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PAUL D. WOLFOWITZ



Visionary Intellectual, Policymaker,
and Strategist

Lewis D. Solomon



PRAEGER SECURITY INTERNATIONAL
Westport, Connecticut • London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Solomon, Lewis D.

Paul D. Wolfowitz : visionary intellectual, policymaker, and strategist / Lewis D. Solomon.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-275-99587-4 (alk. paper)

1. Wolfowitz, Paul. 2. Wolfowitz, Paul—Political and social views. 3. Wolfowitz, Paul—Influence. 4. Statesmen—United States—Biography. 5. Intellectuals—United States—Biography. 6. United States—Foreign relations—Iraq. 7. Iraq—Foreign relations—United States. 8. United States—Foreign relations—1989– 9. Conservatism—United States. 10. World Bank—Officials and employees—Biography. I. Title.

E840.8.W65S65 2007

327.730092—dc22 2007008470

[B]

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2007008470

ISBN-13: 978-0-275-99587-4

ISBN-10: 0-275-99587-9

First published in 2007

Praeger Security International, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

www.praeger.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

This book seeks to go behind the overabundance of negative media stories and the caricature of Paul Wolfowitz: his being branded an American imperialist and called “Wolfowitz of Arabia,”¹ or suggestions that he is a follower of Leo Strauss, a noted twentieth-century political philosopher. Conspiracy theories abound, with some placing him at the center of a neoconservative, predominantly Jewish cabal, which sought to run the world.

Prior to his becoming an international civil servant as head of the World Bank Group, Wolfowitz spent most of his public-service career thinking about America’s power—political, economic, and military—in the world, representing the United States abroad, and lobbying to enlarge its unipolar position. Ultimately, he sought to use American military might to build a new political order in the Middle East.

In the wake of September 11, America proceeded to redefine its relationship with the rest of the world. Wolfowitz offered a well-articulated global vision, developed over nearly thirty years of U.S. governmental service. He combined a hard-nosed assessment of America’s national security interests with an expansive sense of idealism.

His vision focused on four major elements. First, he coupled his idealism, particularly his longstanding quest to promote democracy overseas, with a searching assessment of U.S. strategic national-security and geopolitical interests. Second, he saw a unipolar world in which the United States had become the global custodian by virtue of its military superiority. Although not a veteran, he evidenced a belief in the efficacy of U.S. military power. He looked to the military as a key American tool in dealing with other nations. Third, he manifested an optimistic assessment of U.S. capabilities in terms of money and commitment. He sought to use America’s military and diplomatic positions to promote U.S. interests,

keep the United States on the initiative and not simply react to the world as America found it. Given its preeminence in global affairs, Wolfowitz believed the United States could preempt perceived threats to its security, domestically and overseas.

The power of Wolfowitz's ideas found a key patron. After 9/11, President George W. Bush implemented Wolfowitz's concepts of a hegemonic foreign policy, based on using military power to spreading democracy and a belief in America's omnipotence. A proponent of American exceptionalism—its unique destiny and superiority—and a believer in the United States as a beneficent force for good throughout the world that lacks predatory instincts, Bush sought to create a world order based on democratic capitalism with the United States as the world's sheriff: the guarantor of order and stability as well as the enforcer of norms. Through its military deployment and diplomatic efforts to buttress the global economy, the United States would provide the basic governance mechanism to keep the world stable and on track.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

Instead of pursuing Wolfowitz's personal and career steps in dogged detail, I want to capture him at key points in his life. I trace the road to Baghdad based on his interventionistic, practical but idealistic worldview, which is less sensitive to diplomatic alliances. He rose to greater prominence than any previous deputy defense secretary, the number two in the civilian leadership of Pentagon, drawing controversy not only for the invasion of Iraq and its aftermath but also for his vision of a democratic transformation of the Middle East, a deeply troubled, autocratic region. His current position, as president of the World Bank, provides us with a way to analyze the bank's efforts to alleviate global poverty.

In brief, Wolfowitz's career progressed through eighteen steps as follows:²

1. June 1966 to September 1966: Management Intern, U.S. Bureau of the Budget
2. September 1970 to June 1973: Assistant Professor of Political Science, Yale University
3. September 1973 to March 1977: various positions at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (the Agency): including 1973–74, staff member, Evaluation and Policy Division of the Plans and Analysis Bureau; 1974–75, Special Assistant to the Agency's Director; 1975–76, Deputy Assistant Director for the Agency's Verification and Analysis Bureau; 1976–77, Special Assistant for Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in the Office of the Director of the Agency
4. June 1976 to December 1976: member of Team B, which provided an intelligence and foreign-policy critique

5. March 1977 to September 1980: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Programs, U.S. Department of Defense
6. September 1980 to December 1980: Visiting Associate Professor, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University
7. January 1981 to December 1982: Director of Policy Planning, U.S. Department of State
8. December 1982 to March 1986: Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, U.S. Department of State
9. April 1986 to May 1989: U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia
10. May 1989 to January 1993: Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. Department of Defense
11. January 1993 to December 1993: George F. Kennan Professor of National Security Strategy, National Defense University
12. January 1994 to March 2001: Dean, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University
13. 1996: chief foreign policy advisor to the presidential campaign of Robert Dole
14. January 1998 to September 1998: member, Commission to Assess the Ballistic Threat to the United States
15. June 1998 to February 2001: member, U.S. Defense Policy Board, an adjunct advisory group to the U.S. Secretary of Defense
16. 1999 to 2000: a foreign policy advisor to the presidential campaign of George W. Bush
17. February 2001 to May 2005: Deputy Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense
18. June 2005 to date: President, The World Bank Group

Chapter 2 considers Wolfowitz's personal and intellectual roots. His worldview goes back to three sources: his father, Jacob Wolfowitz, who provided an atmosphere of intellectual and moral seriousness; his undergraduate days at Cornell University, particularly the intellectual hothouse of the Telluride Association residence; and his graduate mentor, Albert Wohlstetter, at the University of Chicago. Starting with his association with Wohlstetter, Wolfowitz began a long series of key professional relationships with his mentors and then his students. He was always loyal and unthreatening. The chapter concludes with a description of two lucky breaks that marked his career in the federal bureaucracy.

Chapter 3 discusses Wolfowitz's development as a practical idealist. He coupled his idealism, particularly his longstanding vision of democracy, with a hard-headed assessment of strategic U.S. interests. His experience with the 1985–86 "people power" uprising against the Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos propelled Wolfowitz's passion for spreading democracy through the globe. Based on

the premise that people everywhere seek political freedom and self-government, he believed universal ideals could be used to achieve a practical, twenty-first-century goal of curtailing terrorism and creating as he put it, “a world that will be very congenial for American interests.”³ Beginning with his 1976 service on Team B, which critically analyzed Soviet strategic aims, he also pressed the need for the United States to develop more accurate intelligence. His efforts in 2002, this time with respect to al Qaeda’s ties to Iraq, are examined in chapter 3. Wolfowitz also sought to ground American foreign and national-security policies in the need to protect and advance U.S. interests as well as in a rigorous analysis of global and regional situations and their geopolitical implications, particularly with regard to the importance of petroleum resources and the precariousness of the Persian Gulf region. Spotting Iraq as a regional menace in 1977, he viewed that nation as a threat to strategic U.S. interests in the Middle East. He saw that the energy-rich world of the Middle East eclipsed everything else on the list of U.S. geopolitical concerns.

Chapter 4 analyzes Wolfowitz’s belief, going back to his service in the State Department in the 1980s and the Defense Department in the early 1990s, that the United States could (and should) assert its military and diplomatic power, especially in a post-cold war world. The 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, which reflected Wolfowitz’s views, examined the implications of the United States as the world’s sole superpower. Wolfowitz had a longstanding belief in the efficacy of U.S. military power, despite the debacle in Vietnam, believing that the buildup of U.S. military strength would make it fruitless and financially disastrous for any nation (or group of nations) to compete with the United States in the global arena. As a corollary, he thought that the United States ought to be reluctant to enter into agreements or make accommodations with other nations, such as China. He evidenced concern that making deals would constrain U.S. freedom of action overseas. Based on an optimistic assessment of U.S. capabilities in terms of money and commitment, he wanted the United States to embrace its unipolar status and take steps to protect and enhance that status whether or not other nations agreed with the United States.

Wolfowitz doubted whether the old multilateral institutions and the cold war containment strategies would continue to remain viable. No longer could national goals be pursued exclusively through a network of alliances and multilateral institutions. His skepticism that other nations shared American interests or values led him to favor acting alone, with only a few allies, and the formation of ad hoc coalitions, looking to multilateral institutions only when it served U.S. interests.

With the United States as the sole superpower, he concluded that many nations would look to America for leadership. If the United States did not provide leadership on key matters, others lacked the capacity or the will to do so.

In tracing three wars, the 1991 Gulf War (chapter 5), the 2001 campaign in Afghanistan (chapter 6), and the 2003 liberation of Iraq (chapter 7), the book examines the efforts of the United States to reverse Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait,

root out al Qaeda from Afghanistan, and bring down a tyrant and strive to create a stable democracy in Iraq.

In 1989, Wolfowitz became Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. He established an enduring bond with his boss, Secretary of Defense Richard B. (Dick) Cheney. As discussed in chapter 5, Wolfowitz participated in the Bush 41 administration's deliberations, before, during, and after the Gulf War. In these discussions, Wolfowitz repeatedly warned Cheney, among others, against attempting a strategy based on containing Saddam Hussein.

The Gulf War of early 1991 started with an intensive air campaign followed by a flanking maneuver advocated by Cheney and Wolfowitz and the quick defeat of Iraq. The United States asserted its leadership in mounting an extensive international coalition and by its willingness to use military force.

Wolfowitz long believed that the sudden end to the 1991 Desert Storm ground campaign, which left Saddam in power, was a mistake. By the late 1990s, he came to support a policy of regime change in Iraq.

Chapter 6 analyzes how the events of 9/11 upended conventional thinking and strategies, providing an opening for Wolfowitz on September 15, 2001, at a key Camp David meeting with President Bush, and thereafter. In an era of weapons of mass destruction—biological, chemical, nuclear—monstrous dictators in the Middle East, leading rogue nations, threatened not only their beleaguered countries and nearby nations, but the West as well. Amorphous, stateless groups, such as al Qaeda, a terrorist network that circles the globe, posed an ever growing threat. Combating religiously motivated terrorism unconstrained by any limits on violence, particularly the targeting of civilians by unconventional means, became for Wolfowitz America's first priority overseas and at home.

Following 9/11, Bush needed a vision, a way of looking at America and its place in the world. Based on his years of study and his governmental experience, Wolfowitz readily supplied that a vision. Bush came to reject America's former policy of treating terrorism as a legal, not a military, problem. Declaring that the United States would call to account not only terrorist groups but also nations that harbored and sponsored them, Bush took the battle to the enemy, beginning with draining one swamp where the terrorists trained. The 2001 war in Afghanistan represented the initial military steps by the United States in an ongoing war against any terrorist group or nation that could threaten American supremacy.

From early 2001 up to the beginning of the war of March 2003, as described in chapter 7, the Bush White House faced the question of what to do about Saddam Hussein's regime. Deterrence and defensive operations came into disfavor. The White House gravitated toward strategies focused on an offensive military action.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11, as part of a campaign of violence aimed at total victory, represented by the establishment of a theocratic Islamic caliphate from Spain to Indonesia, were (and are) not something that could be wished away or dealt with after the fact as a law-enforcement matter. Terrorists and the regimes that sponsor them are not legal matters; rather, they represent a national-security issue.

The enemy could not be answered by understanding, aid, or in the hardest cases, legal action.

The combination of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction presented a threat of an entirely new and different magnitude. As described in chapter 7, the Bush Doctrine, which basically reflects the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, recognizes that the United States could not wait for terrorists or rogue states to strike and then retaliate. This formed the basis for Wolfowitz's advocacy of regime change in Iraq. Both Bush and Wolfowitz saw real evil in the world and sought to confront and destroy it. Where small groups of fanatical individuals could, without warning, unleash violence against the civilized world, the traditional system of reactive, multilateral cooperation and institutions had to give way to a proactive, preventive approach.

Wolfowitz served as the chief idea man and policy expert, the preeminent intellectual force in the Defense Department, during Bush 43's first term. As a leading architect of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, perhaps more than any other Pentagon official, he became identified with the Iraq war and the campaign to implement democracy there.

After 9/11, Wolfowitz focused on the need to transport democratic ideals to the Middle East as a wedge against America's new enemy, terrorist groups and rogue nations. As an outspoken advocate of removing Saddam, he held firm to his belief about Iraq's and, more generally, the Middle East's democratic potential and the possibility of building an ever increasing number of regimes friendly to the United States. Changing the political culture by creating a functioning democracy in one country, he assumed, could shift a whole region in a chain reaction. A democratic Iraq would serve as the new pillar of the Middle East. It would harbor neither terrorists nor evil designs on neighboring nations.

As described in chapter 8, the American venture in Iraq represented a roll of the dice, a high-stakes gamble. Wolfowitz sought to shake up the status quo, traditionally centered on keeping reliable autocrats in place and oil flowing, not only in Iraq but also in the whole Middle East.

Wolfowitz did not view the 2003 conflict in terms of the use of American military power. Noting that he saw the debate instead in terms of overturning the status quo in the Middle East, he asserted: "I see it as a debate over the acceptability of the status quo—whether you go back to containment; living with the Soviet Union; living with Marcos, Korean dictators, Suharto; living with Saddam; or even today living with Iranians. There is a constant bias toward inaction, because the risks are less obvious. . . . The point is, this has something to do, I think, with the morality of what we did. But it also has a lot to do with the nature of the enemy we are still fighting. The use of force to liberate people is very different from the use of force to suppress or control them, or even to defeat them."⁴

He saw the futility and danger of foreign and national-security policies centered on the notion of equilibrium. Instead of opting for the illusion of stability and risk avoidance, Wolfowitz sought change, which would lead to freedom and democracy. He hoped that the liberation of Iraq, creating the opportunity

to build a freer, more open society there, would serve as a beacon of hope in the Middle East. It represented one of the most ambitious programs to transform a region in U.S. history.

However, the Bush Administration, including Wolfowitz, underestimated the price of regime change in Iraq, a nation marked by sectarian rivalries, ethnic feuds, and ancient grudges as well as significant al Qaeda operations. The constant, prolonged, day-to-day peacekeeping activities in Iraq proved costly in human and financial terms. The security, political, and economic mistakes made by the United States in Iraq are analyzed in chapter 8, along with the planning for postwar Iraq, the players, and their assumptions that have proved faulty, at least in hindsight.

The insurgents, including al Qaeda and Sunni Baathists, realize how much is at stake. Forcing a premature withdrawal of U.S. troops, thereby destroying any chance for a democratic Iraq, would represent a huge defeat for the United States, demonstrate American vulnerability, and force a reexamination of U.S. foreign and national-security policies. Iraq has thus become the central front in the global war on terrorism.

The security, political, and economic challenges in Iraq, although great, are not insurmountable. At present, however, it is uncertain whether it is possible to plant a relatively stable, religiously based, decentralized democracy in Iraq and if so, whether this transformation in one nation will spur the democratization of the Middle East. Also, it is unclear whether America's foray into Iraq will be followed by withdrawal and disengagement.

Wolfowitz saw the 2003 invasion of Iraq as part of the larger war against terrorism, with the fight against Islamic fascism as America's ongoing battle against totalitarianism, the twenty-first century's successor to its previously successful struggles against Nazism and Soviet Communism. For Wolfowitz, there was a basic similarity in these three struggles. In an interview, he noted, "[W]e're dealing with a fundamental existential threat to our way of life, to our values." "The main parallel," he continued, is "the nature of the challenge it presents to us. That is, it really does require mobilization of a major effort on our part. It requires contemplating a long-term struggle."⁵ Iraq is one piece, albeit an important piece, in a global war against terrorists and their state sponsors, which has been described as World War IV (with the cold war as World War III),⁶ involving billions of people and dozens of nations.

The broader struggle to overcome nihilistic Islamic fascism—those who follow the cult of death and the politics of slaughter—in Iraq and elsewhere throughout the world will take hard work, sacrifice, and time, probably decades, perhaps with no end in sight. This new global war faces, however, the radical pacifism and a disdain, to put it mildly, for George W. Bush, of a pampered American elite and many of those overseas.

Wolfowitz continues to be an optimistic believer about human nature and the possibility for progress. Chapter 9 examines Wolfowitz's role as head of the World Bank Group, where he continued most, but not all, of his predecessor's

policies for economic development. Seeking to build a peaceful, prosperous world, the bank presidency serves as a logical extension of his longtime goal to foster a political economy based on free-market democracies as the key tool for economic development. He believes in the ineluctable triumph of a free market in goods and services and political democracy.

Long before taking the bank presidency, in November 1989, Wolfowitz sketched two basic ideas he sought to implement at the World Bank:

One is that the route to economic development lies not through government control of economic activity but through freeing the creative energies of individuals. The second idea is that democracy and openness are not obstacles to economic development, but often necessary for it. Those countries that gave up fundamental freedoms in the belief that they would develop faster most often ended up with neither freedom nor prosperity. When the government controls the economy and is not open to criticism, the economy does not work.⁷

Many are pessimistic about the possibilities for economic growth and development in sub-Saharan Africa, a part of the continent filled with tribal conflict, corrupt dictatorships, and widespread disease and hunger. Not Wolfowitz, who wants the World Bank to move Africa to prosperity, political stability, and peace as a top priority, along with rooting out corruption in nations receiving the bank's assistance.

Emphasizing the need to expand microenterprise lending and unleash the forces of entrepreneurial capitalism, the chapter concludes with an analysis of public-sector international efforts to alleviate poverty in the third world, focusing on policy prescriptions for the World Bank.

Although free-market economics and political democracy remain appealing throughout most of the world, not everyone views them favorably. The radical strain within Islam hates America for what it is and what it represents—a country that is democratic, pluralistic, tolerant, materialistic, open to talent, providing opportunity. Free-market critics, who oppose policies aimed at globalization, economic growth, wealth creation and accumulation, likewise dislike America's culture. Some view the United States as having a long history as a predatory nation.⁸ Only time will evaluate the viability of the claim of American exceptionalism—its unique destiny and the universality of its values—as well as an optimistic belief in the possibility of progress based on the spread of a political economy oriented to democratic capitalism throughout the globe. Paul Wolfowitz's career provides a lens to examine whether America's highest ideals are achievable in practice.

The Personal and Intellectual Roots of Paul Wolfowitz's Worldview

The roots of Paul Wolfowitz's worldview go back to three sources: the influence of his strong-willed father, Jacob Wolfowitz, who provided an atmosphere of intellectual and moral seriousness; the four years he spent at the Cornell University, particularly at the intellectual hothouse of the Telluride Association residence; and the influence of his dissertation advisor and mentor, Albert Wohlstetter, at the University of Chicago.¹ The chapter concludes by describing two lucky breaks that marked his career in the federal bureaucracy.

THE INFLUENCE OF HIS FATHER, JACOB WOLFOWITZ

Wolfowitz's father, Jacob, was born in Warsaw in 1910.² Jacob's family immigrated to the United States in 1920 and settled in New York City when he was ten years old. Family members who remained behind in Poland perished in the Holocaust. After graduating from the College of the City of New York in 1931 with a bachelor of science degree, during the Depression, he taught high school math and obtained a Ph.D. in mathematics from New York University in 1942.

Jacob Wolfowitz, a Jew, was a 1930s FDR liberal and an interventionist in global matters. He brooded over the Holocaust throughout his life. Paul subsequently reflected, "The history of World War II had a big impact on me."³ Jacob often told his children how fortunate they were to have escaped totalitarian Europe and to have grown up in America's benign security. Jacob was also passionate about the need to defend Israel. Later in life, he became a staunch anti-Communist, organizing protests against the repression of dissidents, intellectuals, and minorities in the then-Soviet Union. The world's perils and America's moral responsibility

were repeated topics at the Wolfowitz dinner table. Jacob believed in the power of the United States to do good works and vanquish totalitarianism.

Beginning his rise to one of America's leading experts in the theory of statistics, Jacob joined the Statistical Research Group at Columbia University in 1942. There, he conducted war-related research for the U.S. military. In 1945, he became an associate professor of statistics at the University of North Carolina and in 1946 joined the newly formed Department of Mathematical Statistics at Columbia University.

In 1934, he married Lillian Dundes. On December 22, 1943, Paul Dundes Wolfowitz was born, the second of the Wolfowitzes' children. Laura Mary, Paul's older sister, had been born two years earlier, in 1941. Laura married an Israeli and lives in Israel.

Jacob Wolfowitz left Columbia's statistics department following the 1950 death of his friend and principal collaborator, Abraham Wald. He joined the faculty of Cornell University in 1951. Although Jacob taught semesters at the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Illinois in 1952 and 1953, respectively, he then settled in an upper-middle-class enclave of Cornell faculty families.

Paul Wolfowitz grew up in Ithaca, New York, enjoying a well-rounded upbringing typical for a precocious child in the Eisenhower era of innocence. He was a spelling-bee champion and an Eagle Scout; he played tennis and basketball, excelled on the Ithaca High School debate team, and was the features editor for the school newspaper.

Jacob served as a visiting professor at Technion in Haifa, Israel in 1957 and brought his family along. Paul prepared for the trip by bringing Arabic-language books with him to swimming practice in Ithaca.

Paul and his friends treated Cornell University as their personal playground, using the university's indoor basketball courts for pickup games. Once, when a member of the maintenance staff tried to kick the tenth-graders off the basketball courts, Paul marched into the office of the university's athletic director and obtained a permission note.

Paul quickly outgrew Ithaca High School. During his senior year, he attended a freshman honors calculus class at Cornell every morning, before returning to high school for the rest of his classes. Even in a class with the cream of the freshmen, Paul dominated the college students.

THE IMPACT OF HIS UNDERGRADUATE YEARS AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

After winning a full academic scholarship at Cornell, he matriculated there. Initially majoring in mathematics and then chemistry, he seemed destined to follow his father into math or the sciences. By his senior year, his interests had branched out into other fields. Sharing his father's fascination with history and

global politics, he spent his free time reading books on those subjects. He later recalled, "I was a Cuban Missile Crisis kid. I was a sophomore in college when all that happened. There were other things in it as well. It was a kind of passion for history and politics even though I was good in math and science. But it is amazing to me to realize how remote the idea of nuclear war is to my kids' generation. We lived with it as a reality. I suppose that was one of the things that motivated me originally."⁴ Profoundly moved by John Hersey's *Hiroshima*,⁵ he shifted his focus toward political science and the prevention of nuclear war.

On entering Cornell, Paul had become a member of the Telluride Association, an elite group of Cornell undergraduates who received free room and board at a large campus residence, the Telluride House.⁶ There, these students lived, studied, and absorbed the intellectual atmosphere. The selected students learned democracy in practice; they ran the house, hired and supervised the staff, and organized various intellectual exchanges such as speakers. Paul excelled at the mundane duties of Telluride self-governance. It was at Telluride that he met his future wife, Clare Selgin, whom he married in 1968 and divorced in 2002, and with whom he would have three children.

In 1963, Allan Bloom (1930–92), a professor of political philosophy, arrived at Cornell and served as a faculty resident at the Telluride House. Bloom, who published his bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind*, in 1987,⁷ preached the importance of great books and traditional values and ideals. The charismatic Bloom quickly developed a network of undergraduate students. At dinner or in the basement kitchen of the Telluride House, the young professor conducted hours-long, informal Socratic dialogues, mixing debate with jokes and gossip. Bloom was spellbinding; he was Socrates incarnate.

Bloom rhapsodized about the students he encountered at Cornell. Paul was among them. Others included intelligence specialist Abram N. Shulsky, a Telluride member, 1963 Cornell graduate, and graduate student who preceded Paul at the University of Chicago. Wolfowitz subsequently hired Shulsky onto his staff at the State and then the Defense Departments.

Wolfowitz now downplays the impact Bloom and his ideals had on his views. As he later reflected, "[Bloom] had a lot to do with my coming to appreciate that the study of politics could be serious business, even though it wasn't science in the sense that I understood science to be. That was an important eye-opener. But I never, for better and for worse, took the political theory [course] . . . most of his other students did."⁸

Despite his intellectual devotion to Bloom, Wolfowitz was never a blind follower. An independent thinker, "[h]e always thought for himself," according to Charles Fairbanks Jr., a 1965 Cornell graduate, fellow Telluride member, and now the director of the Central Asia Institute at the Johns Hopkins University Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Fairbanks noted, "The effect of Allen Bloom's teaching was to liberate his natural interest or bent toward public affairs."⁹

As Wolfowitz recalled, his father and Bloom regarded each other with admiration, but with a degree of wariness. Although "somewhat disdainful of hard science

in general because it left out the philosophical dimension," Bloom, who believed that the life of the mind served as the highest form of human activity, was "in some awe" of the way Jacob would pace around the campus deep in thought, without a pencil or paper.¹⁰ However, Jacob did not hold the social sciences and humanities or those engaged in them, including Bloom, in high regard. Thus, a wide gulf separated Jacob, the mathematician, and Bloom, the political theorist and protégé of Leo Strauss, with whom he had studied at the University of Chicago.

Besides Bloom, Telluride had another faculty guest, Frances Perkins, the former Secretary of Labor under FDR and the first woman to hold a U.S. cabinet-level position. When she moved to Telluride in 1960, Perkins was in her late seventies and teaching as a visiting lecturer at Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. She served as a living link to the interventionist Democratic Party that Jacob Wolfowitz admired. Paul was deeply impressed by her noblesse oblige and sense of duty to society. The two forged a special bond. He served as one of her pallbearers after her death at age eighty-three in May 1965.

In late August 1963, Paul and Fred Baumann, another Cornell undergraduate, were cleaning the Telluride attic, when Paul suggested that the two of them join some Ithaca church groups taking buses to Washington for a civil rights demonstration. Baumann agreed, and the two joined some 250,000 people who heard Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28, 1963.

Years later, Wolfowitz indicated that he remained a proponent of civil liberties and a "bleeding heart" on social issues.¹¹ A JFK Democrat while in high school, Paul switched parties during the Reagan administration.

In May of his senior year at Cornell, Paul, a solid anti-Communist, participated in a minuscule three-person demonstration in support of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. He joined the Committee for Critical Support of the United States in Vietnam, which staged a silent counterprotest to a vastly larger antiwar demonstration on the Cornell campus.

Although student deferments kept him out of the draft during the Vietnam War, he looked on that war with scholarly detachment and later seemed ambivalent about the war and the desirability of fighting it. Paul remembered that in the 1960s he was sympathetic to the war. Vietnam appeared to be a noble cause. Following the lead of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, he believed that the United States saved Southeast Asia by delaying and ultimately postponing the Communist march in the region.¹² Wolfowitz subsequently questioned whether the war was worth its "horrendous" costs in American lives and the resulting polarization of U.S. society. Although it seemed to him an "overexpenditure of American power,"¹³ he reflected, "[b]ut we don't know what that part of the world would have looked like today if it hadn't been."¹⁴

Wolfowitz's subsequent, rather ambivalent, reflections mirror the views of his graduate school mentor, Albert Wohlstetter, who was not a strong supporter of the Vietnam War. According to Wohlstetter:

In Vietnam, the United States entered a conflict in which the chances were poor to start with for affecting events in the direction of basic United States interests

and aims for the political and economic self-development of the “third world.” The skillful communist leadership benefitted from its success in the long struggle against the French. They had built up a formidable apparatus of cadres in the south. The heritage of French colonialism left the noncommunist alternative for leadership weak and badly divided.¹⁵

Wohlstetter viewed the U.S. military effort in Vietnam as a “distraction, a rather misguided venture” that drained America’s energies and diverted its attention from its paramount objective: success in its long-term competition with the Soviet Union.¹⁶

In his senior year at Cornell, Paul applied to graduate schools in both political science and international relations. Jacob’s efforts to direct Paul to economics, the social science most closely related to mathematics, proved futile. Admitted to graduate programs at Harvard and the University of Chicago, Paul chose the latter. One of the key factors was the presence there of Leo Strauss (1899–1973), a German-Jewish refugee from Nazism, who taught political philosophy at the University of Chicago beginning in 1949. Wolfowitz recalled Strauss as “pretty remarkable.”¹⁷ He thought him “a unique figure, an irreplaceable asset.”¹⁸

ALBERT WOHLSTETTER: A MENTOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

After arriving at the University of Chicago, Paul did not become close to Strauss. He took two of Strauss’s courses, one on Plato and another on Montesquieu. The latter course helped him better understand the U.S. Constitution. Strauss left Chicago in 1967 before Paul completed his graduate work.

Despite Paul’s continuing emphasis on stopping tyranny and condemning evil, as his career unfolded, he sought to distance himself from Strauss. He told an interviewer, “I don’t particularly like the [Straussian] label, because I don’t like labels that much.”¹⁹ He dismissed talk of a Straussian conspiracy and the idea that Strauss’s ideas could be linked to the 2003 Iraq war as “a product of fevered minds who seem incapable of understanding that September 11th changed a lot of things and changed the way we need to approach the world.”²⁰

At the University of Chicago, Wolfowitz gravitated to a new field, nuclear strategy, and a key mentor, Albert Wohlstetter.²¹ Wohlstetter, who combined mathematics, science, and public policy, might have been someone Jacob approved of. Growing up in New York City, he had graduated from the College of the City of New York and received his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

In 1951, Wohlstetter became a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, a California-based think tank devoted to research and development. Emerging as one of America’s preeminent theorists and strategists on nuclear war, he became the godfather of the anti-detente school during the cold war. He also focused on the vulnerability of the bombers of the U.S. Air Force at bases overseas to a surprise Soviet attack, which could knock out the America’s retaliatory capacity.

His conclusions led the Strategic Air Command to base its bombers far from the U.S.S.R., which would have enabled the United States to strike back after receiving a first attack by the Soviets.

In 1964, Wohlstetter started teaching political science at the University of Chicago. He attracted a number of students, including Wolfowitz, who wanted to combine theory and practical application together with a technical and technological approach to military strategy, weapons, and war.

Returning from a trip to Israel in the late 1960s, Wohlstetter became concerned about the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, particularly the possibility that nuclear-powered desalination stations near Israel's borders with Egypt and Jordan could produce plutonium that could be used in nuclear weapons programs. A U.S.-based firm, Kaiser Engineers-Catalytic Construction Co., proposed a nuclear desalination project in Israel. Wohlstetter brought back written materials on the project and the general subject. These materials became the basis of Paul's doctoral dissertation.

Wolfowitz's dissertation argued against building nuclear-power desalting stations.²² He maintained that the benefits were vastly overestimated and the risks of nuclear proliferation too great. He focused on the difficulties of conducting effective, international nuclear inspections and the risks of a secret diversion of nuclear materials to weapons production. He also opposed an Israeli nuclear weapons program that, he asserted, would lead one or more Arab nations to match it "if not from the Soviet Union, then at a later date from China or on their own."²³

Throughout the late 1960s, Wolfowitz maintained a student deferment, exempting him from military service. Although he considered volunteering to serve in the military, he did not. He noted: "[B]ut sort of [my father's] view was if they aren't drafting you, and I had a student deferment, you should stay in school, and I'd already had enough of an argument over switching out of mathematics which he considered divine, and going into political science which he considered something low."²⁴

In the summer of 1969, while still a graduate student, Paul served as an intern, working for expenses, at the Committee to Maintain a Prudent Defense Policy.²⁵ At the committee's office in Washington, D.C., Dean Acheson and Paul H. Nitze passed along their tough-minded views of American foreign policy to Wolfowitz. Serving in the Truman administration at the beginning of the cold war, Acheson, as Secretary of State, and Nitze, as the Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, advocated uncompromising policies toward the Soviet Union. They took a dark view of Soviet intentions, viewing the Kremlin as seeking world hegemony.

Acheson and Nitze created the committee to lobby Congress to continue to support America's antiballistic missile (ABM) system, designed to destroy incoming Soviet missiles in midair. In the midst of the ever-increasing unpopularity of the Vietnam War, the defensive ABM system, an expensive budgetary item, faced extensive senatorial opposition.

Acheson and Nitze sought to counter scientists, including experts from Harvard and MIT, who raised questions about the cost of the ABM system, whether it would work to intercept a sufficient number of incoming missiles, and whether it would stimulate an arms race. They turned to Wohlstetter as the principal theoretician, and he, in turn, recruited Wolfowitz among others.

Under the supervision of Acheson and Nitze, a team of graduate students, including Wolfowitz, wrote research papers and prepared fact sheets and charts for senators in support of the ABM system. They generated materials for Senator Henry M. (Scoop) Jackson, a fierce anti-Soviet advocate and a key proponent of funding the ABM system. Jackson maintained that the system was cost effective, technologically feasible, and needed as a U.S. deterrent. As Wolfowitz later observed:

[Senator Stuart] Symington got hold of a Pentagon chart proving the ABM would not work. I talked with Albert Wohlstetter about how easy it was to make a chart that refuted Symington's. We came up with charts and delivered them to Senator Jackson. It was the first time in my life I met a U.S. Senator. What impressed me was that he insisted on understanding the results we got on the graphs. He sat on the ground in shirtsleeves with a twenty-[five] year old graduate student to master them. He then called Senators John Tower and Peter Dominick and went through it with them. It was clear from the reaction after the secret session that Jackson had scored a big win. When it came down to it, it was not the intellectual argument, but who you believed. . . . He spoke with such authority that when he really believed something on a defense issue, few members of the Senate were comfortable challenging him.²⁶

Nitze subsequently praised the committee's team of graduate students. In his memoirs, he wrote, "The papers they helped us produce ran rings around the misinformed and illogical papers produced by [the] polemical and pompous scientists."²⁷

On August 6, 1969, the Senate defeated an amendment to the 1970 fiscal-year military authorization bill that would have halted the Safeguard antiballistic missile system and prohibited anything but research and development on other "advanced" ABM programs by one vote, 51–50.²⁸ Under the Senate rules, a tie vote defeated an amendment, with Vice President Spiro T. Agnew casting an unnecessary vote against the amendment. The Senate vote gave President Richard M. Nixon a bargaining chip in his negotiations with the Soviet Union. The United States would limit the development of its ABM system in return for similar Soviet concessions. In 1972, Nixon signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union,²⁹ restricting the development of ABM defensive weapons for three decades. Although the 1972 ABM treaty allowed the United States and Soviet Union to build an antimissile system at a single land-based site, it prohibited more extensive, nationwide systems. It also barred the development, testing, or deployment of space-located defenses against long-range missiles.