

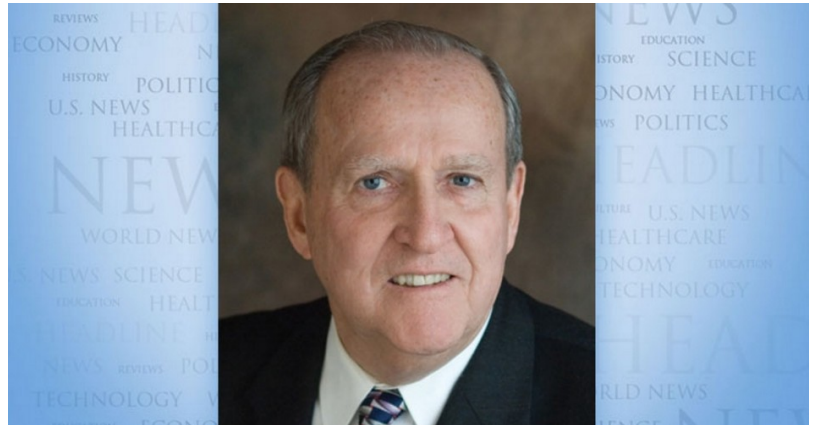


Written by [John F. McManus](#) on June 23, 2019

## Neoconservatives Like to Use War

Among reelection strategies employed by leaders of nations, none can top winning a war. A victory over some enemy, even a hapless nobody, gains real support. If a winnable conflict can't be arranged, successfully pressuring a real or imagined enemy to resign is next in line.

When President George W. Bush was making the case for going to war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, he and his aides repeated ad nauseam that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and that Saddam would use them if he remained Iraq's leader. When more sensible and honorable individuals insisted there were no such weapons in the Hussein arsenal, they were drowned out. Saddam had to go. After Bush launched an offensive war against Iraq and toppled Saddam's regime in 2003, using as a rationale UN resolutions to get rid of the reputed WMDs, Bush used the "victory" to boost his reelection bid of 2004. Bush was reelected, but no WMDs were ever found.



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Approximately two decades earlier, President George H. W. Bush had as his top lieutenants many of the same war-happy advisers (Cheney, Rumsfeld, et al.) who would later run his son's presidency. They launched the first attack on Iraq in 1991. Although it didn't propel the senior Bush into a second four-year term, it made him the hero of all neoconservatives and all who had been influenced by propaganda about what a horrible tyrant Saddam Hussein truly was. Most 1992 voters skipped right past Bush's determination to create a "new world order" that would terminate U.S. independence. Iraq suffered and militant Islamists started targeting the country's Christians. Most are no longer in their homeland — either killed or terrorized into fleeing. From 1.5 million living side by side with their mostly Muslim neighbors, the Christian population shrank to less than 200,000 today.

Time after time, an existing war, a hope to start one, or unverified reports of outrageous acts committed by a petty dictator have propelled the American people to accept the "need" to send U.S. troops. Practically anything generating fright or disgust can be expected. Dealing with real or phony scenarios generates support from an ill-informed public. History is so full of such treachery that, five centuries ago, Shakespeare had one of his monarchs tell an underling that the way to stay in power was simple: "Be it thy course to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels."

Franklin Roosevelt wanted World War II and he goaded the Japanese into bombing Pearl Harbor. Teddy Roosevelt catapulted to the nation's highest office after the sinking of the USS *Maine* in Cuba followed



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by retaliation carried out by his “Rough Riders” attacking Cuba. Lyndon Johnson sought justification for continued action in the Vietnam War by pointing to a Gulf of Tonkin attack against the United States. But there was no such attack. Lyndon Johnson knew this and he also knew that official claims about the faked incident would boost acceptance of the Vietnam War and make him seem like an anti-communist.

On June 13 of this year, two oil tankers, one Japanese and one Norwegian, were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. Iran, which denied involvement, was immediately blamed for the deed by warmongering neoconservatives in the Trump administration. One week later, Iran downed an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone, claiming it was over their territory, but the United States claims it was over international waters. The incidents have caused the Trump administration to issue dire threats about possible retaliation. In fact, a military strike was even put in motion in response to the drone downing, but early Friday (June 21) Trump tweeted that “10 minutes before the strike I stopped it” because he had been told 150 people would die and this would not be “proportionate to shooting down an unmanned drone.”

Though Trump’s halting of the attack, thereby averting war with Iran, at least for the time being, is good news for noninterventionists who support the U.S. Constitution, the Trump administration is laden with neoconservative warmongers. They include Trump’s national security adviser, John Bolton, who has long been known as the classic neoconservative. Those properly labeled as neocons want war and lean toward socialistic domestic initiatives. Bolton serves alongside Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who, only recently, has demonstrated a willingness to beat the drums for possible military action against Iran.

Neoconservatives have always been dangerous, not only when they urge action against hapless targets. They are believers in using war or the threat of war to aggrandize themselves or to carry out the wishes of unnamed masters.

Iran is no threat to the United States. Its leaders know that any use of nuclear weaponry, which the country doesn’t have, would be suicidal for Iran.

Are there some in America who would follow in the footsteps of previous national leaders and employ misinformation and hidden motives to mislead the American people? Is possible war or the threat of war being employed today? Sadly, if history is any guide, we can count on this. Stopping the ruse must be the goal. America should not be the policeman of the world and should not, as President John Quincy Adams stated, go about the world seeking monsters to destroy.

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#).*



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