



Gingrich Wants Attacks on Iran, North Korea

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Republican of Georgia, apparently believes the United States is not yet involved in enough wars. In a speech last week before the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute*, Gingrich said the United States did not take President George W. Bush's 2002 "Axis of Evil" speech seriously or we would have followed the invasion of Iraq with military attacks on both Iran and North Korea. In the speech to the AEI last Thursday Gingrich spoke of the "axis" as a formal alliance, such as the one the Allied forces defeated in World War II.



"If Harry Truman had done that, the world today would be communist," Gingrich said, according to the report of the speech appearing on the web site, *The Raw Story*. "If Franklin Roosevelt had done that in '41, either the Japanese or the Germans would have won. If Lincoln had done that, we would have become two and then multiple countries."

Gingrich was referring to the 2002 State of the Union address in which Bush labeled Iraq, Iran and North Korea the "axis of evil" in the world. The speech came just a few months after the terrorist attack on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 and after the United States had already invaded Afghanistan and overthrown the Taliban government there. Though Bush did not accuse any of the three "axis" nations of complicity in the 9-11 attacks, the speech had the effect of focusing attention on Iraq, especially, as a state sponsor of terrorism and it inspired enthusiasm for "finishing the job" of conquering Iraq that had begun in the first Gulf War under President George H.W. Bush.

During the year that followed, Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and other administration officials focused public attention on Iraq and its alleged "weapons of mass destruction" as a threat to the United States and our allies. The propaganda campaign led directly, as intended, to the invasion of Iraq by the U.S., Great Britain, and various allies. Today, while Gingrich and others are calling for attacks on Iran and North Korea, the U.S. military remains bogged down in war making and nation building in both Afghanistan and Iraq with a military that is stretched to the breaking point.

Gingrich, who appears to be entertaining presidential aspirations, has joined in the beating of the war drums against other nations in the mid and Far East. He has also come out against the building of an Islamic community center a few blocks from the former site of the World Trade Center, saying, "There should be no mosque near Ground Zero in New York so long as there are no churches or synagogues in Saudi Arabia."

He later reaffirmed this position in even stronger language, decrying "the idea of a 13-story building set up by a group many of whom, frankly, are very hostile to our civilization."

Gingrich has also been doing his best to stir up fear of Sharia law. He recently told Newsmax: "Radical



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Islamists are people who want to impose on the rest of us Sharia, which is a form of medieval law which would fundamentally end America as we've known it."

During his AEI speech, according to *Foreign Policy's* Joshua Keating, "Gingrich cited a number of examples of sharia encroachment, which he described a 'mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and the world.' These included an Islamic loan program in Minnesota, the Islamic finance program at Harvard, and a court decision in New Jersey that was eventually overturned and of course, the much-discussed Ground Zero mosque. There was also the U.S. military's failure to immediately label the Ft. Hood shooter as an Islamic terrorist, and the fact that Christmas bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's father's warnings were not taken seriously."

Keating comments sarcastically, "Given that, as Gingrich acknowledged, Abdulmutallab's name found its way onto a database with 'half a million' other names, one might infer that there are an awful lot of people the U.S. is keeping tabs on. If only we would spend billions on a massive top-secret effort to sort through all that intelligence."

But when it comes to military and intelligence operations or more empire building, money is no object to Gingrich and other "conservatives" who seem to believe that the United States can and should be at war in any number of countries to protect our "national interest." He apparently would also welcome the abridgement of civil liberties that usually accompanies war, since he would suspend the right of Muslims to build mosques in the U.S. until Saudi Arabia allows the building of churches and synagogues in that land. The increased surveillance of Americans, without warrant, the imprisonment of terrorist suspects indefinitely without trial, secret prisons and the use of torture would likely escalate if our war efforts expand into other far-off lands.

But another right of the American people would also be violated, that of determining through our elected representatives whether, when and with whom we shall go to war. The power to declare war is assigned under our Constitution to the Congress of the United States and not to the commander-in-chief of the Army, Navy, and the National Guard when called into the service of the United States. Alexander Hamilton, in the collection of essays that became known as *The Federalist Papers*, argued (in Federalist 69) that a fundamental difference between the British system of government and the government to be established under the new Constitution was that in England the King could declare and carry out war on his own authority. Under the U.S. Constitution, that power would reside with the representatives of the people, while the role of President would be analogous to that of the First Admiral of the British Navy. The curious reader may find that argument made in a paperback edition of *The Federalist Papers* that has on its cover the blurb: "Newt Gingrich's required reading."

Perhaps Gingrich, who has been a college professor, should go back and read again the arguments for the new Constitution and how it would prevent the chief executive from becoming a monarch. And in so doing, he might take as his model for the next president, not Truman, Roosevelt, or Lincoln, but the honorable George Washington.

*A [profile](#) in Wikipedia describes the American Enterprise Institute as "the most prominent think tank associated with American neoconservatism, in both the domestic and international policy arenas. Irving Kristol, widely considered a father of neoconservatism, was a senior fellow at AEI (arriving from the Congress for Cultural Freedom following the widespread revelation of the group's CIA funding) and many prominent neoconservatives — including Jeane Kirkpatrick, Ben Wattenberg, and Joshua Muravchik — spent the bulk of their careers at AEI."

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