson records the decapitating of the experienced generals in Iraq, and the removal of several hundred intelligence officers, who were replaced with a handful of officers new to the country. As Anderson concludes, at a time when experience and knowledge were desperately needed, Washington sent in new commanders and administrators with no knowledge of Iraq, “including Jerry Bremer, who had no experience in nation-building, had never been to Iraq, and did not speak Arabic.” (150) Qualifications for jobs in Iraq depended upon the applicants’ record in terms of voting for Republicans or supporting anti-abortion views inside the United States. Instead of making the world safe for democracy, it now appeared that Bush wanted to make Iraq safe for ‘Faith-based Initiatives.’

Even the execution of Saddam Hussein with its gruesome details broadcast on the web seemed to demonstrate that the new American-sponsored Iraqi government resembled nothing so much as sectarian regime bent on revenge. As Anderson concludes, the outlook for Iraq depends on still unresolved issues, political and economic. Whatever happens, the long term goal for Iraq – a safe landing place for American interests in the Middle East – looks far off. In the final pages, Anderson returns to the Afghan War. There the Taliban returned in force as soon as American forces pulled back. The shocking truth, it turned out – as Bob Gates discovered in a visit to Afghanistan in the fall of 2009 – was that the Taliban had been paying its guys more than the Americans did! There were other reasons, of course, for defections from the Kabul government, but that was a big one, as Gates told *New York Times* correspondent Maureen Dowd – as if discovering the cure for the common cold.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, writes Anderson, believed she had the answer to all of the myriad problems presented by the struggle in Afghanistan. “Counterinsurgency,” she said. “We found out how to do it in Iraq.” (222) When Obama approved the Afghan build-ups the belief was that what followed the Iraq surge, under the direction of General David Petraeus, had demonstrated that with the right leaders, COIN would prove effective as not only tactics, but strategy. Less than two years later, after the raid that killed Osama Bin Laden, and the increased Drone missions offered yet another version of the Long War, policymakers and pundits appeared to be running as fast as they could from COIN to an Air-Sea Strategy. While Americans were securing villages and winning friends by drinking ‘Three Cups of Tea,’ commented Admiral James “Sandy” Winnefeld, “the world has changed.”<sup>1</sup>

Terry Anderson’s achievement in a concise book that should be required reading for courses in American diplomatic history, is not simply to ‘cover’ the Bush Wars successfully, but to put them into the broader context of U.S. relations with the Middle East. There will be longer (no doubt, much longer) books to come with research based on archival sources. But it will be very hard to displace this book on the shelf of ‘must-reads.’

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<sup>1</sup> Ty Cobb, “Good-Bye Counter-Insurgency: Hello Air-Sea Battle,” <http://harvardnsj.com/2011/11/good-bye-counter-insurgency>.

Terry Anderson opens his self-proclaimed “first history of Bush’s wars” with a very instructive and well-outlined review of Afghanistan and Iraq in the period between 1970 and 2000. Within these individual sections, he does a very skillful job of explaining the history of each region as it evolved to become major focal points within the George W. Bush administration’s global war on terrorism. While Anderson’s background history from the 1970s to the end of the Cold War is solid, he really does capture the turbulent and dynamic period of the early post Cold War security environment. Within this secondary context his analysis of the rise of Al Qaeda and his assessment of Iraq in the aftermath of Operation DESERT STORM demand attention by anyone interested in the prelude to the on-set of the Global War on Terrorism. To be fair, Anderson does not present a detailed analysis of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, but rather presents a history of how bin Laden and Al Qaeda emerge in the early 1990s as a rising security risk to the United States.<sup>1</sup> Likewise his analysis of Saddam Hussein and Iraq as its leader struggled to recover from the drubbing incurred during DESERT STORM is skillfully crafted and insightful, as he presents a very clear understanding of how Saddam and Iraq emerged as an obsession with George W. Bush and his “Vulcans.”<sup>2</sup> This phenomenal introduction leads the reader to hold high expectations for the remainder of the book. However, I think the book falls short, as Anderson continues to focus on the Bush administration’s removal of Saddam and invasion of Iraq. This is not to say that the remainder of the book is lackluster, but rather that there are positive elements, as well as negative points, that simply do not match the skill and craft of Anderson’s initial chapter.

The positive elements of Anderson’s study revolve around his ability to methodologically recount the major decision points made by Bush and his core group of neo-conservative cabinet members. In most cases, Anderson portrays individuals (Vice- President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and National Security advisor Condoleezza Rice) as steadfast ideologues who were obsessed with punishing and/or removing Saddam Hussein from power. The lone exception to Anderson’s characterization is Secretary of State Colin Powell, who Anderson portrays as a rational and wise man who was often at odds with other members of the cabinet.

Anderson’s recounting of the strategic debates, discussions, and analysis of the major actors of Bush’s administration, including the president himself, provide a comprehensive understanding of the neo-conservatives’ vision of re-shaping the Middle-East. However, more importantly, Anderson focuses on the administration’s central obsession with

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<sup>1</sup> The history and evolution of Al Qaeda is thoroughly covered in Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York: Berkley Books, 2002); Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohanmedou, *Understanding Al Qaeda: Changing War and Global Politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, (London: Pluto Press, 2011); Christina Hellmich, *Al Qaeda: From Global Network to Local Franchise*, (London: Zed Books, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet*, (New York: Viking Book, 2004).

Saddam Hussein and elaborates on how he came to occupy its collective strategic thinking. Supporting his point, Anderson recounts anecdotes such as one from Richard Clarke, who had been briefing the administration on the rise of Al Qaeda and the potential for a massive attack on the United States throughout the summer of 2001, and who walked into a meeting in the early hours of 12 September 2001 to hear the major principles advisors discussing "Iraq." Anderson cites Clarke's initial reaction:

I walked into a series of discussions about Iraq. At first, I was incredulous that we were talking about something other than getting Al Qaeda. Then I realized with almost sharp physical pain that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were going to try and take advantage of this national tragedy to promote their agenda about Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

By citing quotations such as Clarke's and by providing a very neat and meticulous chronology of the administration's fixation with Saddam, Anderson effectively reinforces his main point that Bush and his administration discounted intelligence and even skewed intelligence to support their preconceived notions about Iraq, which in the collective minds of the administration justified the need to remove Saddam from power. One of the major strengths of this text is Anderson's ability to convey to the reader how Bush and his key decision makers missed the obvious Al Qaeda connection, as they became increasingly focused on Saddam. Anderson's objective here is twofold. First, he aims to present and detail for the historic record the process by which the United States came to invade Iraq. It should be noted that while the invasion of Afghanistan is covered as well, the majority of Anderson's attention is devoted to Iraq. Second, Anderson conveys the idea that the administration purposefully charged headlong into a second front in the Global War on Terrorism without any true understanding of the reality of the ramifications of their decision to invade Iraq. Time and time again, Anderson keeps pointing out that Afghanistan was/is the real main effort, yet the President and his neo-conservative cabinet continually convinced themselves that Iraq deserved equal attention.

Even after highlighting the military invasion of Iraq, Anderson de-emphasizes the tactical and operational problems of the drive to Baghdad. Rather he spends more time focusing on the transition to the control of the provisional authority under the command of retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner. For Anderson, Garner, like Powell, comes off as a very sensible and strategically sound man who fully understood the political reality on the ground in Iraq. However, the advice and ideas of Garner were dismissed by the administration as Paul Bremer assumed command of the provisional authority. For Anderson, this is a major 'what-if moment,] that he is sure will be debated by historian in the decades to come. Bremer's decision to institute 'De-baathification,' which effectively disbanded the Iraqi military and in the process left several thousand people unemployed, which in turn fed the growing and as of yet recognized insurgency, is acknowledged by Anderson as a serious blunder. Further compounding this problem for Anderson was the infusion of "political appointees" for various staff positions within the 'green zone' who were young, some fresh out of college, inexperienced, and simply unqualified for their jobs,

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<sup>3</sup>Terry Anderson, *Bush's Wars*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 70.

but nevertheless appointed for their partisan ties and/or family monetary contributions to Bush's campaign. For Anderson, this is yet another example of how the Bush administration mismanaged and failed to think through the exacting details of rebuilding Iraq.

The real strength of Anderson's narrative is in his ability to capture and provide a thorough, yet easy to follow chronology of Bush's wars. However, as one continually is bombarded with the same messages about the lack of strategic forethought and seemingly general incompetence of the administration, a few weaknesses begin to surface in the text. The most apparent is a methodological issue. As Anderson provides countless quotations and seemingly first-hand primary references in his text, the reader begins to think that the author has interviewed the major individuals involved. However, a close scrutiny of the endnotes highlights the fact that he has used the biographies and other sources such as Bob Woodward's series of books as the sources for the quotations. I believe that this erodes Anderson's claim that his text is intended as the "first history" (xi) of Bush's wars, since he is simply synthesizing the various works that have already covered the material, albeit from different political, personal, or military angles.<sup>4</sup> Historiographically speaking, the synthesis phase tends to evolve after the revisionist phase, and we have not yet had the time to allow this phase to evolve. While I recognize the value of Anderson's text as well as his skillful ability to pull together the various sources of this historically-significant event, I think there is some self-imposed hyperbole in claiming to be "the first."

The second issue that emerges as one works through *Bush's Wars* is Anderson's seemingly strong discontent with politicians responsible for the decision to go to war. While he might be correct in his depiction of the decision to invade Iraq as wrongheaded, he focuses his negative criticism on politicians and only seems to have positive perceptions of former military officers such as Colin Powell and Jay Garner. Furthermore, Anderson is suspiciously quiet when it comes to the military's slow recognition and reaction to the insurgency in Iraq and the re-emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Although I understand that his study is intended to be a political history of Bush's wars, Anderson needs to acknowledge that there were mistakes made by both the political, as well as the military actors. By highlighting the political errors, Anderson presents the false impression that the military was held back by the politicians, when in reality the military also had a difficult time adjusting from major combat operations to the growing insurgency on the ground. I would offer that it is not as simple as the military had the "right" answers and there were stymied by the politicians. There are several texts that highlight the U.S. military's struggles to adapt to the demands of the counter-insurgency.<sup>5</sup> Paraphrasing

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<sup>4</sup>Excellent examples include the following studies: Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, (New York: Simon and Schusters, 2002); Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, (New York: Simon and Schusters, 2004); Bob Woodward, *State of Denial*, (Simon and Schusters, 2006); Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, (New York: Pantheon Book, 2006); Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure In Iraq, 2006-2008*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup>Insights on the U.S. military's efforts to adapt to the counterinsurgency fight can be found in Matt Gallagher, *Kaboom: Embracing the Suck in a Savage Little War*, (Cambridge, MA: Decapo Press, 2010); Gordon

Clausewitz, that war is a complex and dynamic event which tends to escape control, I realize that the truth is probably somewhere in the middle of these two positions.

Notwithstanding the two major issues I have raised, Anderson in the end presents an engaging and thought provoking synthesis of Bush's wars that deserves the attention of military historians, political scientists, diplomatic historians, as well as presidential scholars who are interested as to how the Global War on Terrorism will fare in American, as well as International history. Furthermore, while I do not agree with Anderson's claims that this is the "first history" of Bush's wars, I do believe that in the future it will be a vital book in the historiographic catalogue of books that will be written on the topic of Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, I will go one step further and offer that historians, as well as others interested in this topic, should start their inquiries with this book, as it will provide them with a very solid understanding of the decisions and chronology of events that led the United States to invade Afghanistan and Iraq.

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Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq: Regime Change, Jay Garner, and the OHRA Story*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011); Peter Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict Between America and Al Qaeda*, (New York: Free Press, 2011).

Review by David Schmitz, Whitman College

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It is a privilege and a pleasure to be part of this roundtable to discuss such an excellent book, Terry Anderson's *Bush's Wars*, on such an important topic. This is the finest examination of both the origins of George W. Bush's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the fighting of those wars, to date. It sets the standard, and a very high one, in much the same way George Herring's *America's Longest War* did for scholarship on the Vietnam War,<sup>1</sup> and should be considered for any classes that cover this time period.

First, *Bush's Wars* provides excellent context on Afghanistan—the Graveyard of Empires—and Iraq—the Improbably Country—along with its analysis of the origins of American policy. Second, Anderson's analysis of the war decisions in 2001-2003 is both the most succinct and in depth that we have. Similarly, the examination of how Bush fought the wars is also the finest analysis and synthesis to date and includes material that will be new to most readers. Finally, given the limited records available, it provides an exemplary example of how to analyze policymaking during ongoing wars, and the interplay between events and decisions made in Afghanistan and Iraq with the Bush administration's decision making. Along with Thomas Rick's two excellent works, *Fiasco* and *The Gamble*, which Terry Anderson employs to full benefit, and Peter Bergen's *The Longest War*, Anderson's book is essential reading for understanding the two wars of President George W. Bush.<sup>2</sup>

Another excellent attribute of the book is that it sets out the historiography and interpretive framework for understanding the war. As Anderson asks, "why did the president and his administration invade Iraq?" (228) The first answer comes from Bush and other administration officials: they went to war to defeat a threat to the United States: terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and a dictator who sowed unrest in a volatile and crucial region of the world. To this can be added the fact that the administration believed it could win easily, and therefore start ridding the world of 'evil' in an efficient and effective manner. This was aided by the emotional climate after September 11, 2001, and the high level of confidence in the United States ability to win.

Anderson rejects this argument, noting that while the invasion of Afghanistan was "justifiable," the war in Iraq "was a radical departure from previous presidential behavior, and not justifiable—even if Saddam had WMDs." (229) Iraq posed no threat to the United States. The previous American policy since the end of the Gulf War had successfully contained Baghdad. Rather, the threat from Iraq was a manufactured one that stemmed from various impulses: ideological, economic, and individual. Anderson does an excellent

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<sup>1</sup> George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: Wiley, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006); Thomas Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin, 2009); and Peter L. Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and Al-Qaeda* (New York: Free Press, 2011).

job setting out the worldview of the Bush administration and the impact of neoconservative thinking on American policy. All of the key components of the Bush Doctrine, preemptive war, spreading democracy, regime change, and maintaining the United States position as the sole superpower, were in place prior to September 11. It did not bring forth new thinking, but provided a context for implementing the neoconservative conviction that American values, and in particular democracy, are universal, and that the United States could bend reality to conform to these expectations. There was a high level of conviction in the transformative power of American values and the efficacy of American military force.

Oil, of course, was another reason for war. The Bush administration wanted to insure access to and the stable flow of Persian Gulf oil. The oil factor had the additional impulse in helping to convince many that the war could be fought at almost no cost to the United States. Not only would the military phase of the war be brief, but oil revenues would be used to pay for the postwar reconstruction of Iraq.

These factors, Anderson argues, combined with President George W. Bush's own beliefs and character to bring about war. The president was not a deep thinker, nor was he reflective about his actions. Instead, Bush acted on faith in his ideas and conception of the world rather than evidence or a thoughtful policy. The president was convinced, as he said many different times and in many different ways, that the "United States is *the* beacon for freedom in the world" (231) and that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq would lead the Middle East to a democratic future. Neoconservative policy gave him a rationale and conviction that this could be done. Anderson adds to this list of reasons the hubris of the administration that allowed the president to place enormous faith in the efficacy of American force and overlook the administration's ignorance about Iraq. All of this meant, as Anderson notes, that Iraq was "a war of choice, an unnecessary attack on and occupation of Iraq, which allowed the Taliban to reemerge in the original site of Bush's war on terror-Afghanistan." (233)

Anderson notes that two other related questions will concern scholars for a long time. "Was going to war the right decision?" (234) and "Was the war 'worth it?'" (233) The administration and its supporters have answered yes; although to do so they have had to, as Anderson notes, change the focus on why war away from the original justifications to ridding the world of a brutal dictator. Thus, the United States has made life better for Iraqis, and therefore for the region. This, as Bush argues, has aided the self-defense of the nation. "America is safer," the president claimed, "without a homicidal dictator pursuing WMD and supporting terror at the heart of the Middle East." (234)

But most Americans have now answered no, and Anderson concurs. In another outstanding aspect of the book, Anderson methodically adds up the various costs of the war in terms of lives, money, impact of fighting terrorism, American armed forces and morale, credibility, and the economy, as well as on Afghanistan and Iraq. He concludes by stating: "No one can predict the future, of course, but if the second decade of the twenty-first century witnesses an additional decline of American economic and diplomatic influence, future scholars probably will conclude that the origin of that demise was linked to the war

in Iraq—a conflict that hurt the U.S. economy, diminished American stature in the world, and failed to bring about religious toleration or democracy in the Middle East.” (238)

Still, Anderson’s convincing argument, and book title, that Iraq was Bush’s war, his war of choice, has the distinct echo of Fredrik Logevall’s *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, Michael Hunt’s *Lyndon Johnson’s War*, and the Vietnam War itself, which raises the question as to why no direct comparisons between Vietnam and Bush’s war are made.<sup>3</sup> This is all the more surprising given Terry Anderson’s first-rate studies on the 1960s, *The Movement and the Sixties* and *The Sixties*.<sup>4</sup> Whether it is President Lyndon Johnson and Gulf of Tonkin or false claims of WMDs, the similar American ignorance of Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960 and Afghanistan and Iraq the past decade, the lack of legitimacy of the groups and people the United States supported, the length of the guerilla wars, or the stalemate in the fighting, there are many useful parallels.

More illuminating to me is the impact of the Vietnam War on decision making. While Bush administration officials consistently rejected any comparisons, and the president once answered flatly and succinctly “no” when asked if he saw any parallels,<sup>5</sup> the Vietnam War did influence Bush’s wars. First, it did so by helping to shape neoconservative thinking, a link that could have been brought out more in the text. Second, and more directly, thinking about Vietnam influenced how the administration approached the war in terms of size of the force, and the decision to avoid a draft or any direct sacrifice at home (Anderson makes a very telling comparison between Franklin Roosevelt’s post-Pearl Harbor speech which called for sacrifice, determination, unity, and discussed the high costs the war would have, and Bush’s telling people to go on vacation and shop after September 11) because that would bring protest.

The size of force was one important factor, as Anderson clearly demonstrates, in the failure of Bush’s policy. It was also linked to the administration’s determination for over three years not to escalate and thus create the impression of stalemate and quagmire. It was not until 2007 that Bush implemented the strategy of ‘the surge’ to change the course of the fighting in Iraq. Anderson’s discussion of the surge is focused, rightly so, on the counterinsurgency ideas of General David Petraeus, who was at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the implementation and impact of the policy. What should be highlighted more was that the purpose of the surge was to stabilize the situation and allow the United States to stay in Iraq for a long duration. The importance of this is two-fold. First, it raises the question of how to end wars of intervention where the

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<sup>3</sup> Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Michael Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson’s War: America’s Cold War Crusade in Vietnam, 1945-1968* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Terry Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Terry Anderson, *The Sixties* (New York: Longman, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> *Public Papers of the Presidents: Bush, 2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010), 1134.

United States is supporting unpopular regimes, finds itself in the midst of a civil war, and can only achieve a stalemate at best on the battlefield. Here, comparisons to Vietnam for the situation in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the unnecessary continuation of the fighting, would be fruitful for analysis. Second, similar to Tom Ricks' *The Gamble* that focuses on the surge, Anderson gives Ambassador Ryan Crocker the last word on the surge, noting that it was just the end of the first chapter of a very long book the United States was writing in Iraq, and that "the gains are fragile, and they are tenuous." (225) This last idea, that all of the gains made by the United States were "fragile and reversible," is a common mantra from civilian and military officials alike. That Crocker should have the last word is fine as he is an outstanding diplomat, but his points needed to be contrasted to and used to counter the claims of Bush and his supporters that the surge meant victory and that he had in fact achieved his goals in Iraq. This is the one area of summation and evaluation where I found I wanted more from Anderson in the book.

Finally, Terry Anderson's outstanding history of the Bush administration's wars provides ample material for those who wish to place the two wars into discussions of the questions of empire, continuity versus change in American foreign policy, and the meaning of the end of the Cold War for U.S. relations with the world, especially its response to instability and unrest in the postcolonial states. While Anderson does not directly address these questions—nor should he have; this is not a criticism—his work does raise the issue of the meaning of 'globalization,' a unipolar world, and, as Paul Kennedy noted back in the 1980s, imperial overstretch and relative decline.<sup>6</sup> Another way of asking this is to compare the rhetoric, ideology, and policies of the United States from the 1890s and early twentieth century to the post-Cold War years. While it is not straight, or certainly not the only path, the line is still, I believe, discernible. Did the Cold War, then, merely mask many of the structural, ideological, economic, and geopolitical strategies and directions of American foreign policy? Certainly, Anderson's work provides support for other recent scholarship such as Chalmers Johnson's Blowback trilogy (*Blowback*, *The Sorrows of Empire*, and *Nemesis*)<sup>7</sup> and Andrew Bacevich's recent critiques of American foreign policy *American Empire*, *The Limits of Power*, and *Washington Rules that criticize the imperial aspirations of the United States since the end of the Cold War*.<sup>8</sup> In the process, it challenges the way we periodize and how we think about change and continuity in American foreign policy.

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000); Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); and Chalmers Johnson, *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008); Andrew J. Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010).

Terry Anderson's book has set the bar high for all future work on the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, *Bush's Wars* will shape and influence the scholarship and teaching of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq for decades to come. We are all indebted to him for this fine work.

Author's Response by Terry H. Anderson, Texas A & M

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First of all, I am honored that my recent book, *Bush's Wars*, is the focus of this discussion. I particularly owe a debt of gratitude to Thomas Maddux for organizing this H-Diplo roundtable.

David L. Anderson, a Vietnam veteran and one of our finest historians of that conflict, naturally makes many comparisons between Vietnam and Iraq. As he notes, a few historians have already written on those comparisons; my editor, however, wanted me to limit my discussion of Vietnam. I agree that comparisons are stunning, and it is especially frustrating for historians to see similar presidential patterns in the mid-1960s and in and after 2003. As a U.S. Navy Vietnam vet at age 19, who began protesting against that war after Nixon's "incursion" into Cambodia, I watched in 1975 as helicopters took off from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. I said then, "Thank God, it finally is over. No baby-boomer president will ever get us into another unnecessary war." How wrong I was. Thus, I was shocked after Labor Day 2002, when, as former press secretary Scott McClellan wrote, the administration began "selling the war" to the American people. I also was appalled at how easily the majority of American got in line. Sure, in February 2003 about a million people protested in major cities, and many more in Europe, but for the most part, the "lessons of Vietnam" had been forgotten. Even the Fourth Estate, the press, rarely questioned the administration, and in the summer of 2004 both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* apologized for not thoroughly examining the administration's rationales for invading Iraq. As for historians, many of us spoke out but few listened. I cannot speak for others, but Iraq seems to have made historians of modern United States the members of a profession of frustration.

On another point, and as David Anderson knows, the aim in *Bush's Wars* was not to come up with an original interpretation. I'll leave that for others, and there will be plenty of attacks on my book. The aim was to take tens of thousands of articles from magazines and papers which had journalists in the war zones, from the *Wall Street Journal* to *Al Jazeera*, add those to military and government reports, journalists' books, and memoirs from soldiers or those who worked in or with the administration, and put together the story of George Bush's wars on terrorism, in Afghanistan, and in Iraq. About six years ago I asked my friend George Herring if he was going to write this type of book on Iraq, and he said no, so I said that I'll be the George Herring of Bush's wars. Naturally, the book will be revised as more documents are released, as more participants write their memoirs or submit to interviews, and as I receive more helpful criticism.

As for the interpretation, Paul Chamberlain points out that *Bush's Wars* probably will be considered the orthodox interpretation of the topic. He is correct that the book has established the "basic narrative" and that it will be challenged by revisionists in the future. What a wonderful future I have anointed myself—for those few who supported the Iraq war in 2008, for those few who still admired George W. Bush, I am and will be their lamb to slaughter.

Finally, I agree entirely that the book's main flaws usually are a result of omission, mainly because of its size -- 100,000 words. As stated in the Preface, the topics that I do not examine at length are numerous; many topics and issues I only mention briefly or discuss in a paragraph instead of a few pages. When I approached Oxford University Press my outstanding editor, Dave McBride, convinced me that in this electronic age, as national chains like Borders Books were going bankrupt, a book on a contemporary topic that most citizens would like to forget would have to be a relatively short, stimulating read. Investigating some painful issues is very different than writing one of those fat biographies published by Doubleday, another Washington crossing the Delaware, Franklin in Paris, or Lincoln saving the nation. If *Bush's Wars* failed on the popular trade level, then it would have to make up production costs in the classroom. Unfortunately, that seems to be the nature of selling books on contemporary issues in this new age, and fortunately readers can get the book on their Kindles.

Lloyd Gardner is perceptive as usual, noting how Osama bin Laden alive during the rush to war and march to Baghdad actually played into the administration's hands. The world's number one terrorist was still on the loose, and that gave the administration *carte blanche* to attack another person with whom they had long wanted to settle a score: Saddam. No wonder a couple years into the Iraq war there were political cartoons of Bush charging into Iran chasing Ayatollahs. That was the level of the administration. It did an excellent job of playing on American fears after the tragedy of September 11. The Bush administration had a relatively easy sell job, which sadly revealed that after 9/11 the American character of "Rugged Individualism" quickly dissipated into a nation of goose steppers. The ease with which Bush took this nation into an unnecessary war only upset a few political leaders, like Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia: "This war is not necessary at this time" he chastised his colleagues. This "chamber is, for the most part, silent--ominously, dreadfully silent." Like the "hardhats" who supported Nixon's invasion into Cambodia, those who said "Let's Roll!" into Iraq certainly marked another low mark of American democracy.

Sean N. Kalic is correct that *Bush's Wars* focuses, perhaps too much, on the administration's fixation on and conflict with Saddam Hussein and Iraq. Writing contemporary history—especially as it develops—is fraught with peril. I was writing as the media reported the daily carnage, and that resulted in my focus on Iraq. At that time, 2003 to 2008, the administration and the media also discounted the fundamental reason why the United States military became involved in the War on Terror: the situation in Afghanistan. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said in 2008, "I think it's a mistake to look at Afghanistan as sort of one eight-year war. . . . We had a war in 2001, 2002, which we essentially won. And the Taliban was kicked out of Afghanistan. Al Qaeda was kicked out . . . And then things were very quiet in Afghanistan." Gates continued that the second war began in late 2005 and early 2006 and the U.S. did not get "its head into this conflict" until 2008.

Sean Kalic is correct that I de-emphasize the American run to Baghdad. I synthesize numerous military reports, memoirs, and embedded journalistic accounts into only a dozen pages. I loved writing those pages, had veterans of those campaigns read them, and they are "action packed," according to my students. I would have liked to have written much more on that campaign. But the next chapter, "Bush's War," does examine the "stay the

course” strategy from 2003 to the end of 2006, the military problems as the insurgency fired up, the impact on individual soldiers and on military families, and on recruiting young men and women into the ground forces.

“Anderson is suspiciously quiet when it comes to the military’s slow recognition and reaction to the insurgency in Iraq and the re-emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan,” writes Kalic, and here I agreed on the Taliban but disagree on Iraq. I quote the field commander in 2003-04, Lt. Gen. Richardo Sanchez, about the growing insurgency in Iraq (anyone searching for a harsh U.S. Army critic of the administration should read his book, *Wiser in Battle*).<sup>1</sup> Part of the problem with the “slow reaction” was Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. On June 18, 2003, Jay Garner had just returned from his mission in Iraq and he met with Rumsfeld at the Pentagon. “We’ve made three tragic decisions,” Garner declared, “terrible mistakes,” and described not turning political power over quickly to the Iraqis, disbanding the Iraqi armed forces, and De-Bathification. “Well,” said Rumsfeld, “I don’t think there is anything we can do, because we are where we are.” “They’re all reversible,” Garner countered, but Rumsfeld ended the conversation: “We’re not going to go back.” The arrogance of the Secretary of Defense was overwhelming. Rumsfeld in his new biography *Known and Unknown*<sup>2</sup> can’t understand when critics say that he didn’t listen to his military commanders, but those in the Army know otherwise. Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki, a general who had served his nation for thirty-eight years, who was asked and gave his honest military judgment, was retired; that sent a chilling message to the rest of the officer corps. Nevertheless, I certainly agree that mistakes were made both by politicians and the military, and they resulted in Rumsfeld’s retirement and the appointment of Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense and Gen. David Petraeus as field commander; he and his colleagues initiated a more successful strategy: the Surge matched with COIN. And I’d also like to thank Sean Kalic for noting some recent books by Matt Gallagher and Gordon Rudd that were published after I sent my manuscript to press.

Andrew J. Bacevich succinctly summarizes *Bush’s Wars* (was I *that* critical of the Bush administration?) and then we disagree and agree. I do call not call Dick Cheney a neocon, but I do infer that Donald Rumsfeld was one and also was part of the Project for the New American Century in the mid-1990s. I should be more precise, and we agree that the “Bush administration ...was infested with people possessing unbridled faith in the efficacy of American military might and keen to put it to work.” As stated, I agree entirely that I leave too much out. Bacevich writes that “With the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan disappears from this account,” and the “activities of U.S. special operations forces and CIA paramilitaries in lesser theaters such as Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and the Philippines are nowhere to be found. In that sense, *Bush’s Wars* fails to encompass the full panoply of Bush’s wars.” True, and as I state in the Preface, a book this size has to pick and choose. Thus, I also deleted the Pentagon’s involvement in the stories of Jessica Lynch and

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<sup>1</sup> Ricardo S. Sanchez with Donald T. Phillips, *Wiser in Battle: A Soldier’s Story* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York, Sentinel, 2011).

Pat Tillman, former New York City police commissioner Bernard Kerik's failed attempts to train Iraqi police, Patrick Fitzgerald's inquiry into the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame Wilson and the judicial proceedings of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the relatives of the September 11 victims and the development of the 9/11 Commission, and of course, many military campaigns in Afghanistan, Iraq, and lesser but important theaters.

As for the "W fatigue" that Andrew Bacevich mentions, I have read through the memoirs of Bush, Rumsfeld, and the newest one by Condoleezza Rice.<sup>3</sup> It is no surprise to discover that they gloss over all criticism and incompetence and present a unified mantra: "Everyone" in the world thought Saddam had WMDs, which is lie number one. They were "protecting" American from a possible attack from Saddam and thus preventing a second Pearl Harbor. This wasn't a mistaken war like Vietnam, it was a good versus evil fight like World War II, and on and on. Saddam was equated with Hitler; De-Bathification with De-Nazification. A chorus in unison, rather like the original rush to war in Iraq. I'll write an article about their memoirs, because unlike Bacevich, I'm not "sick of these people." At least, not yet.

Finally, we agree and disagree again. Yes, it is time to let the Bush administration "marinate for awhile." My second edition will not appear for about four years. By that time the Iraq and Afghanistan situations will be more resolved, and perhaps we'll have more investigative reporting and military and government documents. I know I'll be less emotional when revising. But I disagree with the statement that "every administration since Jimmy Carter (if not since FDR) has left fingerprints on the bizarre escapade that eventually matured into the Global War on Terror. It's time to give the likes of Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton their due." Yes, there are antecedents, but after 9/11 I can't imagine Carter or Clinton locking up some 900 Muslims, many American citizens, for an average of 90 days without probable cause before release, and I can't imagine those two or Bush Sr. rushing off to war in a nation in the Middle East that had nothing to do with that national tragedy. The author of that policy was Bush, Jr., egged on by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and the neocons. There were many reasons for the war in Iraq—emotional fallout from 9/11, quick "victory" against the Taliban, neocon ideology and administrative groupthink, misperceptions of a future Iraq, WMDs, and of course oil. I examine those in the Legacies, but there also was Bush. He personified Mark Twain's quote: "All you need in life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure," and he displayed that in his march to war, along with his personal feelings about Saddam. "The SOB tried to kill my dad," W. declared on at least two different occasions, and at another time, "I was a warrior for George Bush."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010); Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> James Bamford, *Pretext for War: 9/11, Iraq, and the Abuse of America's Intelligence Agencies* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 260.

In conclusion, I feel honored that these fine scholars have commented on my book. I want to thank all the participants. Many of their thoughtful comments and suggestions will be incorporated into the second edition of *Bush's Wars*.

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