

The Neoconservative Threat to World Order

Washington's perilous war for hegemony

Paul Craig Roberts

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Chances are you already know the author's writing: if you're reading *Lobster* you're probably also reading other left-leaning sites and Roberts is widely published on them.

Roberts is a very striking figure. A distinguished academic economist to begin with, one time member of the Reagan cabinet, he worked at the free market Cato Institute and the Hoover Institution and wrote for the *Wall Street Journal*.¹ Now he is chiefly known as a critic of American foreign policy, somewhere left of Noam Chomsky. There is no direct British comparison but imagine that Mrs Thatcher's former Chancellor Nigel Lawson now had views on foreign policy similar to those of John Pilger. Something like that.

This book is around 100 of his columns over the period 2014/15 during which the US tried to detach the Ukraine from the Russian sphere of influence by propaganda and covert operations, while waging various wars in the Middle East. Roberts analyses the events week by week. He doesn't believe a word the American government or state says: it's all lies, false flags or disinformation. He portrays post-WW2 America as an evil force in the world, killing millions. Though not without faults and errors – he's working quickly, doesn't always source his claims and is occasionally guilty of conspiratorial speculation – his writing is an impressive mixture of analysis and polemic

Through this main narrative are striking by-ways: an essay on Nixon, listing the good things the Nixon regimes did (and it's quite a list, most of which I had forgotten); and an account of the Reagan administration's supply-side revolution in economics (in which he played a substantial part). He also devotes twenty pages to a long Q and A session with Vladimir Putin; one of his columns is actually headed 'Vladimir Putin is the leader of the moral world'. But it is America's foreign policy,

¹ Details from his Wikipedia entry.

its military expansion and aggression, which is the bulk of the book.

There are many striking phrases. On the opening page he refers to the American major media as presstitutes – a nice joke, though he didn't coin the word. The NSA is the 'National Stasi Agency', another nice joke but not really justified: the Stasi were the secret police, more akin to the FBI; the NSA is just a surveillance agency. The following paragraphs are just some of the many I noted and may give a sense of Roberts' writing if he's new to you.

'Washington has destroyed the sovereignty of Great Britain, all of Europe and Japan and permits none of the countries in its empire of captive nations to have a foreign policy independent of Washington.' (p. 241)

'Reagan and Gorbachav ended the Cold War and removed the threat of nuclear Armageddon. Now the neocons, the US budget-dependent (taxpayer-dependent) US military/security complex, and the US politicians dependent on campaign funds from the military/security complex have resurrected the nuclear threat'. (p. 231)

'Where does Obama find morons like Susan Rice [National Security Advisor] and Victoria Nuland [Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State]? These two belong in a kindergarden for mentally handicapped children, not in the government of a superpower where their ignorance and arrogance can start World War III' (p. 23)

And so on.

But while in small doses – a thousand words, the occasional column – Roberts is a blast, over nearly 400 pages the effect diminishes, mostly because of the (unavoidable) repetition involved in running these columns back to back. Even so this is highly entertaining and informative, even with his errors and biases, notably his naivety about the Russian state. Just don't try to read it all at once. It's a book for

dipping in and out of.

Robin Ramsay