

# The Neocons' Project for the New American Century: "American World Leadership" - Syria next to Pay the Price?

By [Felicity Arbuthnot](#)

Global Research, September 20, 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*"In every age it has been the tyrant, the oppressor and the exploiter, who has wrapped himself in the cloak of patriotism, or religion, or both to deceive and overawe the people." (Eugene Debs, 1855-1926, speech Canton, Ohio, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1918.)*

The Project for the New American Century (PNAC), unleashed in June 1997, has largely disappeared from the political radar, yet the mire, murder and general mayhem the US, UK and dwindling "boots on the ground" allies find themselves in, are seemingly rooted in its aims, which march relentlessly on.

PNAC was founded under the Chairmanship of William Kristol, former Chief of Staff to Vice President Dan Quale during the Presidency of George Bush Snr. Kristol's father, Irving Kristol has been described as the "Godfather of Neoconservatism."

The organization was: "... dedicated to a few fundamental propositions: That American leadership is good for America and the world." Projects were devised: "... to explain what American world leadership entails." (i)

Consulting "the world" about the mind-numbing concept of a US planetary take-over was not a consideration.

Little time was wasted in advancing this new world order. On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1998 PNAC sent a letter (ii) to the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich and to Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott. It referred to a letter sent to President Clinton four months earlier: "expressing our concern" that U.S policy of "containment of Saddam Hussein was failing." Thus: "the vital interests of the United States and its allies in the Middle East would soon be facing a threat as severe as any we had known since the end of the Cold War."

Therefore a strategy should be implemented to: "... protect the United States and its allies from the threat of weapons of mass destruction (and) put in place policies" that would topple the Iraqi leadership.

Without a glance towards international law, the letter continued: ".U.S. policy should have as its specific goal removing Saddam Hussein's regime ... Only the U.S. can (demonstrate) that his rule is not legitimate. To accomplish (this) the following political and military measures should be undertaken ..." The first "measure to be taken" was what has now become the blueprint for each planned overthrow of a sovereign government:

“We should help establish and support (with economic, political and military means) a provisional, representative and free government of Iraq in areas of Iraq not under Saddam’s control.”

That Iraq’s “sovereignty and territorial integrity” was guaranteed in law and by the United Nations was not an issue for consideration. Signatories, a veritable “Whose Who” of neo-cons, included John Bolton, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Robert Kagan, James Wolsey, Zalmay Khalizad and PNAC co-founder Robert Kagan.

Robert Kagan is currently on Hillary Clinton’s Foreign Policy Advisory Committee, his wife is Victoria Nuland, spokeswoman for the Clinton headed U.S. State Department. Kagan’s loftily entitled book “The World America Made”, was publicly endorsed by Barack Obama. Its theme was referenced in his 2012 State of the Union address.

Nor has William Kristol gone away. In March 2011 he wrote an editorial in the Weekly Standard arguing that US Military “interventions” in Muslim countries (including the decimations of the 1991 Gulf War, the Balkans, and destructions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq) should not be classified as “invasions” but as “liberations.” Needless to say, he backed US “intervention” in Libya, urging Conservative support.

A more recent piece of war mongering was on Fox News (7<sup>th</sup> August 2012) when he opined:

“I went back and looked at the speech President Obama gave in March 2011 when he announced the very mild intervention in Libya, which did help to get rid of Qaddafi. Every reason he gave for intervening in Libya is there squared, in triplicate, for intervening in Syria, including the strategic importance of getting rid of Assad and weakening Iran, and we’re sitting there talking about ‘we really hope there won’t be sectarian violence later on’, and, gee, this is kind of unfortunate.”

“If we are abdicating our role of helping to shape events in this absolutely crucial part of the world, what does that say? Are we just going to let other countries, ya know, play their games and stand back as if it doesn’t affect U.S. national security?”

On the same programme Hillary Clinton talked of: “the day after” President Assad. For anyone familiar with the 1983 film of that name portraying the effect of a nuclear strike on Missouri, it was a chilling phrase.

So far it is not known if Kristol and Clinton have connected their perceived threat to U.S. “national security”, the spectre of a dead Ambassador, three colleagues, ten guarding them, burning or under attack US Embassies around the world, generated by actions, provocations and invasions, exactly as they advocated again on Fox News.

Before his next appearance on Fox, Kristol could do worse than peruse Professor Hamoud Salhi’s address, presented at the Center for Contemporary Conflict, of the (U.S.) Naval Postgraduate School in June 2004. (iii pdf) It is entitled: “Syria’s Threat to America’s National Interest.” It is arguably even more pertinent now – and another reminder of how long Syria has been in U.S. sights.

He opens: “Syria’s threat to America’s national interest in the Middle East can only be understood in the context of U.S. plans to reconfigure the Middle East. Knowing now that the

motive for invading Iraq was strategic, taking over Syria would give the United States further strategic depth in the region ... tipping the balance of power (even more) in favour of the United States regional allies, Israel and Turkey.”

Salhi notes that “strategic pre-emption” is long central to American policy in the Middle East, citing Rapid Deployment Forces during the Carter Administration, Dual Containment under Clinton, Pre-emptive Doctrine under George W. Bush. Policies, he holds, which: “have been instrumental in maintaining hegemony in the region”, avoiding threats to U.S interests, or to those of Israel, Turkey and the Gulf States.

After the 1998 US-UK Christmas bombing of Baghdad drew world-wide criticism, Salhi points out that the often daily (illegal) bombing of Iraq by the two countries was stepped up, with often daily sorties, “using the latest technology” destroying what minimal economic infrastructure remained: “under the pretext that they represented future threats.” It was he contends, the “quiet war”, an ongoing tragedy little noticed by the world.

The ground was – literally – being prepared for invasion, the trigger finger ever itchier, any excuse sought. George W. Bush would later explain that invading Iraq was necessary: “ ... to advance freedom in the *greater* Middle East ...” (Emphasis mine.)

11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 arguably gave the excuse to release the safety catches. On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001 PNAC sent a letter to Bush: “ ... recommending the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, even if no direct link to the 9/11 attack were found.” Time to redeem American: “supremacy in global politics (and for) regime changes in Iraq, Iran and Syria.”

Michael Ledeen, foreign policy expert, another neo-con minded Fox News commentator, alleged to be a “strong admirer” of Niccolo Machiavelli, regarded 1991’s Desert Storm attack on Iraq as a woeful missed chance states Salhi. He notes Ledeen’s view that driving Iraqi troops from Kuwait was wholly inadequate. Strategy should have been: “regime change in Baghdad” (as) “one piece in an overall mission”, which should have been: “one battle ... against Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia.”

Addressing “The Syrian Threat”, Professor Salhi reminds of the U.S. Congress 2004 “Syria Accountability Act” which considerably financially weakened Syria’s fragile economy, with further aims clearly paving the way to regime change.

That achieved: “...the United States will have completed its final stage of encircling Iran. This would further tip the region’s balance of power in favour of Israel and ultimately open new doors” for the U.S. “active involvement in toppling the Iranian regime.”

PNAC’s John Bolton, as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control, had testified before a Senate Sub-Committee on Syria’s threats to the U.S., which of course included terrorism and “weapons of mass destruction” reminds Salhi – pointing out that Bolton could cite no specifics. The more a Syrian danger was inflated, the more “justification” for an attack.

Conversely he reasoned, a massively threatened Syria then: “has a motive to make itself more threatening than it actually is.” (On a personal note his comment had resounding resonance. In an interview with Iraq’s then Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz prior to the invasion, I asked about the weapons of mass destruction allegations relentlessly assailing Western air waves . He side- stepped the question neatly: “Madam Felicity, we too are afraid.” He of course knew the truth, Iraq was a sitting duck, but U.S. uncertainty was slender hope for

catastrophe averted.)

In a rare moment of intemperance, President Assad stated the country had chemical weapons and would use them if invaded. As Aziz, he would hardly declare there was no way to counter an invasion's fearsome arsenal.

Concluding, the Professor pointed out that: "Syria's economic capabilities do not support the argument that Syria could become a threatening force in the region ... " Further, it's technological development falls to near nil as a threat to the United States. A: "lack of interest in the sciences is reflected in patents registered in the United States, a meager ten, as against 16,328 for Korea and 7,652 for Israel (1980-2000.) Syria has a long way to go before it could reach any kind of technological development to be a threat to the United States."

Moreover: "Syria's leadership has pursued a principled foreign policy, built around deeply rooted philosophical orientations and molded to conform to the realities of the region."

Whilst ideologically deeply rooted in Arab nationalism: "Syria's political approach has been consistently pragmatic ... a scenario in which Syria acquires nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and uses them against the United States or its regional allies is unlikely."

Further, as with Iraq, which was minutely scrutinized by US satellites since the late 1980's ("We can see a Coca Cola can in a trash bin", "If Saddam sneezes we can see him reach for his handkerchief") it is surely happening with Syria, with Israel also openly admitting to Drone surveillance.(iv)

Professor Salhi's final point is that to deter ever mounting threats, Syria might resort to acquiring WMDs, perceived as for their own protection. However: "What is certain, is that using WMDs would be inconsistent with Syria's well established political approach."

What is also certain is that in the event of an attack on Syria, the worldwide attacks on US and allied interests and personnel of the last few days will pale in to insignificance.

## Notes

i <http://www.newamericancentury.org>

<http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqletter1998.htm>iiiiii

kms1.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/.../en/salhiApr05.pdf

iv

<http://www.inquisitr.com/285063/israel-increasing-syrian-drone-surveillance-to-monitor-weapons-of-mass-destruction>

Essential reading:: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/syria-nato-s-next-humanitarian-war/>

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Felicity Arbuthnot](#), Global Research, 2012

---

## [Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

## [Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **[Felicity Arbuthnot](#)**

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)