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Jonah Goldberg Smears Patriotic America First Committee

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It has been almost eight decades since the United States was plunged into the Second World War with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and other American possessions on December 7, 1941, and America's neoconservatives still use that terrible day in U.S. history to smear the America First Committee, in order to smear any opponent of their continuing hair-trigger tendency to send American soldiers off to war.

Jonah Goldberg, a long-time writer for *National Review* magazine, a national columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, and a prominent "Never Trumper," penned yet another of his anti-Trump syndicated columns this week.

In this particular piece, Goldberg condemned President Donald Trump's frequent use of the phrase "America First," tying it to the dishonest and historically inaccurate continued smearing of those patriots who founded the America First Committee (AFC). The AFC was founded in an effort to keep the country out of the Second World War. Goldberg opined that Trump probably did not know just how bad the AFC was — that he was just ignorant of the history, in using the phrase of America First.

Goldberg wrote, "When Trump adopted the slogan "America First," many observers were dismayed because of the sinister historical connotations of the phrase. It was the rallying cry of isolationists ... who opposed intervening in World War II."

Probably no term infuriates the globalists in such organizations as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and such neoconservatives as William Kristol and Jonah Goldberg as "America First." As he said himself, Goldberg sees America First as a sinister phrase.

Following the First World War, Americans were disenchanted with President Woodrow Wilson's war to "end all wars," and to "make the world safe for democracy." They knew those lofty goals had not been achieved, and that over 100,000 American soldiers had died on the battlefields of Europe. As a result of that war, various totalitarian systems came to power — the National Socialists of Adolf Hitler in Germany, the fascists in Italy, and the communists in Russia.

Americans — by large margins — wanted no more of the periodic and asinine wars of Europe.

So when yet another war broke out in Europe in 1939, a very large number of Americans wanted to sit this one out. Eventually, an organization — the America First Committee — was formed to keep America out of the war in Europe. The organization was not some fringe group. It had 800,000 dues-paying members in 450 chapters across the country.



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Among those who joined AFC included some Americans who were already famous, such as Charles Lindberg, General Robert Wood of Sears-Roebuck, and Robert McCormack of the Chicago Tribune. Walt Disney was a member. So were future presidents John Kennedy and Gerald Ford. When Kennedy donated \$100 to the AFC, he included a note: “What you are doing is vital.”

What was “sinister” about the AFC? Goldberg asserts that the phrase “America First” was the “rallying cry of the isolationists” who opposed intervening in World War II.

This is typical of neoconservatives such as Goldberg. To them, it is always 1938, and we are always needing to sacrifice young soldiers to stop the latest Hitler. And the AFC’s sin, that made it “sinister,” in Goldberg’s warped universe, was desiring to keep America out of a war.

It should be noted that the AFC did not consider itself “isolationist.” An isolationist country is one that has no contacts with the outside world, a description of very few countries in world history, and never a good description of the United States. The best example of an “isolationist” country would be Japan in the 19th century, and even it is not a perfect example.

A better description of the AFC was that it was “non-interventionist.” A non-interventionist is a person, or as in the case of the AFC, an organization that does not believe the United States should intervene in the internal affairs of other countries, or in the wars between two other countries, unless it somehow involves the United States. Non-interventionists are not pacifist. Perhaps the most famous AFC member was the first man to fly alone non-stop across the Atlantic — Charles Lindberg. He was impressed by the growing strength of the German Air Force, and pleaded with the U.S. government to quickly build up its own air force — to protect America.

Nowadays, what non-interventionists would be against would be military adventures such as President Bill Clinton’s bombing in Bosnia, although the civil war there posed no threat to American national security. Another example would be President Ronald Reagan’s ill-fated decision to deploy American marines to Beirut, where over 200 were eventually killed in a terrorist attack. After he left office, Reagan cited his placing the Marines into the Lebanese civil war as his biggest mistake. Non-interventionists opposed Reagan’s action before he took it, but interventionist advisors persuaded Reagan to place the Marines into a civil war.

And when Goldberg writes of AFC as those “who opposed intervening in World War II,” it is likely that most Americans who read his column are left wondering why they would oppose going to war after Pearl Harbor. The truth is, the AFC shut down its operations immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan and the December 11 declaration of war by National Socialist Germany. In a short press release, the AFC announced its demise and wrote, “We are at war.... The primary objective is not difficult to state. It can be completely defined in one word: Victory.”

What the AFC had fought against was the U.S. entry into the war in Europe, months before Pearl Harbor. And the facts are that poll after poll showed the American people agreed with them — they did not want to go to war in Europe again.

Near the end of the 1940 presidential campaign, President Franklin Roosevelt told audiences concerned that the United States was drifting into yet another war similar to the one that his fellow Democrat Woodrow Wilson had put us into, “I say to you again, and again, and again — your sons will never be sent to fight in a foreign war.” The truth is that Roosevelt favored intervention in the European war, but being the devious politician that he was, said what he had to say to win another term.

In short, what the AFC was about was placing the interests of America first. It seems, at least since the



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end of WWII, most of America's political leaders and opinion leaders put America last.

If any phrase should be considered sinister, it is America Last.

Photo of Jonah Goldberg: [Gage Skidmore](#)

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