



Neocon Control

Many Americans, including a growing number of political figures, claim to be conservatives. Not only do some attach this label to themselves, media operatives fasten it on a veritable parade of others, some of whom they wish to harm with the label and some of whom they seek to boost, however unworthily. But the wide-ranging views, some even contradictory, issued by these individuals should result in a good deal of head scratching. Why? Simply because, currently, there isn't any commonly accepted definition of what it means to be a "conservative."



Christopher Jasper

This identity dilemma was starkly illustrated during the recent 2011 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), the annual extravaganza sponsored by the American Conservative Union that features speakers, panelists, and exhibitors representing what is widely considered to be the veritable Who's Who of the conservative movement. For the second year in a row, CPAC found itself convulsed with controversy over including GOProud, a self-described "gay conservative" group, as a cosponsor of the three-day event. "Gay conservative"? This would have been considered an oxymoron by almost everyone just a few years ago, when the efforts of homosexual activists to force acceptance of their lifestyle were universally recognized by self-identified conservatives as a revolutionary attack on the basic moral, social, and political foundations of our society. After heated internal wrangling, the forces of "diversity" triumphed. The CPAC organizers ruled that GOProud would stay — even though the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, the American Principles Project, American Values, the Capital Research Center, the Center for Military Readiness, Liberty Counsel, and other groups that have been past CPAC participants dropped out in response to this cave-in on a matter of fundamental concern.

Still another indication of this identity crisis can be seen in this year's CPAC presentation of the "Defender of the Constitution Award" to former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, arguably one of the most notorious recent *offenders* of the Constitution. Rumsfeld's attempts to set up his own unconstitutional military tribunals, his suspension of *habeas corpus*, and, in general, his running roughshod over the Constitution's Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments, make CPAC's choice to present him with such an award seem downright Orwellian.

So, it might be worthwhile to ask if the label "conservative" really means anything. What is it that those who call themselves conservatives are trying to conserve? In years past, some would have insisted that the term "conservative" had been defined by Russell Kirk in his *The Conservative Mind* (1953), or by Senator Barry Goldwater in his *Conscience of a Conservative* (1963). Both of these seminal volumes are still admired in most CPAC circles, and the names of both men are regularly invoked at CPAC gatherings. But the direction toward which many current conservatives have been steering the



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movement cannot reasonably be equated with the principles enunciated by Kirk and Goldwater.

Among the essential hallmarks of conservative thought set forth by Dr. Kirk are belief in transcendent truth — the Divine Law and the Natural Law — as well as the idea that one has an obligation to posterity and futurity to uphold the Christian moral order bequeathed to us by our nation’s Founders. He also maintained that the great conservative minds fought against the prevailing “liberal” trend of our age that seeks to centralize and concentrate all power into the hands of the unitary state. He was a firm believer in the constitutional principle that the federal government has been granted minimal powers that are, in James Madison’s words, “few and defined.” Along with our Founding Fathers, Kirk saw imperial ambitions and foreign entanglements as mortal dangers to our Republic.

Senator Goldwater, likewise, hewed to a philosophy that adamantly opposed the federal government’s unconstitutional intrusions into virtually every area of our lives, and its usurpations of personal, local, and state responsibilities. And he saw increasing national indebtedness and the squandering of ever more of our citizens’ wealth by Washington, D.C., as a deadly trend that must be reversed. Over the past few decades, however, many “conservatives” not only joined the liberals in praising Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal, but enthusiastically endorsed the federal government’s accelerated wasteful spending and egregious usurpations.



John F. McManus, president of The John Birch Society and publisher of The New American magazine, shares a laugh with a visitor at the society’s booth at the 2011 CPAC convention in Washington, D.C. *(Photo credit: Sam Antonio)*

Already existing confusion about who is and who isn’t a conservative grew when the two Presidents named Bush and their appointees were regularly labeled “conservative” by the media. Both Bushes openly supported larger government, a soaring national debt, and a deepening of international entanglements. They could hardly identify with what Kirk and Goldwater had written years earlier. Journalists Fred Barnes, William Kristol, David Brooks, George Will, the late Robert Bartley, Charles Krauthammer, and numerous other pundits have claimed, or have been awarded, conservative status while generally adhering to and expounding political, economic, and moral principles that one would not associate with traditional conservative thought. Among politicians, Newt Gingrich leads the pack for talking the conservative talk but refusing to walk the conservative walk. It ought to be obvious that jamming such an amalgam of books, authors, political leaders/staffers, journalists, academicians, and



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others under a single conservative umbrella can't be done.

It appears there simply is no longer any agreed-upon definition for "conservative," just as there isn't one for "liberal." Yet there is need for a label to identify traditionally minded Americans, one that can substitute for the watered-down appellation "conservative." We suggest "constitutionalist," signifying adherence to the document created by our Founding Fathers, the one overwhelmingly accepted by the first Americans, and one so cavalierly sworn to by so many. In other words, go to the U.S. Constitution for what Americanism means and skip using "conservative" to describe anyone.

In the Constitution of 1787, one finds strictly limited government, non-intervention in the affairs of other nations, and — because of a near-total absence of restraints on the American people — conditions allowing for more individual freedom than mankind had experienced in all of history. This is what conservatism once meant, but not anymore. In fact, even though the Constitution still exists, and even though government officials, military leaders, and others solemnly swear to adhere to its provisions, the document is regularly ignored by most — even by conservatives.

Over the past several decades, while the conservative label has been applied almost willy-nilly, the stage has been set for something else to emerge. That something else is *neoconservatism*. Happily, this brand of political thinking has been narrowly defined — by none other than the man who is widely touted to be its "godfather." In his 1995 book *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*, the late Irving Kristol wrote:

It describes the erosion of liberal faith among a relatively small but talented and articulate group ... (which gradually gained more recruits) toward a more conservative point of view: conservative, but different in certain respects from the conservatism of the Republican party. We ... accepted the New Deal in principle, and had little affection for the kind of isolationism that then permeated American conservatism.

There you have it, and it comes from the godfather himself. Neoconservatives seek unconstitutional, socialistic big government (*à la* Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal) while they champion America's meddling in the rest of the world's affairs, even to the making of war. They have succeeded in making repugnant any slight leaning toward, or even mention of "isolationism." Change that once-useful term to "non-intervention in the affairs and wars of other nations" and most Americans will nod in agreement. But many have been scared away from such good sense by fear of being labeled an "isolationist."

The political figure who most effectively opposed Roosevelt's revolutionary New Deal was Ohio Senator Robert Taft, the brilliant legal scholar who was known by both detractors and supporters as "Mr. Republican." As the ideological leader of the Republican Party in the post-World War II era, Taft championed a policy calling for non-intervention in the affairs of other nations. By holding such an opinion, Taft was faithfully echoing the sage advice given by America's Founders. George Washington advised not to "entangle our peace and prosperity" with others. Thomas Jefferson urged avoidance of "entangling alliances." And John Quincy Adams declared that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." Taft, who agreed with these early Americans, was the leading conservative of his day. But that was an era prior to the term becoming attached to many who never shared his views. As a non-interventionist and a firm opponent of socialism, he epitomized the precise opposite of what has



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become known as neoconservatism. He represented the kind of Republican Party from which Irving Kristol pointedly distanced himself.

According to their own leaders, neoconservatives want government programs to deal with any and all problems, meaning they want a larger and more intrusive and socialistic-style government. In keeping with their desires, they favor spending enormous sums of money, some of it financed by onerous taxation and much of it acquired through borrowing. Increasing the National Debt, a necessary consequence of outlandish spending, has been a regular item in the neocon agenda.

Also, neoconservatives prefer world government to independence. Some are outspoken champions of the United Nations, others merely mildly critical of the UN but supportive of our nation's entanglements in the world body and its various offshoots such as NATO, IMF, and WTO. As for the Declaration of Independence and its insistence on America being a sovereign nation, they never mention it. And the attitude of the typical neocon toward the U.S. Constitution varies from disdain as a relic of a bygone era to a need to "reinterpret" it to meet current needs. In 1989, neocon Charles Krauthammer went so far as to author an article for Irving Kristol's *The National Interest* that called for integration of Europe, Japan, and the United States to create a "super-sovereign" entity. For any who missed the full impact of what he recommended, he said it would "require the conscious depreciation not only of American sovereignty but of the notion of sovereignty in general." And he added, "This is not as outrageous as it sounds."

Godfather Kristol, who never shied away from his desire to have the United States entangled in the affairs of the rest of the world, also never backed away from his affinity for socialism. Always a supporter of New Deal socialism, he frequently supplied particulars to back it up. As far back as his 1983 *Reflections of a Neoconservative*, he had written that "a conservative welfare state ... is perfectly consistent with the neoconservative perspective." Conservative welfare state? Most constitutionally minded conservatives would no sooner embrace that contradiction than they would a boa constrictor. Regularly advocating one socialist initiative after another, Kristol detailed in a 1993 *Wall Street Journal* article his backing for "Social Security," "Medicare," "food stamps," and even "a children's cash allowance" for the offspring of unwed mothers. We can be grateful to Kristol for defining what neoconservatism truly is.



CFR/neocon cabal: Former President George W. Bush shakes hands with his former Vice President,



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Dick Cheney, a leading neoconservative and former director of the Council on Foreign Relations, at the 2010 groundbreaking ceremony for the George W. Bush Presidential Center. (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

Recently deceased Harvard professor Daniel Bell, one of Kristol's close friends and neocon colleagues, famously described himself as "a socialist in economics, a liberal in politics, and a conservative in culture." In truth, the neoconservative label fits him very well. In *The Essential Neoconservative Reader*, editor Mark Gerson jubilantly observed: "The neoconservatives have so changed conservatism that what we now identify as conservatism is largely what was once neoconservatism. And in so doing, they have defined the way that vast numbers of Americans view their economy, their polity, and their society." Who can disagree?

Irving Kristol served as the guiding force behind the neocon magazine *The Public Interest*. His close allies Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter guided *Commentary*, still another unabashedly neocon magazine. Like Kristol, Podhoretz defended the welfare state, especially focusing on ways to direct human action toward neocon desires. Always contending that welfare benefits are sacrosanct, he wrote that a committed neocon could identify "the precise point at which the incentive to work [would be] undermined by the availability of welfare benefits." In addition to her writings, Midge Decter served with George W. Bush's Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, as co-chair of the Committee for the Free World, an organization formed to promote democracy throughout the world, even force it on nations and people who don't want it. Along with husband Norman Podhoretz, she was a signatory with numerous others of the war-mongering Project for the New American Century. Neocons such as Decter always promote democracy and never point to our nation's founding as a republic, or to the strong antipathy toward democracy expressed by America's Founders.

In general, the term neoconservative refers to journalists, pundits, policy analysts, politicians, and organizations who agree with all or a large part of the godfather's preferences.

Neoconservatism's Roots

More than anyone, the man most admired by the founders of neoconservatism has always been Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky. First a partner with Vladimir Lenin in the seizure of Russia in 1917, he then teamed up with Joseph Stalin as Lenin's health problems led to his death in 1924. Complicit in the murder or enslavement of millions, Trotsky never veered from being an unrepentant Marxist and atheist. His eventual break with Stalin centered on which tactics should be employed to seize control of the world. After Stalin exiled this former close ally, Trotsky took up residence in Turkey, then in Vienna, and ended up in Mexico, where he was murdered by one of Stalin's agents in 1940. Yet, in his 1995 book, *Neoconservatism*, Irving Kristol candidly stated, "I regard myself lucky to have been a young Trotskyite and I have not one single bitter memory." His attitude toward Trotsky was enthusiastically shared by his neocon ally Norman Podhoretz.

The year 1972 was pivotal in the rise of neoconservatism. Its importance began when Max Shachtman, a Trotskyite and former Communist Party member, along with his followers, surprised many socialists by backing Richard Nixon for President. Considered a conservative by most Americans because of his mostly undeserved reputation as an anti-communist (neocons detest communism while they back its socialist partner), Nixon famously adopted Keynesian economics and even imposed wage and price controls on the nation, two key indicators of his socialist leaning. During that year, many neocons became especially disenchanted with George McGovern, the Democratic Party's choice for President.



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The outrageous excesses of his anti-Vietnam War entourage actually drove neocons toward the GOP. Kristol explained what happened:

In 1972, the nomination of George McGovern, an isolationist and a candidate of the New left, signified that the Democratic Party was not hospitable to any degree of neoconservatism. Only a few of us drew the obvious conclusion that we would have to try to find a home in the Republican Party, which had always been an alien entity, so far as we were concerned. But with every passing year our numbers grew.

Grow they surely did. Spurred on substantially by the *Wall Street Journal's* Robert Bartley, who sought out Kristol as a regular columnist and named him to the *Journal's* board of contributors, prominent neocons gravitated to the GOP. Then, in early June 1991, Kristol wrote in a *Journal* column about the invaluable assistance the movement received from William F. Buckley, Jr. Without ever naming the two dozen leading conservatives who attended a Buckley-sponsored three-day conference in 1991, neocon godfather Kristol delightedly reported what happened. He wrote:

The conference was sponsored by William Buckley's *National Review*, and most of those attending regarded themselves as conservatives first and Republicans second. By the end of the meeting, a significant reversal had occurred.... Most were Republicans first and conservatives second.

These Buckley invitees didn't shift their priorities from conservative to Republican, they shifted their allegiance to neoconservatism even while remaining Republican. This, of course, is why Kristol wrote so glowingly about the event. He specifically enthused about one conclusion they reached: "President Bush is now the leader of the conservative movement within the Republican Party." In other words, these freshly minted neocons were now backing sharply increased taxes called for by the man who emphatically had stated, "Read my lips! No new taxes." They were also now supporting the imposition of more fascist-style federal controls over business and industry, as well as sending U.S. forces into Desert Storm, the undeclared war against Iraq. Kristol announced that foreign policy wasn't discussed during the three-day session because the participants had chosen to leave all of that to the President.

Kristol was aware that President George H.W. Bush had spent months brazenly pointing to the need for the war that would bring about a "new world order" and accomplish a "reinvigorated" and "newly activated" United Nations. Were these neocon goals? Absolutely! No wonder that Kristol could write four years later: "So I deem the neoconservative enterprise to have been a success, to have brought elements that were needed to enliven American conservatism and help reshape American politics." Conservatism wasn't enlivened, it was fundamentally altered. And important assistance in making the "enterprise" a success was provided by William Buckley.

Columnist Sam Francis, a veteran foe of every part of neoconservatism, summarized in January 1993 that "the whole concept of 'conservatism' in America is virtually devoid of meaning, in large part because conservatives made the seminal error of allowing dilettantes like Mr. Buckley to define it for them in the first place." Francis would later note:

Almost none of the neoconservatives showed any interest in American constitutionalism or



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federalist or states' right issues, and arguments based on constitutionalism were muted in favor of the "empirical" arguments drawn from disciplines like sociology and political science in which the neoconservative academics tended to concentrate.

Preference for War

In his book *Crisis and Leviathan*, economic historian Robert Higgs looked over history and concluded both that war is the handmaid of tyranny and a non-interventionist foreign policy is necessary to keep statist from using war to create a base for their power-seeking ambitions. Higgs was echoing warnings given by many including a) Plato, who noted in the pre-Christian era that would-be tyrants were "always stirring up some war"; b) Alexander Hamilton, who worried about the potential misuse of military forces by future Presidents in "schemes to subvert the liberties of a great community"; and c) Shakespeare, who had King Henry IV advise son Prince Hal, "Be it thy course to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels."

Over the centuries, philosophers and ethicists have debated what is or isn't a just war. Many have concluded that only in response to an attack could a war be termed just, only a struggle that is essentially defensive. That was the view adopted by our Founding Fathers and by all leading conservatives. The neoconservatives, by way of contrast, have promoted the idea of a "preemptive war," a conflict begun without having been attacked and therefore an unjust war. In his 2002 State of the Union speech (four months after 9/11), President George W. Bush gave an emphatic thumbs up to preemptive war by advocating an attack on Iraq, even though Iraq had not attacked our nation. The speech, written for him by neoconservative David Frum, was immediately championed by neoconservative William Kristol, the son of Irving and the editor of the *Weekly Standard* magazine, a leading domestic mouthpiece for neoconservatism. Neoconservative-style foreign policy had now completely taken hold in the White House.

Too few of today's self-styled conservatives seem to recall that one of the major attacks used by George Bush and the Republicans against Bill Clinton and the Democrats was Clinton's propensity for using America's military for UN nation-building operations.

During a debate with then-Vice President Al Gore on October 11, 2000, Bush said:

I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building.... Maybe I'm missing something here. I mean, we're going to have a kind of nation-building corps from America? Absolutely not.

However, as President, George W. Bush made nation-building a central element of American foreign policy — and his neocon enablers successfully deluded legions of "conservatives" into accepting this heresy, all in the name of promoting democracy in Islamic lands.

The neoconservative dominance of much of U.S. foreign policy began during the administration of George H.W. Bush (1989-1993). Neoconservative Dick Cheney served as Secretary of Defense when the elder Bush decided to attack Iraq and oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The President frequently stated that his twin goals were to build "the new world order" and "reinvigorate" the United Nations. Known as Desert Storm, the first Iraq War (1991) derived its authorization from a UN Security Council



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resolution, not a constitutionally required congressional declaration of war. It ended abruptly after Saddam Hussein's almost ragtag troops had been chased out of Kuwait by the UN coalition made up almost entirely of U.S. forces. The UN Security Council resolution authorizing the operation called merely for ousting Hussein's forces from Kuwait — which is why it ended so surprisingly. Every aspect of this operation fit neocon-style preemptive war to enhance the stature of the United Nations. Our nation certainly hadn't been attacked; there was no declaration of war; the only authorization for the conflict had been supplied by the UN; and the UN determined what its goals were and when it should end.

Immediately after the Desert Storm operation (spring 1991), Cheney directed his top assistant, neocon stalwart Paul Wolfowitz, to devise future military policy for our nation. Wolfowitz promptly drew up a plan to attack Iraq again, remove Saddam Hussein from power this time, and bring about regime change. But the neocons weren't able to carry out this plan because Cheney and Wolfowitz lost their posts when Bill Clinton bested the elder Bush in 1992. Cheney joined the neocon American Enterprise Institute and then accepted the post of CEO at Texas-based Halliburton, a leading defense contractor. Wolfowitz went back to academia.

Early in 1998, top neocons turned their attention to the leading GOP candidate for the next presidential election, George W. Bush. Cheney, Wolfowitz, former Secretary of State George Shultz, future Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and several others formed a "brain trust" at a meeting in Shultz's California home in April 1998. Their purpose: train George W. Bush to be the next President. They did so with frequent seminars in Texas and with continuing conferences via telephone and e-mail. Once he secured the nomination, Bush named Cheney as his running mate. After being certified as the nation's 43rd President, Bush turned to neocon Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense, and brain trust participant Rice became National Security Advisor. Rumsfeld immediately tapped Wolfowitz as his top assistant, and numerous other neocons were awarded staff positions or named as advisors.



Liberty forum: Radio talk-show host and columnist Jack Hunter (left), Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), and Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) share the stage at a 2011 CPAC event. *(Photo credit: Sam Antonio)*

Mentioned earlier for the assistance he supplied to Irving Kristol in reshaping the thinking of prominent GOP leaders, William F. Buckley, Jr. nevertheless continued to be widely touted as the nation's premier conservative. That he spent a career shifting the thinking of many Americans toward neoconservatism



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and away from the conservatism held by his own father has been a carefully guarded secret. But many have already been awakened by the thoroughly documented history of the man I call the “Pied Piper for the Establishment” in my 250-page book.

In 1952, the recent Yale graduate was in Mexico serving the Central Intelligence Agency in an assignment he never fully described except to say he was in “deep cover.” While there, Buckley penned an article for the Catholic weekly *Commonweal* in which he wrote:

We have got to accept Big Government for the duration — for neither an offensive nor a defensive war can be waged, given our present government’s skills, except through the instrumentality of a totalitarian bureaucracy within our shores ... and the attendant centralization of power in Washington — even with a Truman at the reins of it all.

That was neoconservatism even before anyone had used the term. November 1955 saw Buckley launch *National Review* magazine. Once the magazine gained a reputation as the conservative standard bearer, it began to have readers accept views that moved left of center and toward internationalism. Space doesn’t allow for a listing of all of Buckley’s betrayals, but it became obvious to many that whenever leftists needed America’s conservatives disarmed, Buckley performed on cue. He and his magazine backed the United Nations (Buckley even accepted appointment as a U.S. delegate to the UN Human Rights Committee); supported the giveaway of the Panama Canal; sanctioned foreign aid for Russia; approved passage of the UN’s Kyoto Protocol dealing with non-proven global warming; backed the UN’s Genocide Treaty; and much, much more. On the domestic scene, Buckley defended Richard Nixon’s “I am now a Keynesian in economics” claim, supported new gun-control measures, defended the imposition of wage and price controls, and registered approval of pornography, abortion, prostitution, “gay rights” legislation, and national service for youth.

Overall, the major accomplishment of “Mr. Conservative” saw him steer millions of Americans into substituting his definition of what is and isn’t acceptable “conservatism.” Buckley steadily and assiduously redefined and reoriented traditional *paleoconservatism* into neoconservatism. The new orientation jettisoned the U.S. Constitution, the standard by which policies and politicians should be judged. Buckley’s rare mentions of the U.S. Constitution came, for example, when he sought to destroy it, as in his advocacy of a constitutional convention that would have power to rewrite our founding covenant.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates and explains the betrayal of conservatism by Buckley and the neocons than their longstanding close ties to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the premier internationalist organization working to undermine American sovereignty and establish a UN-led global government. This magazine has been in the forefront of exposing and opposing the CFR’s treasonous agenda for the past three decades. (For a more extensive treatment of the CFR’s destructive influence on U.S. domestic and foreign policy over much of the past century, see our many articles available online at www.thenewamerican.com and James Perloff’s *The Shadows of Power: The Council on Foreign Relations and the American Decline*.)

As the CFR’s role in so many of our nation’s debacles gradually became more publicly recognized and began receiving deserved condemnation, Buckley had one of its members defend the organization in *National Review* — and he then proudly announced his own membership in the council. The CFR had



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already welcomed neoconservative leaders Kristol, Podhoretz, and others to membership. Many other prominent neocons are also CFR members: Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Charles Krauthammer, Elliott Abrams, Newt Gingrich, Condoleezza Rice, Henry Kissinger, Robert Kagan, and Rupert Murdoch. Their pseudo-conservative messages are regularly retailed to millions of unsuspecting conservatives through daily infusions from Murdoch's *Fox/Wall Street Journal/New York Post* media empire.

Most importantly, for many years Buckley dutifully carried out the CFR's dirty work of attacking those who opposed the CFR's globalist policies. He strongly suggested that real conservatives such as Patrick Buchanan, Joseph Sobran, Sam Francis, and others who were outspoken opponents of the neoconservative takeover were closet anti-Semites. And he waged incessant warfare against The John Birch Society and anyone else who dared conclude that America's problems resulted from conspiratorial design.

One Voice in Congress Condemns the Neocon Takeover

In 2003, Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) addressed his colleagues from the floor of the House of Representatives about the dangers of neoconservatism. After claiming that neocons had successfully taken over the George W. Bush administration, he named as prominent neocons Richard Perle, Elliott Abrams, William Kristol, Michael Ledeen, Bill Bennett, Frank Gaffney, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld. He defined neoconservatism as follows:

Neoconservatism is not the philosophy of free markets and a wise foreign policy. Instead, it represents big-government welfare at home and a program of using our military might to spread their version of American values throughout the world.

In summation, neoconservatives can be identified as advocates of more government, increased spending, international entanglements, and misuse of America's military. They also refuse to rely on the true meaning of the Constitution, preferring instead to support the tortured meanings supplied by liberal judges, liberal pundits, and the liberal mass media.

Many more Americans must be made aware that neoconservatism is a deadly enemy of our nation. While gaining that necessary understanding, they must be steered toward the U.S. Constitution as the nation's standard.



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