



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on August 25, 2009

Obama's Wars Trigger New Activists

The election of Barack Obama to the Presidency has highlighted the foreign policy double standard that the activists on the left end of the political spectrum have exhibited, or should one say not exhibited, towards the President's war-centric foreign policy.

Obama is following the [McCain plan](#) for Iraq, [doubling](#) the U.S. forces in Afghanistan in addition to sharply [increasing](#) the number of private contractors operating in that region and [bombing](#) Pakistan on a regular basis. Yet, all of these actions, which in prior years would have been decried by those who consider themselves liberals/progressives, have seemingly fallen off the radar of the left-wing grassroots activists.



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The [Netroots Nation](#), an alliance of liberal activists, held their annual convention on August 13-16 in Pittsburgh which featured "the most concentrated gathering of progressive bloggers to date." Surprisingly, the issue of ending the multiple conflicts the United States is actively engaged in, which was such a big topic from prior years, was barely a blip on the agenda. Byron York, writing for the Washington Examiner, states: "Not too long ago, with a different president in the White House, the left was obsessed with America's wars. Now, they're not even watching."

But does this mean that the antiwar movement in America is dead? Some political observers feel that the time is long past due for a political realignment to oppose Obama's wars. John V. Walsh, writing for [Antiwar.com](#), passionately argues that activists from the right can succeed in an area where activists from the left failed so miserably.

So a great opportunity presents itself to the Right ... whose movement has been captured and distorted by the neocons. The Right has a world to win, if it might be put that way, or at least an empire to terminate. What could be more inspiring than a view, an ideology, which rescues mankind from the suffering of war that has plagued humanity over the millennia? The Right can do this because it has a following at a crucial point... All that is required is the will and then the action.

Indeed, it was Congressman Ron Paul's [antiwar](#) message of his 2008 presidential campaign which made him stand out from the establishment Republicans and propelled him to the national stage. Paul's message was unique because he opposed unconstitutional government intervention domestically as well as abroad. Lew Rockwell, writing in the introduction to Dr. Paul's 2007 book [A Foreign Policy of Freedom](#), stressed that this position is the only ideologically consistent one.



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Government should be restrained from intervening at home or abroad because its actions fail to achieve their stated aims, create more harm than good, shrink the liberty of the people, and violate rights. Does that proposition seem radical? Outlandish or far flung? Once you hear it stated, it makes perfect sense that there is no sharp distinction between the principles of domestic and foreign policy. What would be inconsistent would be to favor activist government at home but restraint abroad, or the reverse: restraint at home and activism abroad.

And it isn't just the voices of Rockwell and Paul arguing that a coherent limited government vision only resorts to war as a last resort. Many of our patriotic forefathers also were weary of endless interventions abroad. It was none other than George Washington himself who advised his fellow countrymen to avoid foreign entanglements. Author Bill Kaufman wrote a 2008 book entitled [Ain't my America: the long, noble history of antiwar conservatism and middle-American anti-imperialism](#), where he concludes that there "is a long and honorable ... tradition of antiwar thought and action among the American right."

Historian Ralph Raico recounts that the early history of American Republic was one of wise visionaries familiar with the dangers of involvement in endless wars.

That this system was endorsed by John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the other Founders as well was no accident... The monarchies of the Old World were massive war machines, exploiting the people to fund their never-ending conflicts and the military and civilian bureaucracies those conflicts necessitated... Here the rights of the people were to be all-important. Government power was strictly limited and mainly exercise by the localities and the states (hence, the Tenth Amendment)...

But, in order to forestall high taxes, debt, and the centralization of power, we had to steer clear of war. That is why the advice of the Founders was: if you want to preserve the system we have established, keep out of wars except when required to defend the United States, and avoid political entanglements overseas, since these are likely to lead us into war.

But as the old saying goes, "what was old is new again." Some activists who have been instrumental in organizing Tea Parties are now picking up the antiwar "torch" which has been dropped by born-again [liberal war-hawks](#). Namely, libertarian activist and attorney [James Ostrowski](#) has already begun [organizing](#) a "National Day of Protest of Obama's Democrat Wars" for September 5 at noon in Buffalo, New York. In an interview with THE NEW AMERICAN, Ostrowski explained "the tea party movement has been very successful in thwarting Obama's domestic agenda and I feel that now is the appropriate time to go after his foreign policy agenda. It's the right time since almost all the liberals and the leftists have given Obama a pass on all his war mongering. Big government and war are genetically linked and historically linked. This can be a great teaching moment to the tea party activists and perhaps they will open their eyes to the link between big government and war." Could a new antiwar movement rise up and derail Obama's presidency? Only time will tell if the activists who made the tea parties such big events will be able to translate that energy into opposition to Obama's wars.



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