



## With Ryan as Speaker, Whither the GOP Agenda?

With much fanfare, the foregone conclusion was formalized yesterday with the election of Paul Ryan (shown) as the new speaker of the house. The wonkish Wisconsinite with the winning smile accepted the mantle from John Boehner with grace and a professed intention of starting with a clean slate. But all indications are that the honeymoon for Ryan — whom talk show host Laura Ingraham recently called “basically John Boehner with better abs” — will be a short one.



For one thing, nine of his fellow Republicans voted against him. These, a remnant of the 43 who supported Florida congressman Daniel Webster, may be expected to hold Ryan’s feet to the fire, along with other members of the Freedom Caucus who view with suspicion Ryan’s history of accommodationism of Democrat Big Government programs.

In point of fact, Ryan has already gone on record — with 78 other House Republicans — in supporting the massive spending increases and raise of the debt ceiling contemplated by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. This act essentially was the death knell of the very modest “sequester” provisions passed a few years ago, a final attempt by Congress to self-impose limits on their ability to borrow and spend. With those limits all but repudiated by Republicans and Democrats alike, with the full support of Paul Ryan, it is difficult to foresee any remaining obstacles for Congress in spending America into bankruptcy. But for Ryan, as well as a disconcertingly large number of his House partisan colleagues, the fiscal survival of the United States is of less consequence than getting along with cynical Democrats and preventing another unthinkable government shutdown. It is unlikely that future budget battles with the minority Democrats and President Obama will end any differently.

Besides a track record of fiscal irresponsibility, Ryan is also a vocal support of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), yet another mammoth international trade protocol (like NAFTA) that promises to lower tariffs and open doors in exchange for significant sovereignty concessions of member nations. As the debate of passage of NAFTA two decades ago demonstrated, the neocon GOP establishment does not understand (or willfully conceals) the crucial difference between free trade and managed trade; the TPP, like NAFTA, is an instance of the former, designed to impose yet more restrictions on the independence of sovereign nations such as the United States, and to prepare the way for more powerful organs of international government already being planned. Just as Europe’s Common Market has now been transformed into a financial, economic, and political union, and the former General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) protocol into the World Trade Organization (WTO), a true instrument of UN-centered world government, so too can the TPP, promoted by establishment Democrats and Republicans alike, be expected to “evolve” into a regional government apparatus sooner or later.

What is needed in the House, of course, is the kind of principled GOP leadership that would amount to true opposition rather than the me-tooism that has fooled the American electorate for so long. But Paul Ryan is not the man to bring such leadership, and it will not be long before his fellow lawmakers — and



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the American public — figure it out.

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