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Where Have the Architects of War Gone?

By [Arianna Huffington](#), [AlterNet](#). Posted [July 19, 2006](#).

Where have you gone, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Doug Feith, et al? A nation turns its anxious eyes to you.

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In his terrific blog post on the [hornets' nest we've kicked open in the Middle East](#), Gary Hart makes the point that as the fighting spreads, we have seen precious little of "the nation's wisemen, those neoconservative idealists who saw the great American empire imposing democracy on the Middle East at the point of a bayonet."

And, indeed, in the wall-to-wall coverage of the latest Middle East carnage -- and the analysis of said carnage -- the neocon architects who brought us the invasion of Iraq and the promise that it would bring democracy and stability to the region have been notably absent from the discussion.

Where have you gone Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Doug Feith, et al? A nation turns it anxious eyes to you.

In the run up to Shock and Awe, these guys were all over the place, singing from the same song book, letting us know that the fall of Saddam would bring good things throughout the Middle East. With their every pronouncement, you could hear the sound of Arab dominoes falling.

The neocon fantasy was summed up by Dick Cheney, a [charter member](#) of the Project for a New American Century brigade, in August 2002: "Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region: extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of jihad, moderates throughout the region would take heart, and our ability to advance the Israel/Palestinian peace process would be enhanced."

Wolfowitz was just as optimistic, [predicting the invasion of Iraq](#) "will be an act that will bring more stability to the region." According to [pre-war Wolfie](#), "With Saddam Hussein out of the picture, it'll be a much better atmosphere for peace."

Same with Doug Feith, who assured us that [a democratic Iraq would be](#) "inspirational for people throughout the Middle East to try to increase the amount of freedom that they have." He also suggested that success in Iraq "would be impressive and influential" and allow others in the region to look at the Iraqi example and say, "If the Iraqis can have these benefits, perhaps we can get some of these benefits for our own people." And he was confident that the ousting of Saddam would "influence the thinking of other states about how advisable it is for them to continue to provide safe harbor or other types of support to terrorist organizations." (Maybe Tommy Franks knew what he was talking about when he [called Feith](#) the "stupidest guy on the face of the earth.")

As for Richard Perle, six months after the fall of Saddam (and months into the insurgency), the so-called Prince of Darkness was still seeing [nothing but blue skies](#): "I think others in the region will look at Iraq and say, 'Why can't we rid ourselves of a regime that's rather similar in some ways to the Iraqi regime?' So the precedential effect of liberating Iraq may assist in bringing about democratic reform elsewhere."

It hasn't exactly turned out that way, has it? The extremists are as committed to jihad as ever, the Israel/Palestinian peace process has been declared [officially dead](#) and buried by the Arab League, "democratic reforms" in the region have led to the rise of fundamentalists in Iraq, [Hamas in Palestine](#), and the legitimization of [Hezbollah in Lebanon](#), and Iraq has indeed proved "inspirational" -- to al Qaeda and its fellow jihadists.

Could the wise men's crystal balls have been any cloudier?

But an admission that they were wrong -- or a stirring defense of why, despite all appearances, they were actually right -- has been harder to come by than a Y chromosome at a Melissa Etheridge concert.

In his post, [Gary Hart wrote](#), "Democracy does not work without accountability." But no one is holding these guys accountable. Especially not the media -- which the neocon shills used so effectively when selling the country on the wider benefits of war in Iraq.

The cable and Sunday shows -- where so much prewar misinformation was disseminated -- need to haul in the war triumphalists and ask them to account for the gulf between their rosy predictions and the bloody reality.

It would be interesting to see how they would react. Would they belatedly go the way of [Francis Fukuyama](#) and disavow their notions of war in Iraq leading to peace in the region or would they pull a Bill Kristol and use the current upheaval as the perfect justification for [expanding the war in Iraq to Iran and Syria](#)?

When last we heard from Perle, back in June, he was using the *Washington Post* to wag his finger at Bush -- dreaming of the next war, [the one in Iran](#), and clearly not feeling any obligation to explain the sectarian chaos that's become of the current one in Iraq.

Wolfowitz has been hard at work at the World Bank, posing as the Second Coming of Mother Teresa and doing all he can to whitewash his past. His [official World Bank bio](#) extols the role he played in "the successful liberation of Kuwait" but expunges any mention of his role in the failed occupation of Iraq or his forecast that the people there would "greet us as liberators."

For his part, Feith has [retreated to the halls of academia](#), landing a job at Georgetown's school of Foreign Service, where he will teach a course on the Bush administration's antiterrorism policy. Supply your own syllabus-related punchline ([here's](#) Jesus' General's). Feith's last TV appearance was in August 2005, on Geraldo, right before leaving his post as Undersecretary of Defense. He clearly owes the nation an update.

These men were the architects of the administration's imperialist policies in the Middle East. It's time to hold them accountable for the fatally flawed blueprint and the woefully shoddy workmanship.

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### **Accountability? In the nation's capitol? What are you, some kind of commie-symp egghead?**

Posted by: Sojourner on Jul 19, 2006 1:36 PM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Between the gross errors in judgment and the plethora of lies that pass for policy statements these days, do you know how long it would take to sort through the endless rhetoric passed along by journalists who simply stuff the administration's PR pieces in everyone's mailbox?

Can't we expect American citizens to think for themselves? (I recall a conversation with an elderly Scandinavian immigrant who really believed that the people wearing the white coats in TV commercials were MDs.)

Isn't it a politicians right to change his mind? (Only when the evidence is so overwhelming that to blather the old line would invite the white coats to bring a straight-jacket with them.)

Then, again, maybe good journalists just don't notice such things as horrible policy positions. If it sells, it's gotta be good, right or wrong. If Americans buy it (and do we ever), it's self-evidently right.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it! Oh, it's broke? Are you sure? Aren't we turning a corner?

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