



An Honest Look at Rick Santorum

Thus, presumably, Santorum must be an enemy of just the sort of Big Government ideology to which Barack Obama and the Democratic Party are beholden.

But is this correct? A look at Santorum's positions on the issues of the day readily reveals that his rhetoric aside — and the rhetoric of the party of which he has been a fixture for decades — Santorum is no less a champion of Big Government than President Obama himself.



For one, Santorum is as vocal a supporter of “the War on Terror” as anyone. This in and of itself tells us about all that we need to know about his view of government. As Ron Paul has pointed out to the former Pennsylvania Senator, *terror* is a means to an end, a tactic. It makes as much sense to speak of waging a *war* on terror, then, as to speak of waging a war on guns or other instruments. In all fairness, in spite of his continual use of the language of “the War on Terror,” Santorum concedes the soundness of Paul's position. Yet he maintains that we are, nevertheless, in a real war, but it is a war, not on terror as such, but against the terror of “Islamists” or “radical Islamic extremists.”

Three observations are here in order.

First, the distinction that Westerners insist on drawing between “radical Muslims” and “moderate Muslims,” or “Islamism” and “Islam,” is the offspring of the union between considerations of political expediency, on the one hand, and those of wishful thinking, on the other. It is, of course, true that not all Muslims wish non-Muslims harm; but as Brigitte Gabriel and other students of Islamic and Middle Eastern affairs know all too well, the taxonomy in terms of which Westerners seek to characterize Muslims is nowhere to be found within the Islamic self-understanding. And what this in turn means is that whether Santorum supports a war on *terror* or a war on “Islamists,” he supports *a war without end*. Terror, like greed, will always be with us, and since “Islamists” are at bottom orthodox Muslims, a war on them is nothing more or less than a war on Muslims. Since there are over a billion Muslims worldwide, a war on Muslims, like a war on “terror,” is also *a war without end*.

Second, war is the Tree of Life for government. It is the Mother of all crises, the Emergency of all emergencies. Liberty is always a precarious thing, but never is its condition more precarious, more



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imperiled, than during war. Now, when this war is a war *in perpetuity*, liberty doesn't stand a chance, for the war will serve as an all-purpose pretext for all manner of measures designed to grow the federal government ever more.

Third, however undesirable any war may be, in our constitutional Republic, wars must be *declared*. That is, our Constitution requires that before our government embarks our country upon a war, the U.S. Congress must issue a formal declaration. This, though, has not done with respect to "the War on Terror" or "the War on Islamism" or whatever Santorum and his colleagues are calling it these days. Nor, for that matter, have they so much as indicated a desire to do so.

Importantly, Santorum is a self-avowed proponent of "compassionate conservatism." This too tells us all that we need to know about his stance on government.

In 2005, Santorum gave a speech to the Heritage Foundation in which he argued passionately for this ideology of Big Government. An excerpt from the speech was subsequently published at Townhall.com. Santorum asserted, "If government is to be effective, charities, houses of worship, and other civil institutions" have to be, not just "respected," but "*nurtured*." And because "compassionate conservatism" is "founded on an inviolable belief in humanity's inherent dignity," respect for the sanctity of human life means that "ending genocide, international sex trafficking and the oppression of minority groups, and promoting the respect for religious freedom *around the world will always be top priorities*" for the U.S. government. (Emphasis added.)

"Compassionate conservatism" is oriented toward helping "the poor and [those] hurting for help, whether they are across the street or *across an ocean*." Thus, Santorum proudly proclaims, he and his colleagues in the Senate have assembled "a domestic anti-poverty agenda" to help the poor here at home. Yet they also are busy at work to help the poor around the world. Santorum states that "AIDS has seared Africa into our moral vision." Apparently, not only is it "morally right" to care "for the sick and dying in Africa," it is also "geopolitically prudent; if we don't help, someone else will and that someone else may not be friendly to our interests." How do "we" care for "the poor and dying in Africa?" Santorum's answer is to the point: "We need to embrace the challenge to dedicate a larger percentage of our GDP to *foreign aid*." (Emphasis added.)

"Compassionate conservatism" is about "changing the role of government in our lives," Santorum says. To this end, we should be "not only cutting old, tired programs, but also *advancing new initiatives* like the CARE Act." The latter is "a *bold* package of expanded charitable-giving incentives that supports faith-based and community organizations." (Emphasis added.)

Santorum readily acknowledges that "this agenda will require a role for government that some conservatives find disquieting." But he assures us "that [this] is a discomfort worth confronting."

From his endorsement of Mitt Romney in the 2008 GOP presidential primaries to his endorsement of Arlen Specter in the latter's Senate race against the much more conservative Pat Toomey, from Santorum's sponsorship of the "Iran Freedom and Support Act" — a bill that sought to transfer \$10 million to Iran for purposes of "regime change" — to his insistence that we must actually *enlarge* our troop presence throughout the world, there is much more that can be said regarding Santorum's attachment to Big Government.

But, hopefully, enough has already been said to establish that Santorum is a champion of Big Government through and through.



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