



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on December 4, 2011

GOP Presidential Hopefuls Turn to Neocons for Foreign Policy Direction

As his poll numbers increase, so does the interest in the policies Gingrich advocates and the identity of the cadre of counselors who have his ear.

As to the former, Gingrich's appearance at a recent GOP debate where he declared his support for an amnesty program for illegals has given pundits and his opponents plenty of fodder for attack.

In the case of the latter, the roster of advisors that Gingrich has announced reveals the true trajectory that the once and future neoconservative would take were he elected to the White House.



In fact, Gingrich's foreign policy pronouncements, and the advisors he has turned to for fleshing them out, are so consistently neocon that one report called a possible Newt Gingrich administration a "[neocon fantasy land](#)."

An interested observer need look no further than the publication touting the qualifications of Team Gingrich. *Foreign Policy*, formerly the print mouthpiece of the Carnegie Foundation, recently published [the roster of Gingrich's foreign policy molders](#). The article crowns that the experienced "brain trust" tapped by Gingrich to formulate his foreign policy platform "have known Newt for decades, and see themselves as helping a candidate who already boasts a long track record and well-formed intellectual identity when it comes to foreign policy."

A summary of the Gingrich gang of foreign conflict hawks and their neocon bona fides was [reported](#) by Talking Points Memo.

David Wurmser: Gingrich's Middle East policy adviser was a notorious member of Vice President Cheney's inner circle that pushed the U.S. into war in Iraq. Once he was questioned during an espionage probe while in the vice president's office, and he was one of the names driving the initial support for the later disgraced Ahmed Chalabi. Asked by the *Daily Telegraph* in 2007 if he was a neocon, he offered this: "There's nothing 'neo' about me. I'm a very medieval sort of guy."

James Woolsey: A former director of the CIA, Woolsey recently spoke at a panel hosted by the founder of Judicial Watch focused on President Obama's "political jihad promoting Islam around the world." Woolsey is a serious Iran hawk, warning that the way the West is dealing with the nation at the moment "rhymes with what was taking place in the 1930s [with Nazi Germany]". Woolsey is a Democrat (of the Lieberman school) but he's helped Republicans running for president before. In 2008, he advised John McCain.

Stephen Yates: Another ex-Cheney national security team member, Yates is known among other things for his work on China. One former U.S. ambassador to China familiar with Yates says he



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views “China as the solution to ‘enemy deprivation syndrome.’” As Counterpunch explained the theory, “You need some unifying enemy after the collapse of the Soviet Union.” Not exactly the most productive way to view one of America’s most important trading partner, perhaps.

While that is undoubtedly an impressive line up of neocon heavy hitters, Gingrich isn’t alone in his commitment to keeping these players in the foreign policy game.

The spread of neocon fever among the Republicans vying to represent their party in the November 2012 presidential election was ably diagnosed in [a recent article published](#) by the Huffington Post.

The results of the unilateralism, preemptive war and democracy-promotion that the neocons forcefully advocated and helped make the official policy of President George W. Bush’s administration are still playing out as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down. President Barack Obama may have banned the use of “enhanced interrogation techniques,” but other elements of the “War on Terrorism” remain, from secret prisons in Afghanistan and Europe to Guantanamo Bay to the use of illegal wiretapping. And despite Herman Cain’s claim that he was “not familiar with the neoconservative movement” — among other things — its influence is clearly on display in the race for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination.

So prevalent is the neocon doctrine among the Republican presidential contenders that none other than Zbigniew Brzezinski recently said, “The Republican would-be candidates are simply regurgitating ideas originally disseminated by the neocons.” That’s quite an indictment.

What follows is a brief breakdown of the influence wielded by neocon luminaries in the squads of advisors being employed by the many of the current GOP presidential candidates.

Texas Governor and GOP presidential hopeful, Rick Perry, turns to Donald Rumsfeld acolyte Doug Feith for guidance on many matters of foreign policy. Readers of *The New American* will recognize Feith’s name. He is notorious for promoting the now completely debunked connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Then there is the call by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney for the dawning of a “New American Century.” That mantra is suspiciously (intentionally?) similar to the name of the notoriously warmongering neocon think tank [Project for a New American Century](#). This cohort was populated by a collection of neocon “who’s who” including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Gary Bauer, and William Kristol.

A [recent article](#) in the Examiner described the Project’s fascination for foreign conflict:

This group was arguably the force behind the invasion of Iraq, who had no ties to 9/11 and possessed no weapons of mass destruction. The toll on that country has been absolutely devastating, and while the taxpayer foots the bill for the military presence there, private corporations make huge profits in contracts and exploitation.

Two years prior to the 9/11 attacks, the Project for a New American Century [pushed for American troops to be sent to Serbia](#).

That’s quite the record of devotion to the deployment of the armed forces of the United States to fight in conflicts around the world, none of which are authorized by the Constitution.

One Clinton-era State Department official summed up Romney’s likely plan to expand the New American Century and the new American empire into Tehran.



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“Assuming that economic sanctions won’t convince Iran to change course — and I don’t think they will — Romney seems pretty locked into bombing Iran if he’s president,” said James Rubin.

Of course, Romney’s fondness for neocon folly is to be expected given the clique of counselors he’s assembled: Robert Kagan, Dan Senor, and Eliot Cohen. These three have each earned a place in the pantheon of neocon greats.

Even the former favorite of the Tea Party, Minnesota Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, has recruited her foreign policy pros from the rank of the neocon elite.

[Reports published](#) by *The New Republic* indicate that Bachmann has turned to Islamophobe Frank Gaffney for help in formulating her foreign policy platform. Gaffney identified himself as a “resource she [Bachmann] has tapped.”

Gaffney keeps his curriculum vitae up to date by regularly publishing diatribes proclaiming the threat posed by Islam to the security of the United States of America. Curiously, Gaffney has never identified the hawks in Congress obsessed with illegally invading primarily Muslim countries as having contributed to the rise of anti-American sentiment in that region.

Of course, not all GOP presidential contenders base their foreign policy positions on neoconservative advise. In contrast to their advocacy of foreign interventionism, Congressman Ron Paul, who supports noninterventionism, regards his colleagues’ adherence to the neocon doctrine of global warfare as a tragic waste of the Founders’ gift to the nation: the Constitution.

Photo of Newt Gingrich: AP Images



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