

Abstract

This study analyses the official discourse of American President George W. Bush during his two terms in the White House from 2001 to 2009, in particular with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The research focuses on three main themes in Bush's speeches directed towards the Palestinians: 1- democracy promotion, 2- the "war on terrorism," and 3- reform of the Palestinian security forces.

Our study tests and largely refutes the hypothesis that Bush was a neoconservative and based his policies and decisions on this ideology. In arriving at this conclusion, in-depth research on the origins, ideas and political priorities of the American neo-conservative movement was carried out and discussed.

The study is divided into three chapters: the first chapter offers needed theoretical background regarding discourse. It shows that political discourse is a comprehensive process involving numerous elements, a complex one aimed at influencing recipients in a certain direction. The chapter reviews the existing literature, and concludes that there is a serious shortage in the discourse analysis in the Arab World.

We then move on to seek out the degree of consistency between the thoughts and policies of George W. Bush and the neoconservatives by answering the following questions:

- 1- To what extent does the political discourse of George W. Bush express the dominant elements of neoconservative ideology?
- 2- Is there any contradiction between the American presidential official political discourse and actual American policies regarding the Palestinian Israeli conflict?
- 3- What are the elements that led to the drastic change in George W. Bush's vision after his election, as compared to his pre-election discourse?

The first conclusion of our research is that there was a clear contradiction between the visions and policies of President George W. Bush before and after he was elected. The second major conclusion is that there was a clear difference between the reasoning behind Bush's policies and that of neoconservatives concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The methodology applied was based on the choice of a sample of twelve speeches delivered by President George W. Bush regarding the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. The sample was chosen carefully in order to cover the two presidential terms. Speeches selected were delivered in several locations and on different occasions. The research analyzed the chosen sample with a main focus on the previously mentioned three topics, the war on terrorism, the reform of Palestinian security forces and democracy promotion.

The second chapter was devoted to the neoconservatives, presenting a detailed study of the roots, ideas, policies, and ideology of this group. The chapter concluded that a careful search for consistency among the “Neocons” will be frustrated, as there is no clear definition and statement of their ideas as a whole. The chapter then seeks out the linkage, if any, between the ideas of the Neocons and the policies adopted by George W. Bush. The circumstances that faced the United States following the attacks of September 11 and their reflection on internal and external American policies were carefully highlighted to evaluate the relationship between the Neocons and the Bush administration.

The third chapter analyses the chosen sample, basing itself on key terms taken from George W. Bush’s speeches. The terms were viewed both numerically (frequency of repetition) and in terms of content.

The study concludes the following:

- 1- There is a clear line differentiating George W. Bush from the neoconservatives.
- 2- The ideas expressed in the presidential discourse of George W. Bush do not go hand in hand with actual American policies towards the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.

3- There is a clear bias in the official discourse of George W. Bush in favor of Israel and its interests.

Finally, in chapter three the study presents the findings and conclusions. This research is an open call to colleagues and researchers, to pursue additional in-depth studies in the area of American official political discourse and its different elements.