

example, in September 2002, to avoid undermining progress toward peace and stability in Afghanistan, United Nations administrator Lakhdar Brahimi resisted calls from outgoing human rights commissioner Mary Robinson to investigate alleged war crimes by key figures in the new UN-backed government there.

The first order of business in countries where atrocities occur—and where those who committed abuses may remain powerful—should be to establish, through bargaining and negotiation, the fundamental political and institutional conditions that will make justice possible. Absent those conditions, attempts to implement universal standards of criminal justice may actually weaken norms of justice by revealing their ineffectiveness.

Snyder and Vinjamuri examined 32 civil wars fought since 1989. Of the nine instances in which “human rights abuses were reduced, peace was secured, and the degree

of democracy was substantially improved,” only three—East Timor, the former Yugoslavia (except Macedonia), and Peru—involved trials for individuals accused of atrocities. In general, say the authors, trials helped to end abuses only where local criminal justice institutions were already fairly well established. Like tribunals, amnesties “require effective political backing and strong institutions to enforce their terms.” And truth commissions, another favorite instrument of human rights advocates, “have been useful mainly” when, as in South Africa, they have made amnesties politically acceptable.

In Iraq today, a trial of the captured dictator Saddam Hussein appears to be in the works. But, the authors warn, extensive use of war crimes trials there, “in the midst of ongoing instability and powerful potential spoilers, as well as in the face of efforts to rebuild the basic institutions of the state,” would be an ill advised move.

Neodivide

“The Neoconservative Moment” by Francis Fukuyama, in *The National Interest* (Summer 2004), 1615 L St., N.W., Ste. 1230, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Neoconservatives have come under intense criticism for their role (real and imagined) in taking the United States to war in Iraq. Now, one of their own, writing in the premier neocon foreign-policy journal, joins the critics. Fukuyama, author most recently of *State-Building* (2004), attacks the “emblematic” neoconservative strategic thinking of columnist Charles Krauthammer as “fatally flawed.”

As early as 1990, Krauthammer began propounding a doctrine of American “unipolarity” in the post-Cold War world as an alternative to the ideas of isolationist, realist, and liberal-internationalist thinkers. Fukuyama contends that he and other conservatives (“neo” and otherwise) around *The National Interest* tried to build another sort of approach based on the same critiques, but it was Krauthammer’s thinking that prevailed in the upper echelons of the George W. Bush administration.

Fukuyama says that the lack of reality in

Krauthammer’s doctrine was evident in a speech he gave this past February championing democratic globalism, which Fukuyama describes as “a kind of muscular Wilsonianism—minus international institutions.” While defining U.S. interests so narrowly “as to make the neoconservative position indistinguishable from realism,” as advocated by Henry Kissinger and others, Krauthammer’s strategy is “utterly unrealistic in its overestimation of U.S. power and our ability to control events around the world.” (Making “not the slightest nod” to such setbacks as the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, Krauthammer spoke as if the Iraq War were “an unqualified success.”)

In Krauthammer’s view, the United States should commit “blood and treasure” to democratic nation-building only in “places central to the larger war against the existential enemy.” But neither Iraq nor Al Qaeda ever threatened the existence of the United States, says Fukuyama. Strangest of all, he

says, is the Krauthammerian “confidence that the United States could transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy, and go on from there to democratize the broader Middle East.” For decades, neoconservatives had warned of “the dangers of ambitious social engineering” at home. What made them think they could avoid those dangers abroad?

Fukuyama also writes that Krauthammer’s ideas about how the United States should deal with the Arab world are colored by the experience of Israel, which is surrounded by “implacable enemies.” But Arabs neither surround the United States nor implacably op-

pose it (though U.S. policies could solidify widespread hatred of America).

What now? Fukuyama thinks that Washington should continue to promote democracy, particularly in the Middle East, but that it must be more realistic about its ability to succeed at nation-building and needs to create a permanent U.S. organization to carry it out. And if existing international institutions aren’t able to meet today’s global challenges, U.S. leaders, like their post-World War II predecessors, must create new ones to do the job. That, says Fukuyama, should have been the neoconservative agenda from the beginning.

The Fog of Quotation

“Can Reading Clausewitz Save Us from Future Mistakes?” by Bruce Fleming, in *Parameters* (Spring 2004), 122 Forbes Ave., Carlisle, Pa. 17013–5238.

“No military strategist shall fail to deploy quotations from *On War* when engaging in verbal battle.” The author of *On War*, Prussian army officer Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), never said that, but America’s military strategists seem to revere what he left unsaid almost as much as his actual words. And why shouldn’t they? asks Fleming, an English professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. After all, Clausewitz can be used to justify almost any point of view.

Take his most famous pronouncement, popularly rendered in English as, “War is a continuation of politics by other means.” To many commentators, the statement means that civilian authorities should set the goals of a war and then allow the military to determine the strategy. But other analysts, such as Bernard Brodie, author of the magisterial *War and Politics* (1973), reject that reading, contending that Clausewitz favored “genuine civilian control” over the conduct of the war.

In criticizing the much-publicized “shock and awe” campaign at the start of the Iraq War last year, Mackubin Thomas Owens, a professor at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, said that such effects should not be presupposed because, as Clausewitz pointed out, “war takes place in the realm of chance and uncertainty” (what the famous theorist called “the fog of war”). On the other hand, Owens noted that Clausewitz also developed a theory of war with “universal and timeless” elements that offer “a guide for action.”

Owens is right about these contradictory aspects of Clausewitz, says Fleming. He was “as wedded to the theory, his need to see war as predictable, as he was to his admissions that it was not. The interest of the work is precisely the tension between the two.”

Which is why Fleming believes that invoking Clausewitz “at every turn is both so satisfying and ultimately so pointless”: “When



Karl von Clausewitz