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War-Torn Democrats

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War-Torn Democrats

By PETER BERKOWITZ

WILL MARSHALL, EDITOR. *With All Our Might: A Progressive Strategy for Defeating Jihadism and Defending Liberty*. ROWMAN AND LITTLEFIELD. 252 PAGES. \$19.95

PETER BEINART. *The Good Fight: Why Liberals — and Only Liberals — Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again*. HARPERCOLLINS. 288 PAGES. \$25.95

IN 1907, IN tribute to Secretary of State Elihu Root, President Theodore Roosevelt observed that a public official “must feel that he is the servant of the people. This is true of all public officials, but perhaps it is in a special sense true of the secretary of state, for our party lines stop at the water’s edge.” This is

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the first documented use of the famous injunction, the one famously invoked against the isolationists of his own party by Republican Senator Arthur Vandenburg, who, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, according to his official Senate biography, “cooperated with the Truman administration in forging bipartisan support for the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO.”

The notion that politics stops at the water’s edge also reflects the political theory that underlies the Constitution, as James Madison, in speaking about the conduct of foreign affairs, observed in *Federalist* No. 42: “This class of powers forms an obvious and essential branch of the federal administration. If we are to be one nation in any respect, it clearly ought to be in respect to other nations.” In private correspondence in 1787, Thomas Jefferson, no friend of a powerful centralized government, concurred: “My idea is that we should be made one nation in every case concerning foreign affairs, and separate ones in what is merely domestic.”

But wise dictums about the need for unity in foreign affairs, along with constitutional mechanisms designed to constrain as well as promote it, cannot by themselves prevent politics from sailing beyond the water’s edge. This is particularly true when, as over the past five years, partisans disagree bitterly about the aims and execution of the nation’s foreign policy and become convinced that their party has a monopoly on the proper understanding and effective exercise of it.

In this respect, and reflecting the spirit of the times, liberal hawks Will Marshall, president and founder of the Progressive Policy Institute, the think

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tank of the centrist Democratic Leadership Counsel, and Peter Beinart, former editor and now editor-at-large of the *New Republic*, are in no mood for bipartisanship. They share much of their fellow Democrats' anger and indignation, if not about the original decision to go to war in Iraq, then about the Bush administration's handling of that as well as foreign policy writ large. Both are weighed down by the failure to decouple their understanding of America's national interests from the interests of the Democratic Party, and neither, alas, breaks the blinding spell of Bush hatred, which has done so much to distort Democrats' judgment. But what makes them different, and worth listening to, is their repudiation of the large and vocal neo-isolationist wing of the Democratic Party and their self-proclaimed muscular alternative — progressive or liberal internationalism — for defeating jihadist terror.

*M*ARSHALL'S BOOK presents essays by a variety of writers on the war of ideas, global terrorism, military culture, the health of the transatlantic alliance, the reform of the United Nations, the economic foundations of foreign policy, and the new configuration of ideas and sentiments among the rising generation in the Democratic Party. The chapters are united by the conviction that American foreign policy is in a state of crisis and that progressivism provides a stand-alone and self-sufficient perspective that generates a set of overarching foreign policy imperatives and a cluster of specific policies.

In the introduction, Marshall along with Jeremy Rosner, partner and senior

vice president at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, a political polling and strategy firm, establish their credentials as *tough-minded* Democrats by stressing that 9/11 thrust the U.S. into a war, likely to be protracted, with "a ruthless new foe." And they establish their credentials as tough-minded *Democrats* by insisting that President Bush's leadership has had all but disastrous consequences for America, at home and abroad:

After initial successes against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Bush administration pursued a course that bitterly divided Americans, alienated many of our closest allies, ran down our military, dissipated our country's moral authority, and stoked anti-Americanism around the world.

Although the president was right, according to Marshall and Rosner, to make the promotion of liberty and democracy abroad a central component of the war against Muslim extremism (and they are right to recognize this as also a progressive message), the administration, they believe, has badly bungled the undertaking:

The White House prescribes democracy for Iraq and Iran while turning a blind eye to repression and corruption in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It preaches respect for human rights while failing to take full responsibility for the torture and mistreatment of captives in U.S. custody. And it has failed to launch political and economic initiatives commensurate with its grandiose rhetoric about promoting democracy.

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Marshall and Rosner trace this litany of blunders to “a worldview — conservative unilateralism — that believes America can shape international affairs simply by flexing its military muscle.”

Convinced that the Bush administration’s conservative unilateralism can’t meet the urgent threat posed by Muslim extremism, Marshall and Rosner offer progressive internationalism as a strategic outlook that “occupies the vital center between the neo-imperial right and the noninterventionist left, between a view that assumes our might always makes us right, and one that assumes that because America is strong it must be wrong.” This yields five national security imperatives, which their book is devoted to elaborating:

First, we must marshal all of America’s manifold strengths, starting with our military power but going well beyond it, for the struggle ahead.

Second, we must rebuild America’s alliances, because democratic solidarity is one of our greatest strategic assets.

Third, we must champion liberal democracy in deed, not just in rhetoric, because a free world is a safer world.

Fourth, we must renew U.S. leadership in the international economy and rise to the challenge of global competition.

Fifth, we must summon from the American people a new spirit of national unity and shared sacrifice.

These are indeed worthy imperatives. In fact, not a single one — contrary to the noninterventionist left caricature of the Bush administration as “unilateralist” and “neo-imperialist” with which

Marshall and Rosner remain enthralled — is inconsistent with the ideas Bush has championed and only in regard to the last has the Bush administration been clearly negligent.

To be sure, important differences are bound to arise when conservatives and progressives translate shared imperatives into policy. Still, the existence of common ground is good news for Marshall and Rosner, because as they themselves recognize, “America’s national security policies are doomed if they are designed to be either ‘red’ or ‘blue.’” Accordingly, Marshall and Rosner insist that faced with an electorate that by significant margins continues to prefer Republicans as stewards of the nation’s national security, Democrats must find ways to achieve a rapprochement with purple or swing voters.

Unfortunately, Marshall and Rosner and many of their contributors handicap themselves with their determination to see nothing but setbacks to American foreign policy since 2002 and to place all the blame on the incompetence, ignorance, and ideological blindness of the Bush administration. They argue as if Michael Moore, Howard Dean, MoveOn.org, the Daily Kos crowd, and the Democrats who support them contributed nothing to political divisiveness in America. As if French and German political elites have acted on the international stage with high-minded motives and far-sighted vision. As if fear and loathing of America in its role as the world’s lone superpower were unheard of before the Bush administration and have nothing to do with other nations’ envy of American power and ambition for theirs. As if corruption at the United

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Nations, starting with the still unfolding Oil-for-Food scandal, were a minor matter that need not interfere with the creation of bigger and better roles for the UN in the pursuit of collective security and global economic development. As if the liberation of Baghdad in April 2003, the successful completion in Iraq of three national elections — to choose delegates to draft a national constitution, to ratify the constitution, and to select representatives under the constitution — followed by the successful formation of the first government under the constitution, were barely noteworthy accomplishments in the region. As if the U.S. — despite serious errors in policy and judgment by the Bush administration, particularly concerning the detention and interrogation of enemy combatants, and regrettable deviations from the principles of military justice on the battlefield — has not waged war in Afghanistan and Iraq with greater respect for the requirements of international law and humanitarian principles than any major power in history. As if the commitment to promote democracy abroad requires nothing less than a massive and indiscriminating campaign that refuses to distinguish between allies and adversaries and pays no heed to the geopolitical consequences of a headlong rush for regime change.

To so argue is not merely to misdescribe America's strategic situation. It is also to reinforce the Democratic Party's prejudices and thereby further estrange Democrats from the realities with which they must grapple to be taken seriously — and to deserve to be taken seriously — on questions concerning the nation's security.

This blind spot notwithstanding,

Marshall's book contains many proposals, tending to revolve around the progressive search for more effective measures for the political and economic reform of the Muslim Arab Middle East, that deserve careful consideration. Among others, Reza Aslan proposes the creation of "international think tanks" where moderate Muslim scholars from all over the world can gather to "to develop and publish new and innovative interpretations of Islamic law to counteract the more traditionalist and fundamentalist interpretations infiltrating much of the Muslim world." Kenneth Pollack advises the U.S. to "embark on multilateral efforts to promote reform, provide resources to Middle Eastern reformers, and even create positive and negative inducements for Middle Eastern governments to adopt key reforms." To facilitate the myriad tasks that go into democracy promotion, Michael McFaul and Larry Diamond envisage the creation within the U.S. government of a "department of international development and reconstruction." The cabinet-level department would "lead and coordinate U.S. governmental efforts to foster economic development, democracy, disaster relief, and postconflict reconstruction." In confronting global terrorism, Daniel Benjamin wants to "shape the battlefield" by providing generous assistance to our allies for their civilian programs for controlling movement across borders, and he calls for the creation of an "International Counterterrorism Agency" that "could significantly change the environment in which terrorists operated by pressing for universal ratification and enforcement of all international counterterrorism conventions." And to guide United

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Nations reform, Anne-Marie Slaughter recommends the creation of “a caucus of democratic nations within the U.N.,” and, as a “fallback alternative,” she urges “expanding NATO as a global security alliance.”

In an oversight characteristic of progressive thought — though likewise not uncommon when conservatives present their platforms to the public and certainly true of the Bush administration throughout the war in Iraq — the contributors to Marshall’s volume seldom accompany their proposals with an analysis of the obstacles, disadvantages, or costs. Given the ambition of their massive programs for democracy promotion abroad, and the restructuring of the executive branch of the federal government and of the UN that they envisage, this oversight is not negligible.

Moreover, as Marshall and Rosner note in the introduction, to advance democracy abroad progressives need the backing of the people at home. Yet substantial segments of the Democratic Party continue to scorn Senator Joe Lieberman for his support of the war, and in early June at the Take Back America conference in Washington, liberal activists booed Senator Hillary Clinton for rejecting timetables for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. One wonders how, in these circumstances, Marshall and his fellow progressive internationalists intend to win over the bulk of their fellow Democrats and persuade sufficient swing voters to create a governing majority.

Alone among the contributors, Melissa Tryon, in “Reconciling Democrats and the Military,” deals with the gap between the people and progressives’ aspiration to speak in their name. And alone among contribu-

tors, she believes that progressives have not only something to teach the nation but also something to learn from it. Tryon has excellent credentials to vindicate this belief. Despite her blue-state profile, she came to the conclusion as a teenager in the early 1990s that effective response by the U.S. to international humanitarian crises required it to maintain “a strong and just military.” Acting on her conviction, she enrolled in West Point. Today a West Point graduate, a Rhodes Scholar, and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Tryon suggests that popular doubts about trusting Democrats with national security stem in significant measure from their ignorance about or disdain of the military and that part of America from which large portions of our all-volunteer military hail. Although she believes that military culture fosters its own misconceptions about Democrats, and notes with concern the increasing tilt among officers and enlisted men and women over the past 20 years toward the Republican Party, she urges progressives to overcome their prejudices and learn more about a world they regard warily and usually know only from a great distance.

To start, counsels Tryon, progressives must develop a better understanding of, and respect for, “the warrior ethos” fostered by the armed forces. This ethos values decisiveness, honor, pride in serving the nation, moral certainty in the justice of its cause, devotion to the community of service members and their families, a can-do attitude, a commitment to winning, and a traditionalism that derives from studying the time-honored principles of war. Although such an ethos is more at home today among Republicans than

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Democrats, “progressives and members of the armed forces,” Tryon stresses, “share many core values.” Like the military, progressives are committed to service to the nation, believe strongly in justice, emphasize the mutual dependence and responsibility that constitute all communities, and affirm the universal application of the principles of individual freedom.

To take advantage of this common ground and close the cultural divide, she recommends that Democrats cultivate relations with veterans groups, encourage their children to acquire military experience, champion policies to improve the practical, day-to-day concerns of military personnel and their families, find ways to show public support for the military community (despite disagreements with the commander in chief about the war), and work to create a nonmilitary national service program to better distribute sacrifice among citizens. None of this will be easy for today’s Democrats. But it is reasonable to believe that taking such steps will give progressives a more credible voice on national security. And as Tryon wisely observes, “A nation at war, facing huge challenges and potential threats, deserves a healthy and vigorous debate on security issues — between both parties.”

IN CONTRAST TO Tryon’s sound liberal appreciation that democracies derive advantage from the competition among diverse opinions about foreign policy, Peter Beinart contends that one foreign policy school in America, and one alone, contains the whole truth about how to wage the war on terror. And one party, and one alone, provides the legitimate

home for, and serves as the rightful guardian of, the principles and the policies that should guide America in its dealings with other nations. That a partisan Democrat — or partisan Republican — would make such a claim for his party is hardly surprising. But that Beinart makes this chauvinistic claim in the name of “liberalism’s best traditions,” which surely includes the insistence upon the thoughtful appreciation of both the limits of one’s own perspective and the partial truth in the perspective of one’s rivals, is further testimony to the estrangement from liberalism’s best traditions that afflicts today’s Democrats.

Beinart’s highly touted and much discussed book aims to do for the Democratic Party what John Kerry’s record of military service could not — restore the party’s moral and political seriousness on questions of war and peace. Neither a work of grand strategy nor a compendium of policy proposals, Beinart’s book is a summons to fellow Democrats to put their house in order so that they can save America from the totalitarian threat posed by Islamic extremism, and, Beinart never lets the reader forget, from the smugness, self-satisfaction, and incompetence of the American right which, he argues, has led the nation disastrously astray in the war on terror.

To craft a “compelling liberal vision for a post 9/11 world,” Beinart looks back to America’s fight against totalitarianism in the pre-9/11 world, seeking to recover the lessons taught in the struggle with Soviet communism by Cold War liberalism. Laudably, he recognizes that reviving among Democrats the Cold War liberal belief in the ability of America to engage the world and

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change it for the better requires the setting aside of his party's powerful norm, "No enemies to the left." Unfortunately, Beinart continues to embrace the debilitating corollary, "No friends on the right." And so he stokes the flames of hatred for all things conservative that afflicts the Daily Kos sensibility from which he wishes to save his party, and he departs dramatically from the broad-minded and bipartisan Cold War liberalism that he seeks to revive.

Beinart begins with an earnest and able retelling of the struggle, after FDR's death and at the dawn of the Cold War, for the soul of the Democratic party. The camps divided over foreign policy. On one side stood the faction led by former vice president and then liberal icon Henry Wallace, which counseled a conciliatory attitude toward communism because of the conviction that communists could serve as "a powerful ally in the fight against imperialism abroad and for economic justice at home." On the other side stood the faction led by President Truman, with diplomatic heft provided by Dean Acheson, George Marshall, and George Kennan, and intellectual heft by Arthur Schlesinger and Reinhold Niebuhr. They viewed communism as an implacable foe of individual liberty, and as akin not to progressivism in America but to fascism in Europe. And they saw the liberalism they championed not as the opposite of conservatism but rather as standing — as Beinart himself, invoking the title of Schlesinger's famous 1949 book, points out early on in his own book but never really absorbs — "in the 'vital center' between the two great totalitarian poles of Communism and fascism."

The fundamentals of Cold War lib-

eralism remain compelling, and Beinart does a service by expounding them. Most fundamental was the understanding that in the middle of the twentieth century modern technology placed in the hands of dictators of both the left and the right an unprecedentedly powerful state apparatus that could be used to monitor and terrorize society and thereby make a credible threat to wipe out every form of individual freedom.

Cold War liberalism was also defined, Beinart stresses, by the plan it developed for defending America from totalitarianism and by the spirit in which it was committed to carrying the plan out. First, Cold War liberals embraced containment. In Truman's words, the U.S. would "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by outside pressures." And specifically to block Soviet aggression in Europe, they championed the creation of NATO. Second, Cold War liberals were dedicated to the reconstruction of war-torn Europe and the promotion of economic development worldwide. This ambitious undertaking rested on two assumptions: a world of freer and more democratic nations made America safer; and liberty and democracy depended on a certain minimum of economic prosperity. Third, Cold War liberals believed that the United States, the undisputed leader of the free world, had an obligation to exercise restraint in wielding its power.

To honor this obligation, they sought to forge an international order based not on power but on law, and they strove to recognize forthrightly and work assiduously to rein in the propensity, common to all nations, for self-aggrandizing behavior. Moreover, Beinart argues, in championing the

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extension of civil rights to blacks and the expansion of New Deal benefits, Cold War liberals aimed to link the war against totalitarianism abroad to the struggle to improve the practice of democracy at home. One might have thought that a commitment to making foreign policy as bipartisan as possible also deserves to be regarded as a defining feature of Cold War liberalism, but Beinart omits it, and his book's index does not so much as mention Truman's important ally, Republican Senator Arthur Vandenburg.

Indeed, from Beinart's point of view, conservatives mostly just got in the way. Despite the moderateness of the conservative Eisenhower administration and its general continuation of Cold War liberal policies, Beinart sees the essence of the right in the 1950s as consisting in vulgar McCarthyite anti-communism, crude skepticism about New Deal expansion of the federal government and programs for international economic development, and the coarse demand for moral and ideological clarity in dealing with other nations. Serious mistakes and lamentable rigidities there no doubt were on the right in the 1950s. Yet you would never guess from Beinart's account that communist infiltration was real, that the tremendous growth of the federal government raised significant constitutional and policy questions about the distribution of power between Washington and the states and local communities, and that Eisenhower Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had a point in regarding the Cold War as a struggle between "good and evil." In addition, the 1950s were also a decade of great intellectual ferment in conservative circles, with James Burnham, William F.

Buckley, and Russell Kirk, among others, advancing provocative critiques of America's regnant left liberalism. Beinart notes the presence of these thinkers. However, foreshadowing his treatment of contemporary conservatism, he can find no legitimate cause or justification for characteristically conservative concerns, and no value to the nation from conservative criticism of typical preferences, proclivities, and policies of the left.

This incapacity on Beinart's part is made all the more puzzling given his own account of the Democratic Party's declining fortunes over the past 40 years. He shows how, after John F. Kennedy for a brief moment gave new impetus to the spirit of Cold War liberalism, the rise of the New Left in the early 60s split the Democratic Party along fault lines similar to those that in the mid-1940s had divided the Henry Wallace faction from the Harry Truman faction. That split, as Beinart's narrative demonstrates, has widened and deepened since then, with the former gaining the upper hand. Today's Democratic Party descendants of Henry Wallace, whom Beinart calls the "anti-imperialist left," are inclined to see in George W. Bush a greater threat to global peace and security than the likes of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. Moreover, they threaten to acquire a controlling stake in the Democratic Party and to erase from its collective memory the proud tradition of the antitotalitarian liberalism that Beinart is dedicated to reviving. Yet it does not occur to Beinart to inquire whether the persistence of the temptation on the left to discount the savagery and the threat to freedom posed by America's totalitarian enemies has a

source in the liberal tradition. Or whether the conservative critique of the liberal tradition in America from Buckley, Burnham, and Kirk to Ronald Reagan and the neoconservatives, instead of representing deviations and distractions from the wise and just politics only liberals of Beinart's persuasion are capable of practicing, may shed light on the temptations and illusions to which all liberals are prone.

Reason to doubt that Beinart's study of Cold War liberalism has equipped him to reach sound political judgments is provided by his public confession of error, first in the pages of the *New Republic* while he was still its editor and now at length in his book, for having backed Operation Iraqi Freedom. He explains that as a "pro-war liberal" he supported the invasion because of the U.S. security interest in keeping Saddam from obtaining nuclear weapons and because of the U.S. moral interest in stopping Saddam from the large-scale murder of his own people. Yet the arguments from national security interests and humanitarian interests that Beinart reasonably found compelling before the American-led coalition began its military campaign in March 2003 remain good today. It's one thing to say, as many do, that subsequent revelations about circumstances caused one to change one's mind about the war. It's another, and a mark of unseriousness, to walk away from the security and humanitarian principles one once found persuasive.

In the summer of 2002, it was reasonable to believe, as Dick Cheney proclaimed, that the risk of inaction in Iraq was greater than the risk of action. And in October 2002 it was reasonable to have a heightened concern, as Congress

did in formally authorizing the president to take military action against Saddam, that in the shadow of 9/11 nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons not fall into the hands of international terrorist organizations with whom Saddam was known to have relations. Nothing that we have learned since about the information available to decision makers at the time has changed the essential calculation. Moreover, the cumbersome and costly U.S.-led containment of Saddam was faltering. And nothing we have learned about Saddam's regime since its fall provides reason to doubt that Saddam would have redoubled his quest for nuclear and chemical weapons as containment crumbled.

The humanitarian argument for removing Saddam was strong in 2002 and remains so today. In January 2003 in the *New York Times*, Pulitzer Prize winner John Burns reported that "Accounts collected by Western human rights groups from Iraqi émigrés and defectors have suggested that the number of those who have 'disappeared' into the hands of the secret police, never to be heard from again, could be 200,000." On March 12, 2003, Walter Russell Mead, writing in the *Washington Post*, observed that, "Based on Iraqi government figures, UNICEF estimates that containment kills roughly 5,000 Iraqi babies (children under 5 years of age) every month, or 60,000 per year." The terrorizing of Iraq's general population and the ravaging of Iraq's children to prop up his military dictatorship must always be, but rarely are, taken into account in considering the case for removing Saddam.

The argument from international

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law for removing Saddam is also a substantial one. Perhaps because the efforts the Bush administration made in presenting it to the public contradict his portrait of the right as imperialist and unilateralist, Beinart skips over it. In November 2002, the United States secured a 15-0 vote by the UN Security Council in support of Resolution 1441, which declared Saddam in “material breach” of 16 previous Security Council resolutions, including the 1991 cease-fire resolution requiring Iraq to abandon the possession, production, and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction; gave it a “final opportunity to comply”; and, in the event of further material breach, promised “serious consequences.” A month later, Hans Blix, head of the UN weapons inspection team, returned from Baghdad to declare that Saddam had again failed to come clean about his weapons programs. For America, Great Britain, and other coalition partners to have failed to proceed militarily would have been to collaborate with fellow Security Council permanent members France, Russia, and China in demonstrating to the world the toothlessness of the United Nations and the emptiness of international law.

In addition to apologizing for having put forward arguments he now regards as bad and to ignoring arguments he once found compelling, Beinart also apologizes for not having put forward arguments he now thinks to be good. In particular, he blames himself for not anticipating how the Bush administration would botch reconstruction. Beinart is certainly correct that the administration was grievously unprepared for the challenges that it faced following the coalition’s lightning mili-

tary campaign, which liberated Baghdad in three weeks. But in assessing the reconstruction of Iraq, Beinart adopts a skewed, historically uninformed viewpoint unworthy of one who purports to carry on the best traditions of Harry S. Truman.

After all, for several years following the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan in 1945, reconstruction in Europe appeared to many to be going nowhere. For example, in 1947, leader of the opposition Senator Robert Taft decried Truman for his failure to consult with Republicans and for the “imperialism” of his “busybody” foreign policy. In 1949, the Joint Congressional Committee on Foreign Economic Cooperation (known popularly, according to the *New York Times*, as the Watchdog Committee on the Marshall Plan), reported that in America’s effort to prevent the communist takeover in Greece, “It is impossible to avoid the impressions of confusion, excesses in personnel and program planning, and lack of central direction in the administration of our Greek program.” And in 1950, Republican members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee accused the Truman administration of taking its eye off the ball by neglecting the fight against communism in Asia and the Pacific. Despite the critics who declared the peace lost, and the real setbacks incurred by Truman’s programs for reconstruction, the president stood by his policies and demonstrated the patience, perseverance, and long-term perspective to prevail during the nearly seven years of his post-World War II presidency.

To be sure, the going got tough in Iraq. And as it did, within months of

Saddam's demise, Beinart began backtracking in the pages of the *New Republic*. Yet from a historical and long-term perspective, the jury is still out, and in the meantime, despite the initial disarray and continuing violence, the coalition partners and Iraq have accomplished amazing things, including a courageous democratic experiment, against vicious opposition, that is without local precedent.

Nor does Beinart's embrace of conventional left-wing criticism stop with reconstruction. Yet, contrary to his assertions, the Bush administration has not inflicted severe damage on America's relations with other countries. Relations with the Europeans are marked by steady cooperation across a wide range of economic and political issues, including Iran's nuclear program and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is not a single Arab country that was an American ally before the invasion of Iraq that is no longer an ally. Indeed, all six Arab-state members of the Gulf Cooperation Council supported Operation Iraqi freedom; America's relations with the small oil-rich Gulf monarchies are stronger than ever; and, in the wake of Saddam's overthrow, Arab Muslims throughout the Middle East are debating as never before the preconditions and promise of liberty and democracy.

What, in conclusion, does Beinart's study of Cold War liberalism and the post-World War II history of the Democratic Party produce in the way of policy for our time? In line with respectable progressive opinion, his liberalism demands more forthrightness about America's imperfections, greater efforts to promote equality at home and to foster democratic engagement

among ordinary citizens, and more multilateralism abroad.

The centerpiece of Beinart's prescriptions, as it was for the contributors to Marshall's book, is the call for extensive new programs for the economic and political development of the Middle East. Beinart wants the U.S. to fund these programs generously while carrying them out in cooperation with our European allies, the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, and the Arab Muslim nations for whom the programs are intended. In theory this is appealing. But in support of these programs it is not nearly enough for a book — one that purports to provide the one and only foreign policy vision capable of winning the war on terror and making America great again — to remind that under the Marshall Plan the United States allocated a much higher percentage of its budget to foreign aid than does the Bush administration. In fact, we still have a great deal to learn about how to promote liberty and democracy abroad, and billions of dollars have been wasted in past decades because of our inattention to the details of how aid is spent. Beinart declines to undertake the hard work of exploring the principles that should guide development assistance, the criteria for determining the effectiveness of investments, the manner of holding foreign grant recipients accountable, or the institutional redesign necessary to make American government more effective in administering foreign aid.

Like his premature apologies for supporting the war in Iraq, Beinart's calls to throw great sums of money at development projects in the Middle East have a familiar feel. Having begun promisingly by undertaking to show

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that liberals could be strong and savvy in confronting the challenges of American foreign policy, Beinart's critique ends disappointingly in irresolution and profligacy.

BEINART'S "antitotalitarian liberalism" certainly represents an improvement on the anti-imperialist left, which believes that "liberalism's real enemies are only on the Right." Yet in the process of exposing their error, Beinart reveals the extent to which he shares it. It's not, in his view, that the anti-imperialist left is wrong to think the right is driven by neo-imperialist fantasies that threaten all that Americans hold dear. Rather, the problem is that his fellow Democrats fail to include the jihadists *also* as among America's great enemies. Leaving no room for misunderstanding on this point, Beinart declares:

The central question dividing liberals today is whether they believe liberal values are as imperiled by the new totalitarianism rising from the Islamic world as they are by the American right.

In drawing a moral commensurateness between the jihadists and the Bush administration and its supporters, Beinart recklessly trucks with the hatred that has poisoned the liberal spirit among Democrats. Instead of regarding the right as an enemy to America only marginally less menacing than the jihadists, he needs to apply more consistently the worthy principles to which he devotes his book and follow the example of his political hero, Harry Truman, in finding the common ground he shares with the tens of mil-

lions of his fellow citizens who are not members of his party and who deserve better than the slander that the party to which they belong and the beliefs to which they subscribe are at their core un-American.

And Beinart could follow his intellectual heroes more faithfully as well. Situated between the communist left and the fascist right, the center to which Arthur Schlesinger refers in *The Vital Center* represents not a party but the principles of liberal democracy, the fundamentals of a free society based on the dignity of the individual and belief in limited government. These principles will always be open to conservative and progressive interpretations, and America will always be a better nation for the lively contest between them. Beinart believes that he honors the teachings of Reinhold Niebuhr by observing how the conservatives he opposes fail to come to grips with the impurity of their and their nation's conduct. But he falls well short of Niebuhr's wise counsel by failing to examine the imperfections and impurities that inhere in his own partisan brand of liberalism.

In the last lines of his book, Beinart expresses the wish that one day it may be said of contemporary Americans what Arthur Schlesinger said of Americans after World War II, that they "began to rediscover the great tradition of liberalism." Among the salutary consequences of such a rediscovery would be the rebirth of an appreciation that the great tradition of liberalism does not in the first place put forward a partisan creed but rather proclaims principles which, when well understood, provide the ground on which partisans in America can unite.