



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 9, 2011

CFR: Tea Party Dangerous, Obstructive

Mead's credentials for representing one of the leading lights of the [Anglo-American Establishment](#) are impeccable: an honors graduate from the Groton School and Yale University, he was the Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy at the CFR. He is now a professor of foreign affairs at Bard College and is editor-at-large of *The American Interest* magazine.

He got the first part right: "The rise of the Tea Party movement has been the most controversial and dramatic development in U.S. politics for many years. Supporters have hailed it as a return to core American values; opponents have seen it as a racist, reactionary, and ultimately futile protest against the emerging reality of a multicultural, multiracial United States and a new era of government activism."



He then complains that this battle of ideologies is going to be impossible to resolve, especially since the Tea Party has no leadership, calling it "an amorphous collection of individuals" which include "affluent suburban libertarians, rural fundamentalists, ambitious pundits, unreconstructed racists, and fiscally conservative housewives." He was distressed to learn that about 115 million of them exist (or at least sympathize with the movement) according to a recent poll. Consequently, the Tea Party's "message" is mixed.

He noted that Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), the father of the movement, and, to a lesser extent, his son, now Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.), are trying to "resurrect isolationism" in their call for greatly reduced military spending and military involvement in foreign undeclared wars. Sarah Palin is much more to his liking; he calls her a "full-throated supporter of the 'war on terror,'" and notes that, when she was Alaska's Governor, she kept an Israeli flag in her office.

But how could such a (in Mead's view) rag-tag, disorganized, incoherent, and unsophisticated gaggle of misfits, miscreants, and malcontents have such a huge impact on the future political direction of the country? He noted that the GOP victory in the House of Representatives in 2010 was the largest gain by either political party since 1938 — despite that fact that as many as four Senate seats were lost by the GOP through political blunders and naïveté. How could this happen? Mead writes:

But with all its ambiguities and its uneven political record, the Tea Party movement has clearly struck a nerve in American politics, and students of American foreign policy [like us] need to think through the consequences of this populist and nationalist political insurgency.

Note Mead's choice of words and tone here. Something is going on in America that he doesn't like or understand, and internationalists like himself, who support the goal of a new world order that the CFR has been so diligently and successfully promoting these many years, had better pay attention. He calls



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the Tea Party “populist” and “nationalist,” and a “political insurgency. ” The CFR internationalists are at war against national sovereignty, and the Tea Party is the enemy.

The Constitution is getting in the way as well:

The U.S. constitutional system allows minorities [such as the Tea Party adherents] to block appointments and important legislation [favorable to the globalists] through filibusters and block the ratification of treaties with only one-third of the Senate. For a movement of “No!” like the Tea Party, those are powerful legislative tools.

This is a difficulty insiders at the CFR have faced for years. For instance, nearly 40 years ago James MacGregor Burns, a member of the CFR, [wrote](#)

Let us face reality. The framers have simply been too shrewd for us. They have outwitted us. They designed separated institutions that cannot be unified by mechanical linkages, frail bridges, tinkering. If we are to ‘turn the founders upside down’ — to put together what they put asunder — we must directly confront the constitutional structure they erected.

Walter Russell Mead, having cut his professorial teeth on analyzing past populist uprisings, felt obliged to analyze the Tea Party’s resistance to the internationalist cabal by calling it “Jacksonianism,” and then predicting possible outcomes.

Wikipedia defines [“Jacksonianism”](#) cleanly and avoids the negative undertones used by Mead in his article. According to Wikipedia, supporters of the political philosophy of President Andrew Jackson, America’s seventh President (who served from 1829 to 1838)

- believed that voting rights should be extended to all white men, not just to those who owned property;
- favored the idea of America’s Manifest Destiny to settle the American West;
- thought that patronage, or the spoils system, served the country better than the corrupting influence of long tenure in civil service;
- honored the concept of strict constructionism of the Constitution, which supported Jackson’s virulent resistance to the Second Bank of the United States;
- enjoyed an economy that was as free from government regulation as any in the history of the world;
- resisted any attempt to create a central bank; and
- thought that only gold and silver could be money.

Tea Partiers can find in this explanation of “Jacksonianism” much with which to agree, to Mead’s dismay.

Referring to the intellectual roots of Jacksonianism, the Scottish Enlightenment, Mead said

This philosophy — that moral, scientific, political, and religious truths *can be ascertained by the average person* [emphasis added] — is more than an intellectual conviction in the United States; it is a cultural force. Jacksonians [Tea Partiers] regard supposed experts with suspicion, believing that the credentialed and the connected [such as Mead himself and elitist groups like the CFR] are trying to advance their own class agenda.

These political, economic, scientific, or cultural elites often want to assert truths that run counter to the common sense reasoning of Jacksonian America. That federal deficits produce economic growth and that free trade with low-wage countries raises Americans’ living standards are the kind of propositions



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that clash with the common sense of many Americans.

As noted so eloquently by Professor Angelo Codevilla in his best-selling book [“The Ruling Class,”](#)

The more that an idea or scheme — whether global warming or government-guaranteed medical care — is dear to the Ruling Class [to which Mead belongs], the more the Country Class has turned its back on it. In doing so, the Country Class is rejecting the ideas’ patrons as much as their substance.

Mead recognizes the danger represented by the Tea Party to the socialist/internationalist agenda. If resistance to the schemes and plans of the insiders to turn the United States into just another European socialist country in a new world order continues to grow, there could be real trouble for the elites.

Writes Mead:

Sometimes those elites are right, and sometimes they are wrong, but their ability to win voter approval for policies that seem counterintuitive is a critical factor in the American political system. In times like the present, when a surge of populist political energy coincides with a significant loss of popular confidence in establishment institutions — ranging from the mainstream media and the foreign policy and intellectual establishments to the financial and corporate leadership and the government itself — *Jacksonian sentiment diminishes the ability of elite institutions and their members to shape national debates and policy.* (emphasis added) The rejection of the scientific consensus on climate change is [just] one of many examples of populist revolt against expert consensus in the United States.

Let’s unpack what Mead has just said here. The elites have an agenda, right or wrong. But under what is left of the Constitution, voter approval is still necessary to obtain approval and funding for their agenda. But with their increasing loss of credibility, and the awakening of members and supporters of the Tea Party to the decades-long scam, the elitists are finding it increasingly difficult to accomplish their objectives. And the mainstream media, losing credibility daily as it continues to reflect the elites’ positions that are no longer tenable, are having less and less influence in the real conversation about freedom. The Internet is taking its place.

Mead tries to put a happy face on this unnerving opposition to the Establishment’s plans for America: “Even though it is by no means likely that the new Jacksonians will gain full control of the government anytime soon (or perhaps ever), the influence of the populist revolt against mainstream politics has become so significant that students of U.S. foreign policy must consider the consequences.” In other words, the Tea Party represents only a temporary speed bump on the way to the new world order, but it could get out of hand if the elites aren’t careful.

For example, one of the key assumptions insiders make is that America is just a country like any other, without an abiding sense of “self.” However, Tea Partiers, he notes, “combine a firm belief in American exceptionalism and [hold a] deep skepticism about the United States’ ability to create a liberal world order. ”

When the United States is attacked, they believe in total war leading to the unconditional surrender of the enemy.... They do not like limited wars for limited goals. Although they value allies and believe that the United States must honor its word, they do not believe in institutional constraints on the United States’ freedom to act, unilaterally if necessary, in self-defense.

Many Tea Partiers have little interest in nation-building, or in “making the world safe for democracy. ” They think countries should mind their own business, and that their governments should have as little



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to do with each other as possible. All of which makes accomplishment of the elite's "liberal world order" all the more questionable. Mead states the obvious: "Today's Jacksonians are ready and willing to do whatever it takes to defend the United States, but they do not believe that U.S. interests are best served by the creation of a liberal and cosmopolitan [read: internationalist] world order."

Mead does draw some hope from the apparent division relating to foreign adventures that appears to be forming in the Tea Party. The "Paulites" (represented by Ron Paul) represent, he says, "an inward-looking, neo-isolationist approach to foreign policy that has more in common with classic Jeffersonian ideas than with assertive Jacksonian nationalism." The "Palinites" (represented by Sarah Palin) are much more to the elite's liking, wanting instead a "vigorous, proactive approach to the problem of terrorism in the Middle East, one that rests on a close alliance between the United States and Israel."

However, that appears to be the only major schism in the Tea Party that the elites may seek to exploit: "On other issues, Paulites and Palinites are united in their dislike for liberal internationalism — the attempt to conduct international relations through multilateral institutions under an ever-tightening web of international laws and treaties." Mead continues:

From climate change to the [rejection of the] International Criminal Court to the treatment of enemy combatants captured in unconventional conflicts, both wings of the Tea Party reject liberal internationalist ideas and will continue to do so.

The U.S. Senate, in which each state is allotted two senators regardless of the state's population, heavily favors the less populated states, where Jacksonian sentiment is often the strongest. The United States is unlikely to ratify many new treaties written in the spirit of liberal internationalism for some time to come.

In stating his nervousness about the potential for the Tea Party to delay the internationalists' plans to sew up the "liberal world order" promptly, Mead also provides a warning to those calling themselves Tea Partiers who are investing themselves in the freedom fight. He says,

Americans [insider-elites] should rejoice that in many ways the Tea Party movement, warts and all, is a significantly more capable and reliable partner for the United States' world-order-building tasks than were the isolationists of 60 years ago.

Restating the obvious, Mead allows that if the "Palinites" succeed in controlling the direction of the Tea Party on international affairs, then their march to their liberal world order should continue without difficulty.

Mead ends his review of the Tea Party by warning his students, readers, and supporters:

Foreign policy mandarins often wish the public would leave them alone so that they can get on with the serious business of statecraft. That is not going to happen in the United States. If the Tea Party movement fades away, other voices of populist protest will take its place. American [internationalist] policymakers and their counterparts overseas simply cannot do their jobs well without a deep understanding of what [has become] one of the principal forces in American life.

It is clear then that, even in its infancy, the Tea Party has already begun to disrupt and delay the plans the insiders have for submerging the American republic into a new world order. As the Tea Party movement grows, the problems that creates for CFR insiders should continue to mount — but only if the Tea Party Movement moves in the direction of the noninterventionist foreign policy advocated by Ron Paul as opposed to the interventionist foreign policy advocated by Sarah Palin.



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