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The Men From JINSA and CSP

JASON VEST

Almost thirty years ago, a prominent group of neoconservative hawks found an effective vehicle for advocating their views via the Committee on the Present Danger, a group that fervently believed the United States was a hair away from being militarily surpassed by the Soviet Union, and whose raison d'être was strident advocacy of bigger military budgets, near-fanatical opposition to any form of arms control and zealous championing of a Likudnik Israel. Considered a marginal group in its nascent days during the Carter Administration, with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 CPD went from the margins to the center of power.

Just as the right-wing defense intellectuals made CPD a cornerstone of a shadow defense establishment during the Carter Administration, so, too, did the right during the Clinton years, in part through two organizations: the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) and the Center for Security Policy (CSP). And just as was the case two decades ago, dozens of their members have ascended to powerful government posts, where their advocacy in support of the same agenda continues, abetted by the out-of-government adjuncts from which they came. Industrious and persistent, they've managed to weave a number of issues--support for national missile defense, opposition to arms control treaties, championing of wasteful weapons systems, arms aid to Turkey and American unilateralism in general--into a hard line, with support for the Israeli right at its core.

On no issue is the JINSA/CSP hard line more evident than in its relentless campaign for war--not just with Iraq, but "total war," as Michael Ledeen, one of the most influential JINSAans in Washington, put it last year. For this crew, "regime change" by any means necessary in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority is an urgent imperative. Anyone who dissents--be it Colin Powell's State Department, the CIA or career military officers--is committing heresy against articles of faith that effectively hold there is no difference between US and Israeli national security interests, and that the only way to

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JINSA/CSP advisers Richard Perle and Douglas Feith have spent the past fifteen years working quietly to keep the US arms sluice to Turkey open. Click [here](#).

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assure continued safety and prosperity for both countries is through hegemony in the Middle East--a hegemony achieved with the traditional cold war recipe of feints, force, clientism and covert action.

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For example, the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board--chaired by JINSA/CSP adviser and former Reagan Administration Defense Department official Richard Perle, and stacked with advisers from both groups--recently made news by listening to a briefing that cast Saudi Arabia as an enemy to be brought to heel through a number of potential mechanisms, many of which mirror JINSA's recommendations, and which reflect the JINSA/CSP crowd's preoccupation with Egypt. (The final slide of the Defense Policy Board presentation proposed that "Grand Strategy for the Middle East" should concentrate on "Iraq as the tactical pivot, Saudi Arabia as the strategic pivot [and] Egypt as the prize.") Ledeen has been leading the charge for regime change in Iran, while old comrades like Andrew Marshall and Harold Rhode in the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment actively tinker with ways to re-engineer both the Iranian and Saudi governments. JINSA is also cheering the US military on as it tries to secure basing rights in the strategic Red Sea country of Eritrea, happily failing to mention that the once-promising secular regime of President Isaias Afewerki continues to slide into the kind of repressive authoritarianism practiced by the "axis of evil" and its adjuncts.

Indeed, there are some in military and intelligence circles who have taken to using "axis of evil" in reference to JINSA and CSP, along with venerable repositories of hawkish thinking like the American Enterprise Institute and the Hudson Institute, as well as defense contractors, conservative foundations and public relations entities underwritten by far-right American Zionists (all of which help to underwrite JINSA and CSP). It's a milieu where ideology and money seamlessly blend: "Whenever you see someone identified in print or on TV as being with the Center for Security Policy or JINSA championing a position on the grounds of ideology or principle--which they are unquestionably doing with conviction--you are, nonetheless, not informed that they're also providing a sort of cover

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for other ideologues who just happen to stand to profit from hewing to the Likudnik and Pax Americana lines," says a veteran intelligence officer. He notes that while the United States has begun a phaseout of civilian aid to Israel that will end by 2007, government policy is to increase military aid by half the amount of civilian aid that's cut each year-- which is not only a boon to both the US and Israeli weapons industries but is also crucial to realizing the far right's vision for missile defense and the Middle East.

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