

[the elephant forgets]

## Where the Right Went Wrong

From Big Government to endless war, the Republican Party has lost its soul.

By Patrick J. Buchanan

*By the opening of the Republican National Convention in New York, Where the Right Went Wrong: How Neo-conservatives Subverted the Reagan Revolution and Hijacked the Bush Presidency by Pat Buchanan was one of the best-selling books in America. The book deals with how the party of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan generated an administration that, while Reaganite on taxes, is committed to a Wilsonian foreign policy, an FDR trade policy, and LBJ immigration and fiscal policies, and what conservatives must do to recapture the movement, party, and country they have lost. Herewith, a few excerpts from Where the Right Went Wrong:*

### Conservatism & the New GOP

Historically, Republicans have been the party of the conservative virtues—of balanced budgets, a healthy skepticism toward foreign wars, of a commitment to traditional values and fierce resistance to the growth of government power and world empire. No more. To win and hold high office, many have sold their souls to the very devil they were baptized to do battle with.

The party has embraced a neo-imperial foreign policy that would have been seen by the Founding Fathers as a

breach of faith. It has cast off the philosophy of Taft, Goldwater, and Reagan to remake itself into the Big Government party long championed by the Rockefeller Republicans whom the conservative movement was called into existence to drive out from the temple. Many Republicans have abandoned the campaign to make America a color-blind society and have begun to stack arms in the culture wars.

There is no conservative party left in Washington. Conservative thinkers and writers who were to be the watchdogs of orthodoxy have been as vigilant in policing party deviations from principle as was Cardinal Law in collaring the predator-priests of the Boston archdiocese.

Conservatism, as taught by 20th-century leaders like Robert Taft, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Jesse Helms, is dead. Forty years after conservatives captured the party in the coup at the Cow Palace, ten years after the Republican Revolution of 1994, what do they have to show for it besides their committee chairmanships and cabinet chairs?

The GOP may be Reaganite in its tax policy, but it is Wilsonian in its foreign policy, FDR in its trade policy, and LBJ all the way in its spending policies. Pragmatism is the order of the day. The

Republican philosophy might be summarized: “To hell with principle, what matters is power, and that we have it, and that they do not.”

### The Bush Doctrine

What, then, are the elements of the Bush Doctrine as enunciated in the presidential speeches and statements in the two years following 9/11?

- The War on Terror is between good and evil, and it will not end until we eradicate all terror networks of a global reach. Every nation must decide: either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. Any nation that feeds or funds a group we designate as terrorist will be treated as a terrorist state, subject to attack.
- No rogue nation, especially Iran, Iraq, or North Korea, will be allowed to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The United States claims a right to launch pre-emptive strikes and preventive wars against any rogue regime that seeks such weapons.
- With Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq, we have launched a world democratic revolution that will continue

until all the despotisms of the Middle East are overthrown and replaced by democracies. And this revolution will not end until the world is democratic. We undertake this duty to mankind because we are good and our enemies are evil, we are the “single surviving model of human progress,” and only when the world is democratic can America be truly secure.

- No nation will be permitted ever again to rise to a position of power where it can challenge the United States, globally or regionally.

Let it be said: this is utopianism. This is democratic imperialism. This will bleed, bankrupt, and isolate this Republic. This overthrows the wisdom of the Founding Fathers about what America should be all about. It is an American version of the Brezhnev Doctrine, wherein Moscow asserted a right to intervene to save communism in any nation where it had once been imposed. Only we Americans now have the right to intervene anywhere to impose democracy. This is a presidential embrace of that democratist temptation against which this writer warned the first President Bush in a *National Interest* essay 15 years ago:

How other people rule themselves is their own business. To call it a vital interest of the United States is to contradict history and common sense. And for the Republic to seek to dictate to 160 nations what kind of regime each should have is a formula for interminable meddling and endless conflict; it is a textbook example of that “messianic globaloney” against which Dean Acheson warned; it is, in scholar Clyde Wilson’s phrase, a globalization of that degenerate form of Protestantism known as the Social Gospel.

### On the Neocons’ War

Thus was it that the neoconservatives who had plotted, planned, and agitated for a war on Iraq for a decade got their war.

In 1995, Irving Kristol had written, “With the end of the Cold War, what we really need is an obvious ideological and threatening enemy, one worthy of our mettle, one that can unite us in opposition.”

On 9/11, opportunity knocked. The neoconservatives had a new “enemy ... worthy of our mettle,” radical Islam, a new ideology, an ideology of empire, and a new doctrine, democratism, the waging of “World War IV” to advance a “world democratic revolution.” They had what Richard Perle and David Frum would call “our generation’s great cause.”

Yet the neoconservatives could not have taken America to war on Iraq had they not persuaded Bush, Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Powell of the necessity of war. They could not have succeeded had they not been in critical posts at the Pentagon and the vice president’s office to “cherry-pick” and “stove-pipe”

many thousands wounded and maimed. America has been shamed by the obscene cruelties of Abu Ghraib and is now doubtful of the wisdom of having gone to war. As Iraq appears to be careening toward chaos and civil war, Bush must be muttering with Melbourne, “What all the wise men promised has not happened and what all the damn fools said would happen has come to pass.” Yet, like the Bourbons of old, the neoconservatives seem to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

In February 2004, Krauthammer was still triumphantly rhapsodizing at the annual AEI dinner that we Americans have “acquired the largest seeming empire in the history of the world.” We are the world’s “unipolar power ... the custodian of the international system.” We have “global dominion.”

“This is a staggering new development in history, not seen since the fall of Rome,” Krauthammer ranted on, “Even Rome is no model for what America is today.” As Francis Fukuyama wrote sadly afterwards, such passages suggest that Krauthammer has become “strangely disconnected from reality.”

**THIS IS UTOPIANISM. THIS IS DEMOCRATIC IMPERIALISM. THIS WILL BLEED, BANKRUPT, AND ISOLATE THIS REPUBLIC.**

intelligence to the president pointing to Iraqi programs to build nuclear weapons and Iraqi complicity in 9/11. They could not have succeeded without collaborators in the neoconservative and mainstream media.

And so it came to pass that the neocons captured a president and may yet destroy his presidency. Eighteen months have now elapsed since the fall of Baghdad. The cost of the war is at \$200 billion and rising with 1,000 U.S. dead and

“Reading Krauthammer,” says Fukuyama, “one gets the impression the Iraq war ... had been an unqualified success, with all of the assumptions and expectations on which the war had been based fully vindicated.” Yet it has been anything but an unqualified success.

These, then, were the men and ideas behind the greatest strategic blunder in 40 years, a mistake more costly than Vietnam. Yet the halcyon days of the War Party may be over and the neocon-

servative hour in American politics may be coming to an end. For rather than seeking new Middle East wars to fight, President Bush and Secretaries Rumsfeld and Powell seem to be looking for an exit ramp out of the Mesopotamian morass.

## Why Do They Hate Us?

When the terrorists of 9/11 drove those planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Americans were shocked at how many in the Islamic world said, "The Americans had it coming!"

What had we done that any should take satisfaction in the massacre of 3,000 of our people? Why did demonstrators from Pakistan to Palestine support the Taliban? Why do millions in that world admire Osama? Why do Islamic radicals hate us so they are willing to commit suicide if only they can take some of us with them? They cannot defeat or destroy the United States. Are they mad?

"Why do they hate us?" Americans asked after 9/11. President Bush professed himself shocked even by the implications of the questions. "I am," he declared,

amazed ... that in some Islamic countries there is vitriolic hatred of America .... I'm amazed that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us .... like most Americans, I just can't believe [it]. Because I know how good we are.

When others probed for a deeper answer, they were charged with "blaming America first," parroting enemy propaganda, trying to place responsibility on our own country for what the murderers had done to us.

We were attacked, declared *National Review* on its cover, "because we are

powerful, rich and good." Our enemies "hate our democracy, our liberal markets, and our abundance and economic opportunity, at which the terror attacks were clearly directed," said Jack Kemp.

"They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government," President Bush told Congress, "They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."

Americans for Victory Over Terrorism, a subsidiary of Empower America, declared in its statement of principles, "The radical Islamists who attacked us did so because of our democratic ideals, our belief in, and practice of, liberty and equality."

With due respect, these answers insult the intelligence of a second-grader. Did the Japanese attack us at Pearl Harbor because we were free, rich, good, and had low marginal tax rates? What is it about us Americans that we so often lack for what the poet Burns said was the greatest gift the gods can give us, "to see ourselves as others see us."

We are not hated for who we are. We are hated for what we do. It is not our principles that have spawned pandemic hatred of America in the Islamic world. It is our policies.

Nothing justifies the mass murders of September 11. Nothing. Nor need we hear out the extended plea bargains of those who slaughtered our countrymen. They deserve the rough justice they are receiving. But now that the Taliban have gone down, and bin Laden is in hiding, and Iraq is occupied, we need to reflect on why Islamic peoples despise the United States so much they wish to see us dead or gone. If we wish to avert a clash of civilizations, from which we have nothing to gain, we need to listen to what they say, not to what we say, about America.

## Is Islam the Enemy?

To defeat a faith you need a faith. While Islamic warriors appear willing to die to drive infidels out of the Islamic world, Westerners appear indifferent to Christian persecution in the Islamic world. While Muslims are full of grievance, Westerners are full of guilt. We preach the equality of all faiths. But where Islam is dominant, it rejects equality, for it holds there is but one true faith. Islam is assertive, the West apologetic—about crusaders, conquerors, and empires.

"More Christians are being martyred today than at the height of the Roman persecutions, and most of them are dying at the hands of Islam," writes scholar and strategist William Lind, "As had been true throughout its history, the expansion of Islam is not peaceful."

But the threat of Islamic fundamentalism is not an immediate threat to America. Nor are U.S. combat divisions designed to defeat a fighting faith. If Islam is rising and its sons are prepared to die to enlarge the Dar al-Islam and use terror to drive us out of their world, can we defeat it? No other Western empire did.

If a clash of civilizations is coming, the West is unchallenged in wealth and weaponry. Yet wealth did not prevent the collapse of Europe's empires, nor did awesome weaponry prevent the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Rome was mighty, Christianity weak. Christianity prevailed.

America's enemy in the Islamic world is not a state we can crush with sanctions or an enemy we can defeat with force of arms. The enemy is a cause, a movement, an idea.

## The Canonization of Terrorists

While we condemn terror, it will be used again and again. For terror often triumphs. Sherman and the Union armies

crushed the South, setting it back a century. But they were victorious, they freed the slaves, and they are lionized. Hiroshima and Nagasaki convinced the emperor that unconditional surrender to America was preferable to the alternative. The IRA, the Irgun, the Stern Gang, the Viet Minh, the FLN, the Mau Mau,

D.W. Griffith's classic "Birth of a Nation" portrayed the Klan as gallant and heroic. Geronimo, the Indian chief who murdered pioneer women and children, was lionized in a Hollywood film. "Michael Collins" is the title of a film starring Liam Neeson, in which Collins is portrayed as an Irish hero fighting for

the matador, though smaller and weaker, drives the sword into the soft spot between the shoulder blades of the bull. For the bull has failed to understand that the snapping cape was but a provocation to goad it into attacking and exhausting itself for the kill.

This is sobering news for the American imperium. For while the United States is a republic, autocracy is a better description of the regimes we support in the Middle East and Central Asia. Our dominance of that region and our reflexive support of Israel are universally resented. Also, to devout Muslims, as to devout Christians, our popular culture is decadent and toxic. Muslims look on our cultural exports the way patriotic Chinese regarded Britain's imposition of the opium trade on their people.

Our problem in this vast region is that tens of millions of Arab and Islamic peoples have now concluded they want us out, the Israelis gone, and pro-Western autocrats overthrown. Support for Osama is widespread—for the Palestinian *intifada* it is universal. Islamists who fight us in the name of these goals are swimming with a powerful current.

## **OFTEN, TERRORISM SUCCEEDED IN THE 20TH CENTURY, AND, WHEN IT DID, THE EX-TERRORISTS ACHIEVED POWER, GLORY, AND IMMORTALITY.**

the ANC all used terror and all prevailed. And the innocent blood that was shed in the revolution is quickly forgotten in the exhilaration of victory.

The FLN's Ben Bella became the first president of Algeria. Jomo Kenyatta, Kikiyu leader of the Mau Mau, became the father of his country, Kenya, and the "grand old man" of Africa. Yitzhak Shamir became prime minister as did Menachem Begin, who would go on to win the Nobel Prize for Peace. So would Nelson Mandela, who went to prison in 1964 for the bombing of trains and whose ANC was famous for "necklacing" enemies, i.e., cutting off their arms and draping a gas-filled tire around their necks, which was set ablaze to the laughter of the mob. Mandela is today perhaps the most respected political figure on earth. Arafat, too, shares a Nobel Prize for Peace and aspires to be the first president of Palestine.

The body of the Communist state terrorist Ho Chi Minh is honored in Hanoi. Saigon is now Ho Chi Minh City. The remains of the tyrant responsible for the deaths of perhaps 30 million Chinese lie in a crystal sarcophagus in Tiananmen Square. The waxen body of Lenin, the arch-terrorist and the brother of the terrorist who attempted to assassinate Czar Alexander III, lies in a mausoleum in the heart of Red Square.

freedom. In "State of Siege," the 1973 film based on the kidnapping and murder of a USAID official in Uruguay, the Tupamaro executioners are portrayed as sensitive and principled.

Often, terrorism succeeded in the 20th century, and, when it did, the ex-terrorists achieved power, glory, and immortality, with streets, towns, and cities named for them. And America today recognizes every regime to come out of these wars where terrorism was a common tactic.

### **Defeating Terrorists**

Crucial to defeating a terrorist movement is how a government responds. As the ultimate battle is for hearts and minds, an over-reaction can be fatal. Britain's response to the Easter Rising, hanging the rebel leaders, and France's response to FLN terror, the round-ups, reprisals, and torture, advanced the revolution. Massu's victory in the Battle of Algiers is a textbook case of an imperial power winning a battle but losing the war.

Terrorists are picadores and matadors. They prick the bull until it bleeds and is blinded by rage, then they snap the red cape of bloody terror in its face. The bull charges again and again until, exhausted, it can charge no more. Then

### **Globalization & Free Trade**

Conservatives, said Ronald Reagan, believe in the values of "work, family, faith, community and country." But free trade puts the claims of consumers ahead of the duties of citizens, the untrammelled freedom of the individual in the marketplace ahead of all claims of family, community, or country. Free trade says what is best for me, now, at the cheapest price, is what is best for America. That is not conservatism.

Free trade does to a nation what alcohol does to a man: saps him first of his vitality and energy, then of his independence, then of his life. America today exhibits the symptoms of a nation passing

into late middle age. We spend more than we earn. We consume more than we produce. Free traders and the evangelists of globalism who promised us our trade deficits would disappear now assure us trade deficits do not matter.

The truth: free trade is the serial killer of American manufacturing and the Trojan Horse of World Government. It is the primrose path to the loss of economic independence and national sovereignty. Free trade is a bright shining lie.

## On the Abdication of Congress

On the issues of religion, race, morality, and culture that define us as a people, Congress has, for half a century, been surrendering to judges and justices the power to decide. The Supreme Court seized these powers in a bloodless coup. It marched in and occupied the terrain because Congress did not defend it and would not fight for it.

Why does Congress refuse to challenge court aggressions? Because Congress is an institutional coward. Many members are men and women of character and courage, but the institution of

America, Irving Kristol wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "I regret to inform Pat Buchanan that those [culture] wars are over and the left has won."

## Coming Home

Though millions of conservatives dissent from his policies on trade, immigration, amnesty for illegal aliens, Big Government, and invading Iraq, President Bush retains the support of 80-90 percent of Republicans. He had no challenger in the primaries, and almost all conservatives will vote for him in November. Their case runs thus:

George W. Bush is a God-fearing and good man, and he and his First Lady restored dignity to the White House after the Clinton years. He kept his commitment to cut taxes, which means greater freedom and security for families. He has revived an economy sinking into recession when he took office. He has chosen fine judges. His willingness to accept international abuse by rejecting the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court show him to be a patriot who will not yield national sovereignty.

differences with a party led by John Kerry are monumental and legion. There is simply nothing a Kerry-led Democratic Party offers to the Right. And there is another reason they will stand by the president, a reason found in words Barry Goldwater used when he took the podium at the Chicago Convention of 1960 and admonished my generation, "Let's grow up, Conservatives. We want to take this party back and I think, some day, we can."

Goldwater had refused to put Nixon's name in nomination because of the Nixon "Pact of Fifth Avenue" with Nelson Rockefeller. Goldwater was saying that a struggle for the soul of the party was coming. But not now. Now was Nixon's turn. Sen. Goldwater began with these words: "We are conservatives. This great Republican house is our historic home. This is our home." For conservatives, it has ever been so.

Tip O'Neill famously said that all politics are local. But when the quadrennial struggle for national leadership comes around, all politics are tribal. Almost all of the disputatious sons and alienated daughters come home. Goldwater himself, abandoned by the Rockefeller Republicans in '64, carried a huge majority of Republicans and conservatives. And they will come home for George W. Bush.

*While, undeniably, the great majority of conservatives will be coming home to George W. Bush in the battle with John Kerry, TAC has not yet endorsed a candidate. We continue to welcome the thoughts of our writers and readers. ■*

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## CONSERVATIVE DIFFERENCES WITH A PARTY LED BY JOHN KERRY ARE MONUMENTAL.

Congress prefers to let the cup pass away and let the courts make the decisions on issues that divide us deeply and emotionally.

Should a congressman vote "wrong" on abortion, affirmative action, or civil unions, his career could be over. Truth be told, many Republicans are the summer soldiers and sunshine patriots of the culture wars. And neoconservatives are presidential supremacists and, all too often, capitulators in those culture wars. In 1992, when I called on the party in Houston to engage Clinton & Clinton in the struggle for the soul of

After 9/11, he led America boldly and brilliantly in building an alliance to oust the Taliban and run al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan. Atop the rubble of the World Trade Center, George W. Bush bonded with the country in a way his father never had. From 9/11 to the summer of 2004, he defended the nation from new terror attacks. Through tough diplomacy, he disarmed Khadafi and has persuaded the Saudis to crack down on imams preaching jihad against our country. He speaks up and he speaks out for freedom.

And while their disappointments with him are many and serious, conservative

[Garden Party]

# Conventional Wisdom

Without the peaceful street protests, the Republican Convention would have been less democratic.

By **Scott McConnell**

BY THE REPUBLICAN convention's first night, after McCain and Giuliani had spoken, it was easy to sense that the race had turned a major corner. It was no longer a toss-up or a slight Kerry lead. There had been a shift in the polls that seemed to ratify something the political pundits had all sensed: Kerry was poor candidate. (Chris Matthews kept hearing of GOP operatives wondering who is in charge of the campaign, as if there were suddenly no there there when Kerry was windsurfing on Nantucket.) The months of a "virtual tie" were over. It had settled into a contest between an incumbent president who is a good campaigner and a challenger who is not. Advantage Bush.

There had been glimmers earlier. At a MoveOn.org event a week before the convention opened, a star-studded affair in an old Manhattan theater, Natalie Merchant had prefaced a song by noting that her antiwar and progressive views were not popular out there in America, sounding almost as if she were Pete Seeger in 1953. A week earlier, Michelle Shocked (an altogether edgier number than Ms. Merchant) said roughly the same thing during a coffeehouse performance on the East End of Long Island: she often "got into trouble" when she reminded her audience that we were "about to pound the s\*\*t out of a town in

Iraq." (This was when the Marines were in Najaf.) Not a poll, to be sure, but perhaps more valuable, this was testimony by well-traveled performers who are highly sensitive to their audiences. When some "take-the-war-to-the-terrorists" guy felt like shouting for Michelle or Natalie to take her politics and shove it, he felt no peer pressure constraining him from doing so. It wasn't the 1960s.

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The Sunday before the convention, New York saw a very large march, as big as anything since the anti-nuke protests of the early 1980s. This wasn't a reprise of the '60s Left (as the Nuclear Freeze movement seemed to be), and it may be too early to discern its tendencies. There is no recognized core of intellectual leaders—no Tom Haydens, Jerry Rubins, David Dellingers, or David Horowitzes to give one a sense from reading. Of course there are groups of veteran leftists who negotiate the permits for the marches and provide infrastructure, but no one really cares what they think.

My day began with Billionaires for Bush, a group of about 200 who dress in tuxedos, Junior League dresses, pearls, and yachting caps to make their class-warfare point through irony. They started with a croquet match and a call for privatization of Central Park, then moved

down Fifth Avenue, carrying placards like "Cheney is Innocent" and "We Paid for Eight Years." They were a big hit with New York tourists, who invariably smiled and took pictures. Immigrant shopkeepers were treated to a "thank you for paying my taxes." With my press credentials flapping around my neck, I heard "Oh look, our media ... thank you for doing such a good job" from a preppy girl in a white summer dress and pearls.

Part of the joke is the play on the Eastern seaboard WASP stereotype, which may be the only totally safe ethnic cliché remaining in America. I heard two women with pronounced Long Island accents (as in "The Nanny") observing, "They even look like billionaires, all WASP-y." In fact, old WASP money is about as influential in today's political process as wooden racquets are useful for winning the U.S. Open.

Things were less gay by the time we had linked up with the main march, a three-mile-long mass of the sweltering. On a very humid day in the mid-90s, it was a sauna in the canyons between the Seventh Avenue skyscrapers. But with drums and flags on coffins and relatively few Marxist slogans (but far too many vulgar puns on Bush's name), the sweating procession made its way past the convention site. The cops—good-natured and in complete control—had little to do.