

secured. Then he went to work at the UP.

### A Republic Transformed

There are many extraordinary stories embedded in the Transcontinental Railroad saga. Chinese immigrants were integrated into the American system by playing a vital role in the UP construction. Their role is vividly conveyed by Ambrose. Railroad construction provided one of the greatest sources of jobs for veterans of both the Union and Confederate armies, immediately following Lee's surrender. The Transcontinental not only provided decent paying employment for the armies of unemployed vets, but was the kind of project that helped heal the wounds of civil war, literally integrating the young men of the North and South in a way that no other "healing process" could have.

Ambrose also deals, in excruciating detail, with the machinations of the men who financed the railroads—from the bedrock patriots, typified by the Shermans, to the crassest speculators. Although Congress passed a succession of laws that provided loan guarantees, land grants, and other regulations and incentives, the project was almost exclusively privately financed.

In his Epilogue, Ambrose beautifully

sums up how the Transcontinental transformed America: "Of all the things done by the first transcontinental railroad, nothing exceeded the cuts in time and cost it made for people traveling across the continent. Before the Mexican War, during the Gold Rush that started in 1848, through the 1850's, and until after the Civil War ended in 1865, it took a person months and might cost more than \$1,000 to go from New York to San Francisco.

"But less than a week after the pounding of the Golden Spike, a man or woman could go from New York to San Francisco in seven days. That included stops. So fast, they used to say, 'that you don't even have time to take a bath.' And the cost to go from New York to San Francisco, as listed in the summer of 1869, was \$150 for first class, \$70 for emigrant. . . .

"Freight rates by train were incredibly less than for ox- or horse-drawn wagons, or for sailboats or steamers. Mail that once cost dollars per ounce and took forever, now cost pennies and got from Chicago to California in a few days. . . .

"Together, the transcontinental railroad and the telegraph made modern America possible. Things that could not be imagined before the Civil War now became common. A nationwide stock

market, for example. A continent-wide economy in which people, agricultural products, coal, and minerals moved wherever someone wanted to send them, and did so cheaply and quickly. A continent-wide culture in which mail and popular magazines and books that used to cost dollars per ounce and had taken forever to get from the East to the West Coast, now cost pennies and got there in a few days."

### Spread Knowledge and Virtue

Ambrose quotes from an October 1868 issue of *Putnam's Magazine*, which extolled the railroad revolution that, in a span of 15 years, enabled the U.S. population to increase by 90 percent, and production to jump by 230 percent. The transcontinental railroad, *Putnam's* wrote, had "lightened human toil, made men richer in blessings and in leisure, increased their activity, shielded them from tempest and famine, enlarged the area available for man's residence and subsistence, enabled him to do more in the same period of time, and spread knowledge and virtue over all this earth."

That is as fair a summary of the "American intellectual tradition" and the American System of Political Economy, as one could muster.

—Jeffrey Steinberg

## The 'Chickenhawks' Take Aim

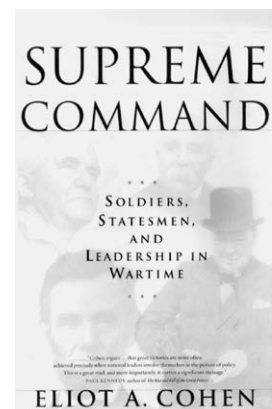
Professor Cohen is part of the interlocking directorate of neo-conservative institutions,— including the American Enterprise Institute, the Project for a New American Century, and the Defense Policy Board,— in which perhaps two dozen individuals populate about that number of boards and "think-tanks," all funded by the same foundations, and all selling the same policies in the same words, like so many communist fronts of yesteryear.

In this bestseller, allegedly read by the President, Cohen sketches a few wartime vignettes, supposedly to

demonstrate a scholarly thesis that war requires intervention by civilian leaderships into military affairs. But, wasn't that already well-known for the case of the modern nation-state? Shouldn't every high-school student know the "Commander-in-Chief" clause of our Constitution?

Indeed, the thesis only exists at all, within the Alice-in-Wonderland world created by Cohen's teacher, crazy Sam Huntington, in his book *The Soldier and the State* (1957).

What is Cohen really driving at? Most obviously, of course, he argues for his right, with his mentor Paul Wol-



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fowitz, and with Richard Perle and his other “chickenhawk” confederates on the Defense Policy Board and elsewhere, to overrule military objections to their proposed war on Iraq, and other wars to follow it.

Although they refer to 9/11 to justify their policy, the policy is much older. Indeed, Cohen was working for Wolfowitz in the Pentagon in 1990, the same year that Cheney and Wolfowitz secretly formulated what was much later to become President Bush’s 2002 “National Security Strategy.”

### The Viet Nam Legacy

Much of Cohen’s argumentation is determined by the legacy of Viet Nam.

That long American tragedy was aimed to drown the patriotic American military tradition in despair. But, because our fighters were human beings, Viet Nam worked to somewhat the opposite effect as well. By the time that 58,000 of their countrymen had been killed, over more than eight futile years, some, especially among our junior officers, began to ask questions which seem never to have occurred to Professor Cohen. What is the value of a human life? When can a nation-state require its citizen to risk his life? And closely related ones: What is war? When must war be fought? When avoided?

Perhaps all the carnage will not have been completely in vain, they thought,— if, when our turn comes, we can succeed, where Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy utterly failed the trust of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and the American people. Read the memoirs of Gen. Colin Powell, Professor Cohen’s favorite hate-object.

They restudied American history to that end, an appropriate one for the last decades of a century which had seen so much war. If they came short of the truth, the fault was in their education, whether civilian or military. Especially since the time of the assassination of patriotic President William McKinley in 1901, American historiography had been

falsified beyond recognition, by “American Tories” (as Franklin Roosevelt called them). It is only typical that arch-Tory Cohen earlier taught “strategy,”— of all things,— at the U.S. Naval War College.

Our most senior military officers of today, are from among those junior officers of the Vietnam years. Others of them have recently gone into retirement. If their historical studies were flawed, they have still been relatively truthful, and for that reason very useful, nonetheless.

### Military Heroes

Take some remarks made Oct. 10 by Gen. Anthony Zinni (USMC-ret.), when asked about the prospect of U.S. invasions of other Muslim countries, after Iraq. He said:

“I have a couple of heroes. One is George C. Marshall, a great general, who led us through a great war and victory. Look what that general did, after the war. He didn’t look to fight more wars. He didn’t look to leave the situation in the condition,—in a place, where those wars would rebreed themselves. Look at General MacArthur in Japan, a man who suffered through Bataan and Corregidor, who lost his troops to a horrific enemy, and his reaching out to the Japanese people, his using other means to recreate stability, prosperity. Look at General Grant and Lee, where Grant wanted the mildest of surrenders, where dignity was maintained, where friendship and connection could happen. Robert E. Lee did not want to go into the hills and fight guerrilla war. It was a time to heal, to do it at the best level.

“General George Washington, who avoided a second war with England, despite everyone pressing him to go to war a second time, someone who’d been through the pains of fighting with the Continental Army. General Eisenhower, who didn’t see the solution in Indochina, in getting involved when the French were engaged with the Viet Minh. He saw that as a loser’s strategy, despite everybody clamoring about the

dominoes that would fall.

“Like those generals who are far greater than I am, I don’t think violence and war is the solution. There are times when you reluctantly, as a last resort, . . . I will tell you, I never saw anything come out of fighting that was worth the fight, in my time. Now, I’m sure my brother who served in Korea, my cousins who served in the Pacific and served in Europe in World War II, my father who fought for this country in the First World War, and the other twelve percent of Italian immigrants who served in the infantry,— they may have a different view of their war. My wars that I saw, were handled poorly.”

### ‘Chickenhawks’ vs. the Generals

In a word, Viet Nam has helped many of our four-star and other senior officers, to arrive at a closer understanding of the historic American strategic principles of Presidents Lincoln and Roosevelt, and MacArthur and our other great generals. This will be of benefit when just war is again forced upon us in the future. It is of benefit now, when a group of civilian “chickenhawks” has gained influence over the President in the wake of 9/11, with their projects for war against Iraq, and more generally for what one of them, Professor Cohen, has called “World War IV.”

These military men and their ideas and institutions are Professor Cohen’s target. Like Iraq itself, Colin Powell is only the first of many on the list for elimination.

Cohen, Perle, and Wolfowitz are determined to get their war, even at the cost of denying competent military officers any input into its planning. They have shown similarly that they’re willing to suffer U.S. intelligence to be blinded, before permitting circulation of estimates or facts which contradict their theories.

What can one conclude, but that simply *starting* the wars they seek, is victory enough for them, and the devil take the hindmost? Viet Nam was the height of sanity by comparison.

—Tony Papert