

# **American Foreign Policy & The Muslim World**

Edited by

**Ishtiaq Hossain    Mohsen M. Saleh**



**Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations**

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السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية والعالم الإسلامي

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## *Chapter Three*

# *The Neo-Conservatives and American Foreign Policy*

*Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain*

# **The Neo-Conservatives and American Foreign Policy**

## **Introduction**

Stanley Hoffmann points out that President George W. Bush, first elected in November 2000,<sup>1</sup> by fewer than half the American voters, has an impressive but depressive record in office.<sup>2</sup> On one hand, his administration's record is impressive, because, according to many Americans, President Bush had reacted in a decisive and quick manner by invading Afghanistan and driving the Taliban - accused of sheltering the men and their leaders responsible for launching the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders - out of power in November 2001. On the other hand, the Bush administration's record is depressive due to controversies and mistakes committed by the Bush administration in the conduct of America's foreign policy since 9/11 especially the way the president has been conducting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of his "war on terror."

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush called for and acquired sweeping powers to deal with threats of terrorism. His administration could now monitor phone calls, e-mail messages and bank transactions, carry out the secret searches of homes and detain aliens believed to pose a threat to national security. The adoption of the Patriot Act, according to various civil liberty groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), has curbed civil liberties, the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, and restricted the access of foreign students to US schools and universities.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Washington holds in its custody an unknown number of aliens and some American citizens treated as "enemy combatants," suspected but not indicted, whose access to hearings and lawyers has been denied.

More than five years since the launching of "war on terror"<sup>4</sup> and driving of the Taliban out of power in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden - accused of planning and executing the 9/11 attacks - and his Deputy of al-Qaeda, Al-Zawahiri,<sup>5</sup> still remain at large. The Taliban are on the rise again in Afghanistan, where reconstruction of the nation remains at a slow pace and democracy, at best, remains very fragile. Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has not experienced any further terrorist attacks on its territory. According to John Mueller, this is so, not because of the success of the Bush administration's counter insurgency efforts but because of the fact that "almost no terrorists exist in the United States and few have the means or the inclination to strike from abroad."<sup>6</sup> Adding to Washington's foreign policy woes Muslims are not convinced that the aim of