



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 29, 2011

Newt Gets “Union Leader” Endorsement; Santorum Strikes Out in New Hampshire

Last Sunday morning dawned bright and early for me in New Hampshire and —

Wait a minute! What am I saying? Don't all mornings ‘dawn’ early? And isn't every dawn comparatively “bright,” considering what has gone before? Do you remember the theme of the Reagan reelection campaign? It was “Morning in America.” It followed four years of Carter's crises. Compared to the solemn Carter, Reagan was southern California sunshine. It took us years and decades to realize that we can't afford all that sunny optimism. Yes, during the Reagan years the rate of growth in federal spending did slow down. But spending did continue to climb compared to previous years — and the deficits exploded.



Anyway, Sunday became less bright for me (though I should not have been surprised) when I learned that New Hampshire's statewide newspapers the *New Hampshire Union Leader* and *New Hampshire Sunday News* had endorsed Newt Gingrich for president.

Gingrich?! Clearly, this is not your father's *Union Leader*. Not that many years ago, the *Union Leader* resisted the lure of the “new world order” by endorsing Pat Buchanan for president against the first President Bush. Then they backed Georgie II, aka “W,” son of the New World Order. The publications once run by the late conservative stalwart William Loeb and later his wife went from Buchananite to Bush Lite in the space of five years.

Make no mistake, Newt is a “new world order” kind of guy. A disciple of Henry Kissinger. A neo-con who supported the Iraq War and now wants one with Iran. A “conservative” who believes America should continue policing the planet and shooting billions of dollars worth of hardware into outer space to explore the planets and the stars while we let the national debt pile up into the trillions here on Mother Earth. A man who thinks habeas corpus should be suspended if the courts get too persnickety over human and constitutional rights. A man who believes the Constitution empowers the president to take America to war at times and in places of the president's choosing. This is conservatism in the age of Toy Story. This is Newt Gingrich as Buzz Lightyear: “To infinity — and beyond!” Bill Loeb must be stirring in his grave. Billy, we hardly knew ye.

Prior to learning about the endorsement of Gingrich in the newspaper, I met another GOP presidential hopeful — Rick Santorum. The candidate was politicking that morning at St. Benedict Center, a traditional Catholic conclave in Richmond, New Hampshire. The congregation gathered in the church hall for coffee and donuts and welcomed the former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania. I was able chat



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with him before he was presented to the audience and proceeded to take questions. I asked him if he had enjoyed tangling with Texas Congressman Ron Paul on foreign policy.

“Ron Paul is very dangerous on foreign policy and national security issues,” he said. I asked the Senator if he believed we could significantly reduce our annual deficits of more than \$1 trillion without cutting the military budget.

“Absolutely,” he said.

“You don’t believe we should cut defense at all?”

“Definitely not,” he said. He asked me to guess what percentage of federal spending goes for defense. It is 20 percent he told me. Is 20 percent of the federal budget too much to spend on what is, after all, the primary mission and responsibility of the federal government?

But do we really need to maintain bases all over the world? I asked.

“We don’t have bases all over the world,” he insisted. We have a large presence in Germany and Japan, he said, because, in so doing we have convinced those countries not to rearm. What happened when Germany and Japan were militaristic, he asked. Did I think German and Japanese culture had changed? Clearly the former Pennsylvania senator believed they had not.

“Well, what has happened to America, then, when Germany warns us about the dangers of militarism, as it did when we invaded and conquered Iraq?” I asked.

“Well,” the Senator said, starting to shrug it off.

“Yeah, well, I guess they’re just a bunch of pacifists over there,” I suggested.

“Well, some of them are,” he said.

I asked who had defeated him in his bid for reelection.

“Bob Casey,” he informed me.

“Is he still pro-life?” I asked.

“No, not really,” Santorum said. Then, with a nod toward the Ron Paul button I was wearing, he said Paul’s pro-life position on abortion was not all that great.

“He believes in federalism,” I said. “He would leave the issue to the states.” I reminded the ex-Senator that most murder laws are state, not federal statutes. But laws, Santorum said, reflect who we are as a people and what our values are. “Ron Paul wants none of that,” he said. “He’s a libertarian.”

When he was introduced and took questions from the congregation, the first question he got was from an aging war veteran whose son had just joined the Marine Corps.

“Thank you for your service,” Santorum said.

“He joined the Marine Corps against my advice,” the man said. He then asked Santorum about being pro-life yet supporting the use of unmanned drones to bomb people in far-off lands that had not attacked us. Santorum gave one of the best propaganda recitals ever heard about our rules of engagement and how carefully we choose our targets and try to protect the innocents from death and injury as “collateral damage.” That and the warnings about the dangers of weapons of mass destruction falling into the “wrong hands” reminded me that President Harry Truman announced in 1945 that



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Hiroshima had been chosen as a military target to minimize civilian casualties when the United States dropped the first atomic bomb. The second, at Nagasaki, was a direct hit on a Catholic church.

Someone asked about the Patriot Act and lost liberties.

“What liberties have you lost?” Santorum wanted to know. The man said something about warrantless searches authorized by National Security Letters. In matters of national security, Santorum said, we must not leave the nation’s security in the hands of unelected judges. That’s not their job. It is up to the political branches, the president and the Congress to decide matters of national security.

“So by calling it national security, you can scrap the Bill of Rights,” I suggested. The Senator’s reply was ambiguous. I suggested that just as when all you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail, the government would begin calling every investigation, from burglary to possession of marijuana, a national security case.

“Well, that’s why we have elections,” Santorum said as he, having noted a pressing appointment to be elsewhere, moved toward the door. “You can reelect Obama and let him try all these folks in civilian courts and see how that works out.”

Or we can let the U.S. Senate have its way and let the president arrest and imprison people without trial in the name of national security. As Paul Begala said in the Clinton administration, “Stroke of the pen, law of the land. Kinda cool.”

Kinda totalitarian. But the folks who call Ron Paul dangerous — like Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich and the *Union Leader* — can’t be counted on to defend the nation and its Constitution from the threat of totalitarianism. They will open the gates for it and let it go by, “singing songs to freedom” all the while.



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