



Newt Gingrich: Speaking for Whom?

“Fire breather,” “bomb thrower,” “the man most Democrats consider the devil incarnate,” “the guerilla leader of Congress’ Republican insurgents,” “McCarthyite,” “bulldog extremist.” These are some of the nicer epithets that have been hurled at Representative Newton Leroy Gingrich, the Republican minority whip from Georgia’s 6th Congressional District who is expected to be replacing Tom Foley as Speaker of the House in the 104th Congress.



To judge from the furious invective he inspires from sputtering Democrat pols and media liberals, this man *must* be far indeed “to the right of Attila the Hun.” Barely a day after the seismic shift of November 8th that swept the GOP to power in Congress and in state houses across the land, Mr. Gingrich had liberal punditdom frothing in high dudgeon for referring to Bill and Hillary Clinton as “counterculture McGoverniks” and to their White House staff as a bunch of “left-wing elitists.” Even worse, he charged that Clinton Democrats are the “enemy of normal Americans” and the party of “total bizarreness, total weirdness.”

“The Vision Thing”

To millions of Americans, of course, Gingrich’s words were merely accentuating verbally what they had already so powerfully expressed with their votes. And the media reaction was not only delicious icing on the cake, but proof that their new champion had hit the mark. An arrogant, imperial President and an equally contemptuous Congress intent on imposing homosexuals on the military, pushing condoms to gradeschoolers, disposing of the Second Amendment, taxing families into extinction, gutting national defense, regulating businesses to death, spending the nation into oblivion, and entangling America in one UN military operation after another had been resoundingly repudiated in one of the most severe political massacres of modern times. And the victors, who had been scorned and excoriated as nuts, malcontents, and “religious extremists,” had earned the right to crow — something Gingrich does with unmatched flair.

But Newt Gingrich is also a capable exponent of “the vision thing.” In a policy address on November 11th at Washington’s Willard Hotel, Gingrich delivered the conservative/populist message that many Americans wanted to hear, declaring that he was going to pursue the goal of “disciplined, smaller, more frugal government” — with a vengeance. “One of the reasons the American people are so fed up with the current political structure,” he charged, “is that they think they send a strong signal on election day and they watch it gradually dribble away in Washington, with all the people in Washington finding excuses not to do what they’ve [been] asked to do.” Amen.

And the signal the American people were sending, he said, was “based on a pretty clear direction of less government, less regulation, less interference, and lower taxes, not just at the federal level, but at virtually every level across the country in virtually every state....” Liberal columnist David S. Broder was suitably impressed by the address, calling it “a policy speech that was confident, coherent, and in every way impressive. The words were strong, the thoughts were clear, and no one who heard him was



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in any doubt that the House Republicans he leads will attempt to enact the conservative governing agenda he described.”

Whoaaaa there, Mr. Broder; speak for yourself. For those who were listening closely, there was more than one agenda described. And for those familiar with history, with politicians in general, and with Newt Gingrich in particular, there was plenty of cause for doubt – and concern.

The GATT Man

Chief and most immediate among those doubts and concerns is Gingrich’s zealous commitment to helping President Clinton secure congressional approval of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organization (GATT/WTO) accord. When asked at his November 11th press briefing, “Will you rally the troops for GATT and the World Trade Organization?” he replied: “Yes. In the first place, the Administration has accepted amendments of Senator Dole and myself giving Congress dramatically more oversight of the World Trade Organization, including the right to bring up a vote on withdrawal every five years in perpetuity, so at any point that we think it is out of control or inappropriate, we can simply withdraw.”

The impression given by his answer was that he and Dole recently had come up with some amendments that would allay all concerns about loss of U.S. sovereignty to, and interference in domestic U.S. concerns by, the proposed supra-national WTO. What he actually was referring to was Section 125 of the agreement, entitled “Review of Participation in the WTO,” which hardly provides the security against WTO tyranny he pretends to find. One of the most manifest weaknesses of the Section 125 “protection” is the five-year cycle of opportunity for withdrawing; the WTO mega-bureaucracy could do a lot of damage to American interests in five years.

Moreover, as far as “congressional oversight” goes, one need only consider how little that has been worth in protecting U.S. interests at the United Nations, the World Bank, IMF, UNESCO, or any of the other internationalist ventures with which we have become entangled.

Earlier this year Gingrich hesitated to support GATT and expressed concern that the WTO smacked of world government. “That is a bizarre turnabout for a man who almost single-handedly bailed out the Clinton Presidency by rounding up Republican votes for a similar accord — the North American Free Trade Agreement — over the opposition of House Democrats,” the *New York Times* chided in a May 8th editorial. The *Times* had a point about Gingrich’s NAFTA role, even though its arguments in favor of GATT/WTO were phony. “The W.T.O. would be more pussycat than tiger — and would protect U.S. interests better than the existing General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade,” purred the *Times*. That is about as convincing as the claims of Clinton, Gingrich, and company that GATT would, after ten years, “add an average of \$1,700 to the annual income of every American family.”

The WTO does indeed present a threat of world government; it is a multinational body with legislative, executive, and judicial branches wielding formidable powers. The myriad of ministries, councils, committees, commissions, panels, and boards to be established under the WTO would make it a global leviathan. It would be far worse than the dozens of international commissions, committees, and secretariats created to oversee and regulate trade between Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. under the 1,700-page NAFTA treaty — which Newt Gingrich gave to Bill Clinton on a silver platter. So much for promises about kinder, simpler, and less intrusive government.

Fast Track to Disaster

However, the dangers of the GATT/ WTO agreement itself are, at this point, of less immediate concern



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than the immoral and illegal *process* by which it is being rammed down our throats. And this from Mr. Gingrich, who in the same breath promises a new “openness” and “honesty” in governing and who calls for greater “participation” and “engagement” by the people. It is the rankest hypocrisy to talk about the new “mandate” and “listening to the people” and then to continue with the same sleazy manner of doing “business as usual” in Washington.

Forcing a “fast track” vote on GATT/ WTO — what some have called “the most important vote of the decade, if not the last 50 years” — in the “lame duck” Congress is an unconscionable act that cannot be justified on any count. It intentionally ignores what is obvious:

- As Gingrich himself has noted, “the people have spoken,” and have elected a new Congress; and that new Congress should have the right (and responsibility) to vote on something as important as GATT. It should not be passed by a body that has been repudiated by the voters.
- The GATT system and negotiations have been going on since 1947. It is absurd to suggest that after nearly 50 years we must now rush this new agreement through, that it cannot wait a couple more months for the new Congress to consider.
- The GATT accord runs some 26,000 pages. No member of Congress has read all of this monstrosity. Gingrich promised to make all bills and documents accessible to the American people, but we certainly have not had full access to all of this document.
- If the Clinton health care program deserved to be knocked off the “fast track” because it was a costly, bureaucratic, socialistic nightmare, GATT/ WTO deserves the same.
- The matters with which the GATT/ WTO accord deal clearly qualify it as a treaty and therefore require ratification by a two-thirds vote in the Senate. Gingrich’s repeated veneration of the Constitution (not to mention his oath) will be proven false if he does not demand compliance with this constitutional requirement.

However, the new Speaker of the House appears to be taking his direction from the *New York Times* and from the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the driving organizational force behind GATT (Gingrich is a member of the CFR), rather than from the Constitution or “the people” he claims to honor and represent.

Rhetoric and Reality

Since so many other conservatives have been gulled into embracing GATT under the false banner of “free trade,” Newt Gingrich’s role in promoting NAFTA and GATT is seen by many as insufficient in and of itself to call into question his “conservative” bona fides. After all, his rhetoric is as fiercely conservative as anyone’s. He once denounced Senator Robert Dole, the Republican chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, as “the tax collector for the welfare state.” He labeled all of official Washington “a large, open conspiracy to take away the money and freedom of the citizens of this country.” In 1985, he called President Reagan’s rapprochement with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev potentially “the most dangerous summit for the West since Adolf Hitler met with Chamberlain in 1938 at Munich.” Over and over again, he has denounced big government, socialism, high taxes, deficits, welfare, bureaucracy, and the “counterculture.”

True enough, but in politics deeds speak louder than words. And Newt Gingrich’s deeds all too often do not match his words. Since entering Congress, Gingrich has repeatedly voted for big government, deficit spending, welfare, foreign aid, regulatory intervention, and socialism. He has repeatedly voted to



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send U.S. taxpayer dollars to communist countries and to grant communist tyrannies such as Red China and the Soviet Union most favored nation (MFN) trade status, while demanding trade sanctions against South Africa.

He has given support to Nelson Mandela and the terrorist African National Congress. He repeatedly has voted for extremist environmentalist measures that are costing Americans billions of dollars. He repeatedly has catered to the “counterculture” and the militant homosexual lobby.

Newt Gingrich’s rating on the Conservative Index (CI) of *The New American*, while better than many other members of Congress, is far from the stellar rating you would expect from one heralded as “the theoretician in chief” of the conservatives in Congress. His CI ratings for his eight terms in office have fluctuated between fairly good to mediocre to abysmal:

96th Congress: 84

97th Congress: 77

98th Congress: 74

99th Congress: 80

100th Congress: 80

101st Congress: 57

102nd Congress: 60

103rd Congress: 78

The following sample of votes shows only some of the many decidedly unconservative votes Gingrich has cast:

Welfare Madness. During his 16 years in Congress, Gingrich has inveighed vociferously against the evils of the New Deal/Great Society welfare state – while voting for every kind of welfare program imaginable: for the elderly, children, the “homeless,” businessmen, farmers, bankers, leftwing broadcasters, etc. Those votes include: March 21, 1991 – \$30 billion to begin the unconstitutional bailout of failed savings and loan institutions; June 26, 1991 – \$52.6 billion for agriculture programs, subsidies, and food stamps; October 5, 1992 – \$66.5 billion for housing and community development; September 22, 1994 – \$250.6 billion in appropriations for the Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education.

Budget-Busting Profligacy. A Balanced Budget Amendment forms the core of the first plank of Gingrich’s “Contract with America.” He has been calling for such a measure and condemning deficit spending ever since coming to Congress. In an early 1982 speech he called on Congress to reject further increases in the National Debt Limit. “Only by using the debt limit as a leverage point” he bravely declared, “can we force the changes which clearly the liberal leadership of this body wants to avoid.” Trouble is, a few months earlier, on February 5, 1981, he had voted with those same “liberals” to raise the National Debt ceiling by another \$49.1 billion to \$985 billion. He has gone this same route many times since.

Of course, raising the debt ceiling would not have been necessary had he practiced what he preached. His votes against “more frugal government” include: December 21, 1987 – \$603.9 billion for 13 regular appropriation bills larded with many wasteful, extravagant, and unconstitutional items (it passed by a vote of 209 to 208); May 4, 1989 – outlays of \$1.165 trillion and a deficit of \$99 billion for a dishonest and spendthrift 1990 budget designed to barely skim in under the Gramm-Rudman \$100 billion deficit limit; March 10, 1994 – a vote *against* a responsible amendment offered by Representative Gerald



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Solomon (R-NY) to balance the budget by 1999 through \$698 billion in spending cuts (a mere 3.5 percent cut) over five years.

Considering these and other votes against sound fiscal policy, it is not surprising that Gingrich's spendthrift ways have carried over into his personal finances. The 1992 House banking scandal revealed that he had run 22 overdrafts on his checking account, and this in spite of having voted himself a huge pay raise and having a taxpayer-provided, chauffeur-driven car. Nor is it surprising that his rating from the National Taxpayers Union during the latest session of Congress (the 103rd) was a meager 75 percent. His tax-and-spend record over the years on votes tabulated by Tax Reform Immediately (TRIM) has so often contradicted his rhetoric that National Director of TRIM James Tort was prompted to remark: "Professor Gingrich hopefully will never be called upon to teach a course in the proper role of our federal government. His rare votes against bloated big government usually have been prompted by the partisan wrangling of the moment, not by any great respect for, or understanding of, the Constitution."

Foreign Aid. If there is anything more unpopular, unconstitutional, counterproductive, fiscally irresponsible, and immoral than welfare for domestic freeloaders, it is welfare for foreign freeloaders. But the "tight-fisted" Mr. Gingrich consistently votes to send U.S. tax dollars to kleptocrats and tyrants abroad: June 27, 1990 — \$15.7 billion in foreign aid for fiscal 1991; June 20 1991 — \$12.4 billion for fiscal 1992 and \$13 billion for fiscal 1993; June 25, 1992 — \$13.8 billion for fiscal 1993; August 6, 1992 — \$12.3 billion for the International Monetary Fund and \$1.2 billion for the "republics" of the former Soviet Union; June 17, 1993 — \$13 billion for fiscal 1994; September 29, 1993 — \$12.9 billion, including \$2.5 billion to Russia; August 4, 1994 — \$13.8 billion for foreign aid for fiscal 1995.

Eco-Lunacy. Gingrich, a longtime member of the Georgia Conservancy ("an aggressive environmental group comprised largely of upper-middle class urbanites" — Newt's own words) cofounded by Jimmy Carter, organized one of the early environmental studies programs back in 1970 while a professor at West Georgia State College. According to *Current Biography*, the success of his early congressional campaigns was due in large part "to the support of environmentalists." Besides being blatantly unconstitutional, virtually all federal environmental legislation involves gross violations of states' rights and the property rights of private individuals, both of which Gingrich claims to champion. Newt's "green" votes include: May 16, 1979 — the -Alaska Lands Bill, locking up 68 million acres as untouchable "wilderness"; December 17, 1987 — \$307 million for continuation of the fraudulent and unconstitutional Endangered Species Act, putting the "rights" of owls, bugs, rats, snakes, and newts above those of people; March 28, 1990 — elevating the unconstitutional Environmental Protection Agency to Cabinet-level status; May 23, 1990 — the badly misnamed Clean Air bill, requiring radical cuts in industry and automobile emissions, adding tens of billions of dollars annually in new costs to our already stringent and costly air standards.

Federalizing Education. The *Communist Manifesto* calls for nationalizing education, while the U.S. Constitution, to the contrary, prohibits federal involvement in educational matters. These votes cause one to wonder which document's philosophy is guiding Newt Gingrich's education policy decisions: May 10, 1979 — for creation of the new Cabinet-level Department of Education demanded by President Carter and the radical National Education Association; May 9, 1989 — \$1.4 billion in federal aid for "applied technology education," the new federalese for vocational education; May 16, 1990 — \$2.9 billion for Head Start and Follow Through programs for fiscal 1991, rising to \$7.7 billion in 1994; July 20, 1990 — \$1.1 billion for a variety of education programs, none of which the federal government has



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authority to fund; May 12, 1994 – “such sums as may be necessary” for the \$3.3 billion-per-year Head Start program and \$2.6 billion for fiscal 1995 for three low-income and child abuse prevention programs.

Counterculture Values. Despite playing to the “religious right,” Gingrich has racked up a surprisingly “moderate” record on homosexual “rights.” His troubling votes include: May 22, 1990 – the Americans with Disabilities Act, permitting massive new federal intervention into the private workplace in order to stop “discrimination” in hiring on the basis of disability, including AIDS; June 13, 1990 – \$2.76 billion for various AIDS programs demanded by the militant homosexual lobby; July 12, 1990 – the final version of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

On July 26, 1990 Gingrich voted with the majority in refusing to support a resolution by Representative William Dannemeyer (R-CA) to expel Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) for felony criminal offenses related to his homosexual activities. He actively supported the re-election of Representative Steve Gunderson (R-WI), an open homosexual, and praises Gunderson’s “courage” for being “gay” and Republican.

Nationalizing Law Enforcement. On October 22, 1991, Gingrich voted for an amendment to the federal crime bill offered by Representative David McCurdy (D-OK) to establish a National Police Corps. Although he didn’t vote for the \$30-billion Clinton crime bill of 1994, he resurrected it and helped make passage possible. As Representative Susan Molinari (R-NY), one of Newt’s cheerleaders, explained to Michael Kinsley on CNN’s Crossfire, “If it wasn’t for Newt Gingrich, you wouldn’t have a crime bill.”

Indeed. The Gingrich-led opposition “threw” the game, failing to challenge the bill’s fundamental flaw – that the federal government has no constitutional authority to take over state and local crime-fighting duties – and focused instead on “pork” in the bill. “That crime bill stank to high heaven,” charged Pat Buchanan. “[I]t federalizes crimes such as spousal abuse, giving the feds police power the Constitution reserves to the states.” And the crime package in Newt’s “Contract With America” would speed us further down the road toward a national police state.

Newt’s Roots

Llewellyn Rockwell, president of the Ludwig von Mises Institute and publisher of *The Free Market*, observes that, rhetoric notwithstanding, “Newt Gingrich is a Rockefeller Republican, a big-government ‘Conservative’ who talks a good line, but like Ronald Reagan will give us higher taxes, more government, and more spending. His ‘Contract With America’ is a fraud; it should be called a ‘Press Conference with America.’” Or, perhaps, a “Contract *On* America.” Newt’s “Contract,” with its calls for amendments to balance the budget and impose term limits, seems to imply that our original contract, the U.S. Constitution, is gravely deficient. This could give new impetus to the dangerous movement for a constitutional convention. *

The problems with Newt Gingrich’s “conservatism” go back to his “roots.” *Current Biography Yearbook* for 1989 gives this snapshot of his early career:

After graduating from Emory [University in Atlanta] in 1965, Gingrich received a master’s degree from Tulane University in 1968 and a Ph.D. degree in modern European history in 1971. His behavior at Tulane appeared to belie his future conservatism and hawkish foreign-policy views. He accepted student deferments rather than face the draft during the Vietnam War, experimented with marijuana, led a campus demonstration defending the school paper’s right to print a nude photograph of a faculty member, and campaigned for Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York



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in 1968 because of the governor's support of civil rights.

Nelson Rockefeller, of course, was the bane of all conservatives, the epitome of effete internationalism, and a member of the CFR (run by his brother David) and the ruling elite of the Eastern Establishment. In his unsuccessful runs for Congress in 1974 and 1976 Gingrich showed no deep conservative leanings. He was, and remains, a member of the NAACP, the World Futurist Society, and the New Age-oriented Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future. In 1978 *Congressional Quarterly* gave this bio of the freshman congressman: "In his previous campaigns Gingrich was considered unusually liberal for a Georgia Republican. But this year he relied on the tax cut issue, using an empty shopping cart to emphasize his concern about inflation." He also capitalized on the widespread anger over President Carter's Panama policy and headed up "Georgians Against the Panama Canal Treaty." He has been using conservative issues to advance his career ever since.

In 1981 this writer asked Georgia Congressman Larry McDonald for an evaluation of the rising Republican star from his neighboring 6th District. His reply was surprising, at the time. Newt Gingrich, he said, was a devious and ambitious politician masquerading as a conservative and not one to be trusted. Gingrich had gone out of his way, Dr. McDonald said, to obstruct and to undermine support of conservative members of Congress for some of McDonald's legislative efforts. This was particularly disturbing since Representative McDonald was *the* most conservative member of Congress — by virtually all ratings systems — and would have been a natural ally of Gingrich if Gingrich were truly conservative. In July 1983, the *Conservative Digest* compared the voting scores of the leading conservatives in Congress based on ratings from the American Conservative Union, the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, and The New American's own Conservative Index. Congressman McDonald topped the list at a combined 98.3 percent. Congressman Gingrich weighed in at an anemic 77.5 percent.

CFR-Crafted Conservative

However, by beating his chest more loudly, trumpeting his message more stridently, and pursuing power more ruthlessly than all others, Gingrich has won the title of Maximum Leader of the "Conservative Revolution." Not that it was all his own doing, by any means; the CFR-dominated "liberal" media have been only too accommodating in crafting conservative bona fides for one of their own. It is a sickeningly familiar redux.

In 1976, CFR front man Jimmy Carter was presented to us by the same CFR media elites as a "conservative" Southern Baptist from Georgia who would give us the "change" America needed. In 1992 it was CFR member Bill Clinton, another "conservative" Southern Baptist from Arkansas who was sold to the country as the ticket to positive "change," the "New Democrat" with "traditional values" and a "New Covenant." Now comes "conservative" Southern Baptist and CFR member Newt Gingrich, with promises of drastic "change" and a new "contract." If you're beginning to sense another imminent betrayal, congratulations: you're catching on.

Photo of Newt Gingrich: AP Images



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