

The neocon-liberal popular front, from Serbia to Iraq

Пише: Justin Raimondo
понедељак, 18 фебруар 2008 16:13

How did we manage to mire ourselves in the midst of Mesopotamia, enmeshed in a three-sided ([at least](#)) civil war, with vanishing hopes of extrication – and the putative Republican presidential nominee hailing a [hundred-year occupation](#) ?

The key to this mystery may be traced back to an earlier act of "liberation" effected through the vehicle of the [Kosovo Liberation Army](#) . Sunday's [official declaration of independence](#) by Kosovo – which will no doubt be immediately [recognized](#) by the United States and the EU nations, along with the Islamic bloc – underscores the folly of our interventionist foreign policy.

This policy was forged and made possible by an alliance – a popular front, as the lefties used to call it – of [neoconservatives](#) and [liberal](#) " [hawks](#) ," and its first project was gathering support from the Right and the Left for the [Kosovo Liberation Army](#)

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[Chalabi](#)
and the "
[liberation](#)
" of Iraq came later, but it was the [same sort of game](#)
, with [the same players](#)
, using roughly the [same moralistic lingo](#)
. Only the locale was changed: the neocon-liberal alliance remained constant, and grew stronger. By Sept. 11, 2001, this popular front was ready, willing, and able to propel us headlong into the Middle East.

I remember quite distinctly when I confronted Rep. Nancy Pelosi in 1996 – I was her [Republican opponent](#) that election year – over the question of going to war against Serbia. Since she refused to debate the issue, or any other, I had to track her down at one of her orchestrated "public" meetings. There I asked her: why is this war worth a single life, either American or Serbian? Her

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answer consisted of a single word: "Genocide!" This, indeed, was the rationalization the Clinton Democrats used, to great effect, in order to make their war palatable.

The cry was taken up by the neoconservatives, who added their own special fillip to the war propaganda that filled the airwaves and the opinion pages of the nation. This would be, said the neocons, a much-needed demonstration of American power in the post-Cold War world, an occasion, as Bill Kristol memorably put it, to "[crush Serb skulls](#) ."

As it turned out, [there was no "genocide"](#) – the International Tribunal itself reported that [just over 2,000](#)

bodies were recovered from postwar Kosovo, including Serbs, Roma, and Kosovars, all victims of the vicious civil war in which we intervened on the side of the latter. The whole fantastic story of another "

[holocaust](#)

" in the middle of Europe was

[a fraud](#)

. This is clear when we examine the progression of claims made by the Clinton administration and its amen corner in the mainstream media. Initially, we were told that as many as

[100,000](#)

Albanian Kosovars had been victims of this "genocide," but that heady moment soon gave way to more conservative estimates –

[50,000](#)

, [25,000](#),

[10,000](#)

– and at that point the War Party stopped talking numbers altogether and just celebrated the glorious victory of "humanitarian intervention."

This parallels the propaganda campaign that led up to the invasion of Iraq, with some slight variations. The [principal casus belli](#) against Saddam Hussein was his supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction, but this charge was mixed in with the moral case that we couldn't abandon the Iraqis to someone who had used poison gas "

[against his own people](#)

," as Bush and his

[Democratic enablers](#)

repeated endlessly. This mobilized the liberal "hawks" while

The Weekly Standard

's series of essays by

[Stephen Hayes](#)

, bolstered by the obsessive book-length missives of

[Laurie Mylroie](#)

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, rationalized a diversion away from al-Qaeda and directed American power against Iraq.

Hillary Clinton often points to Kosovo as an example of interventionism [done the right way](#) . Yet if we look at the actual results, in practice, of nation-building, Clinton-style, it has been no more successful than the Republican version, albeit far less bloody and on a smaller scale. The [ethnic cleansing](#) that followed the military victory of NATO forces left the Serbian inhabitants of Kosovo living in a state of siege and sent them fleeing by the thousands. In the meantime, the rise of a virulently nationalistic regime in Pristina created an ethnically pure and fiercely militaristic state, which embodies the "principle" of gangsterism both in [substance and style](#) . Here again, the parallels with Iraq – where a Shi'ite majority has [largely succeeded](#) in driving the Sunnis out of Baghdad and into the hinterlands and surrounding countries – are all too tragically obvious.

Another, more ominous parallel is that both the Kosovar and Shi'ite states birthed by U.S. military action are regional destabilizers due to the expansionist ideology that energizes their partisans. The independent "republic" of Kosovo, added on to Albania and sections of bordering countries, such as Macedonia, is a component of what Kosovar militants refer to as " [Greater Albania](#) , " a vision of mini-empire that they intend to realize by force. The same is true of the [Iraqi Shi'ite state](#) , which is now said to be a part of what Washington's grand strategists point to with alarm as the " [Shia Crescent](#) " – an evolving "threat" that would never have come into being in the first place if we had simply stayed out.

Furthermore, the creation of these states has had regional and even global consequences, none of which are benign. In the case of the Kosovars, the U.S. appears to have endorsed the concept, if not the full-scale implementation, of "Greater Albania." It remains to be seen whether the U.S. will endorse or otherwise encourage Kosovo's designs on its neighbors. When it comes to the "Shia Crescent," however, we are told that this is a danger that [must be fought](#) , as the creation of a Shi'ite super-state consisting of Iraq and Iran is considered inimical to U.S. interests.

From the Balkans to the site of ancient Babylon, our interventionist policies have set us up for

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confrontations with groups and nations that seek to stem U.S. hegemony, principally Russia and Iran. We are, it seems, presently engaged in a two-front "civilizational" conflict: with the Slavic world, in central and eastern Europe, as well as in the rest of Russia's "near abroad"; and with Sunni insurgents and Shi'ite Iranians, i.e., a good deal of the Islamic world.

How did we get to this point? The grand convergence of Left and Right interventionists during the Clinton years led directly to what Gen. William E. Odom has described as [the biggest strategic disaster in American military history](#)

. As Jacob Heilbrunn puts it in

[They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons](#)

:

"As [Lawrence F.] Kaplan and Kristol depicted it in their [2003] book [[The War Over Iraq](#)], the main issue that should unite the liberal and conservative hawks was the belief that American power, which had liberated the Balkans from Serbian aggression, should be redeployed against Iraq. Once again, morality was the key as well as the putative link between Osama and Saddam."

"Such bellicose rhetoric," Heilbrunn points out, "was adopted by numerous liberal hawks, including Paul Berman." Such militancy wasn't confined to a few left-liberal intellectuals who suddenly imagined themselves as their generation's version of [George Orwell](#) . It also infected the mindset of more than one liberal politician, e.g.,

[Hillary Clinton](#)

, whose pro-war rhetoric at the time of the invasion, as well as her vote to authorize the strike, reflected the new bellicosity on the Left. It was Hillary, you'll recall, whose pressure on her husband to do something about the alleged "genocide" was the

[decisive factor](#)

in launching the bombing campaign against Serbia.

The neoconservatives often get the whole of the blame for the unfolding disaster in Iraq, but the reality is that they couldn't have pulled it off all by themselves: they needed, sought, and got the [support](#) of the liberals.

Have liberals learned their lesson? Not if calls for intervention in [Darfur](#) or [Kenya](#) can be taken seriously. Iran and Pakistan loom large as potential sites of future U.S. military action, but

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I doubt whether we can count on opposition from the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, either in Congress or as represented among the pundits. The neocon-liberal popular front lives on and is bound to be an endless source of schemes for yet more overseas wars in which we have no national interest.

Antiwar.com <http://www.antiwar.com/justin/?articleid=12378>