



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 17, 2011

Gingrich and Johnson Address Crowd at Republican Leadership Conference

This year, New Orleans is hosting the Republican Leadership Conference. Regarding the title of this event, let's just say two out of three ain't bad. This confab of the "conservative" party in America had all the trappings of any other convention: satellite organizations handing out swag, buttons galore, bumper stickers, speeches, and lanyards.



The faithful by the score turned up to fill bags with pens, pamphlets, and paraphernalia stamped with "xxxx2012." Numbered credentials dangled from around the necks of attendees scurrying from ballroom to "courtesy suite" to hear the good news of the forthcoming return of the GOP to the White House.

The top of the bill for Thursday's opening sessions were presidential hopefuls Gary Johnson and Newt Gingrich. Priming the crowd for the the headliners were a coterie of Republican activists, all of whom were adept at ticking off the talking points: Obama (bad), conservative (good), Pelosi (bad), Israel (very good).

Speaking of Israel, there was a lot of speaking of Israel. Nearly every presenter wrapped himself in the blue and white banner of the middle east nation, promoting the United States as the protector of Israel. Naturally, there is a significant Christian undertone in the rhetoric. Despite the diverse topics in which occasional reference to the Constitution was made, there was no citation of any constitutional authorization for the use of the American military forces in the defense of another nation — even one considered a traditional and faithful ally.

Gary Johnson, the former governor of New Mexico, took the stage, bringing with him an atmosphere redolent more of a guest lecturer than a candidate for office. His manner is undeniably professorial and his delivery is soft and almost plaintive. His positions, however, do merit the effort to hear.

If he were elected President, Gary Johnson declared three great priorities: first, to eliminate the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); next, pass a Fair Tax; and, last, to restore confidence in America.

With only the briefest of explication of those goals, Johnson meekly segued into his panoply of policy postures.

There were a few items on the Johnson agenda with which many readers of *The New American* would be allies. For example, the former governor of New Mexico proclaimed that he would "never support cap and trade." Certainly this commitment would garner praise from constitutionalists who recognize that the federal government has no authorization to employ such a scheme.



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Another Johnson position that would fall on sympathetic ears with a constitutionalist crowd was the declaration that, were he elected President, Governor Johnson would “get us out of Afghanistan and Iraq tomorrow.” The deployment of the American armed forces overseas for the purpose of toppling one government only to erect another in its stead, not necessarily one any more friendly to the United States or to the principles of self-government. In fact, in Afghanistan, we drove the Taliban into the mountains only to now be ringing the dinner bell, calling them to the table to carve up the country over which they were the once and future rulers.

Johnson, striking a very libertarian pose at times in his discourse, said that as President he would cut all foreign aid out of the federal budget. “It is senseless,” he explained, “to borrow 43 cents of every dollar we have only to give it away to foreign governments.” While his public speech was bold and unwavering, his tone changed, however, when asked during his press availability if he would cut out all humanitarian aid, as well. “Well, no,” he retreated, “I’d have to look at the important humanitarian aid and I could be persuaded to continue that sort of good will.” So much for the staunchness.

In an interview with *The New American*, Johnson was pressed further for his positions on issues of top of mind concern to constitutionalists. While the full interview will be published in an upcoming issue of *The New American*, a brief synopsis of a few of the GOP hopeful’s responses is given below.

With regard to reducing the size of government, Johnson said he would only propose the elimination of two agencies: the Department of Education and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). With regard to education, Johnson said he would prefer money be kept in the local school districts and that control of curriculum be placed there, as well.

With the forthcoming formation of NAFTA-like regional trade zones (the North American Union (NAU) and Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), for example), *The New American* asked Johnson whether he favored the creation of those extra-constitutional, sovereignty-stealing trade blocs. Johnson replied that he originally supported NAFTA, but upon finding out that it was not free, but “corporatist,” he changed his opinion. As for future measures, he would evaluate them individually and decide whether or not to sign them into law based on how free they really are. Not the firm “no” constitutionalists would prefer on such a fundamental issue to our freedom.

As for nullification (the right of the states to disregard laws passed by Congress in violation of the enumerated powers of the Constitution), Johnson said he is generally for it and would call himself a “states’ rights candidate,” but under a President Johnson the issue would be moot as he would never sign a bill that exceeded the constitutional parameters drawn around the powers granted to Congress.

Next, when asked by *The New American* whether as President he would push for the abolition of the Federal Reserve, Gary Johnson responded that “political realities” prevent the dismantling of the Fed. While theoretically he would favor “the notion of abolition” of the unconstitutionally created central bank, in practice it would need to remain viable in some form and the workaround would be to prevent the Fed from printing money and to pass a Balanced Budget Amendment.

As Gary Jonson exited stage right, the applause was polite though hardly enthusiastic. As the applause de-crescendoed, the lights went dim, the spotlights spun and the cleanup hitter, the headliner, the de facto keynote speaker, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich took the stage.

The crowd went nuts. Cheers of “Newt! Newt! Newt!” resounded in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. The surprisingly teapot shaped (short and stout) candidate took the stage.

There was no mention whatsoever of the recent debacles that have plagued the Gingrich campaign: the



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mass defection of his top-tier staff, Gingrich's embrace of the "individual mandate" of ObamaCare, the reported interference of his wife in the day-in-day-out running of her husband's presidential campaign. Recognizing that he was among friends, Newt immediately donned the metaphorical robes of the philosopher-king.

This Platonic ideal has, if not actually, apparently been adopted by the former Speaker. He mentioned numerous times in his speech that he was a "historian, not a politician." While that sounds awe-inspiring and noble, the facts prove otherwise (there will be a larger treatment of this contradiction in an upcoming print article covering the principal speeches of the Republican Leadership Conference).

In demonstration of historian bona fides, Mr. Gingrich promoted the following of the principles of the Judicial Reform Act of 1802. He rightly stated that Thomas Jefferson and James Madison intended the Congress to have control over the federal bench. The exercise of the Founders' enactments would rid the nation of activists judges who are writing laws from the bench and enshrining themselves as an unelected, unaccountable oligarchy.

While Gingrich cites the reasoning of Jefferson and Madison, the power they gave the Congress to control the federal courts, he said he would not fire half the federal judges. When asked by a member of the audience, "Why not?" Gingrich responded, "I'm not as bold as Jefferson and Madison." That was inarguably the truest statement made by Newt in his entire talk.

With regard to the courts, however, Mr. Gingrich did state that he would "eliminate the Ninth Circuit [Court of Appeals]." Likely said to appease the "activists" in the crowd, but a noble notion nonetheless.

Tilting at windmills aside, what would President Gingrich do on his first day in the Oval Office? According to Gingrich, as soon as the inauguration was over, he would run over to an office at the Capitol and "sign 50 to 200 executive orders" that would take immediate effect.

What would these executive orders address? That is up to the public. Gingrich proposed a plan to allow the American public to propose executive orders. Then, the slough of popular proposals would be vetted by "Reagan and Bush people" and Gingrich would sign the best of the lot.

Newt Gingrich did identify the first four executive orders. First, eliminate all White House czars. Second, repeal the funding of overseas abortions. Third, empower medical care professionals to refuse to perform any procedure violative of their personal beliefs. Last, the United States will officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Although the crowd aggressively applauded Gingrich's scheme, ruling by fiat is not a conservative principle and sets at naught the constitutional allocation of power and the separation of powers. A Republican autocrat is no less a dictator than any other.

As with so many of the day's speakers, Gingrich attached himself (and by extension, the United States) to the side of Israel. "We make no moral equivalents between a free government and a terrorist organization." The crowd erupted in almost evangelical zeal at the mention of a permanent alliance between the United States and Israel. How anyone familiar with history (as Gingrich so frequently proclaims) could espouse such a senseless and irrevocable entanglement is inexplicable. How conservatives could roundly and loudly cheer such a suggestion is equally perplexing.

Finally, former Speaker Gingrich announced his administration's first week policy program. First, he would pass a tax cut. Second, he would "create 25 million jobs. This would bring a concomitant benefit of increasing federal revenue as workers would be paying payroll tax. Next, he would eliminate capital



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gains tax and cap the corporate tax rates at 12 percent.

All of these points, as well as most of the ideas fomented by other presenters and candidates, they kept reminding attendees, are policies that Ronald Reagan would embrace. Throughout this meeting, and reaching its apex with Newt Gingrich, there was an almost reverent display of palaeolatry with regard to Ronald Reagan. From the team vetting the people's executive orders to the imprimatur of his policy platform, the name of Ronald Reagan was invoked again and again and again.

Far from a revolution, the speakers, prominent and lesser known, at the Republican Leadership Conference promised what amounts to a clever rebranding of the same old, same old Establishment principles that have eviscerated our Constitution.

Photo: Republican presidential hopeful, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich speaks at the Republican Leadership Conference in New Orleans, June 16, 2011.: AP Images



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