



In Defense of the Bush Doctrine

Robert Kaufman

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The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, shattered the prevalent optimism in the United States that had blossomed during the tranquil and prosperous 1990s, when democracy seemed triumphant and catastrophic wars were a relic of the past. President George W. Bush responded with a bold and controversial grand strategy for waging a preemptive Global War on Terror, which has ignited passionate debate about the purposes of American power and the nation's proper role in the world. *In Defense of the Bush Doctrine* offers a vigorous argument for the principles of moral democratic realism that inspired the Bush administration's policy of regime change in Iraq. The Bush Doctrine rests on two main pillars: the inadequacy of deterrence and containment strategies when dealing with terrorists and rogue regimes, and the culture of tyranny in the Middle East, which spawns aggressive secular and religious despotisms. Two key premises shape Kaufman's case for the Bush Doctrine's conformity with moral democratic realism. The first is the fundamental purpose of American foreign policy since its inception: to ensure the integrity and vitality of a free society "founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual." The second premise is that the cardinal virtue of prudence (the right reason about things to be done) must be the standard for determining the best practicable American grand strategy. *In Defense of the Bush Doctrine* provides a broader historical context for the post-September 11 American foreign policy that will transform world politics well into the future. Kaufman connects the Bush Doctrine and current issues in American foreign policy, such as how the U.S. should deal with China, to the deeper tradition of American diplomacy. Drawing from positive lessons as well as cautionary tales from the past, Kaufman concludes that moral democratic realism offers the most compelling framework for American grand strategy, as it expands the democratic zone of peace and minimizes the number and gravity of threats the United States faces in the modern world.

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