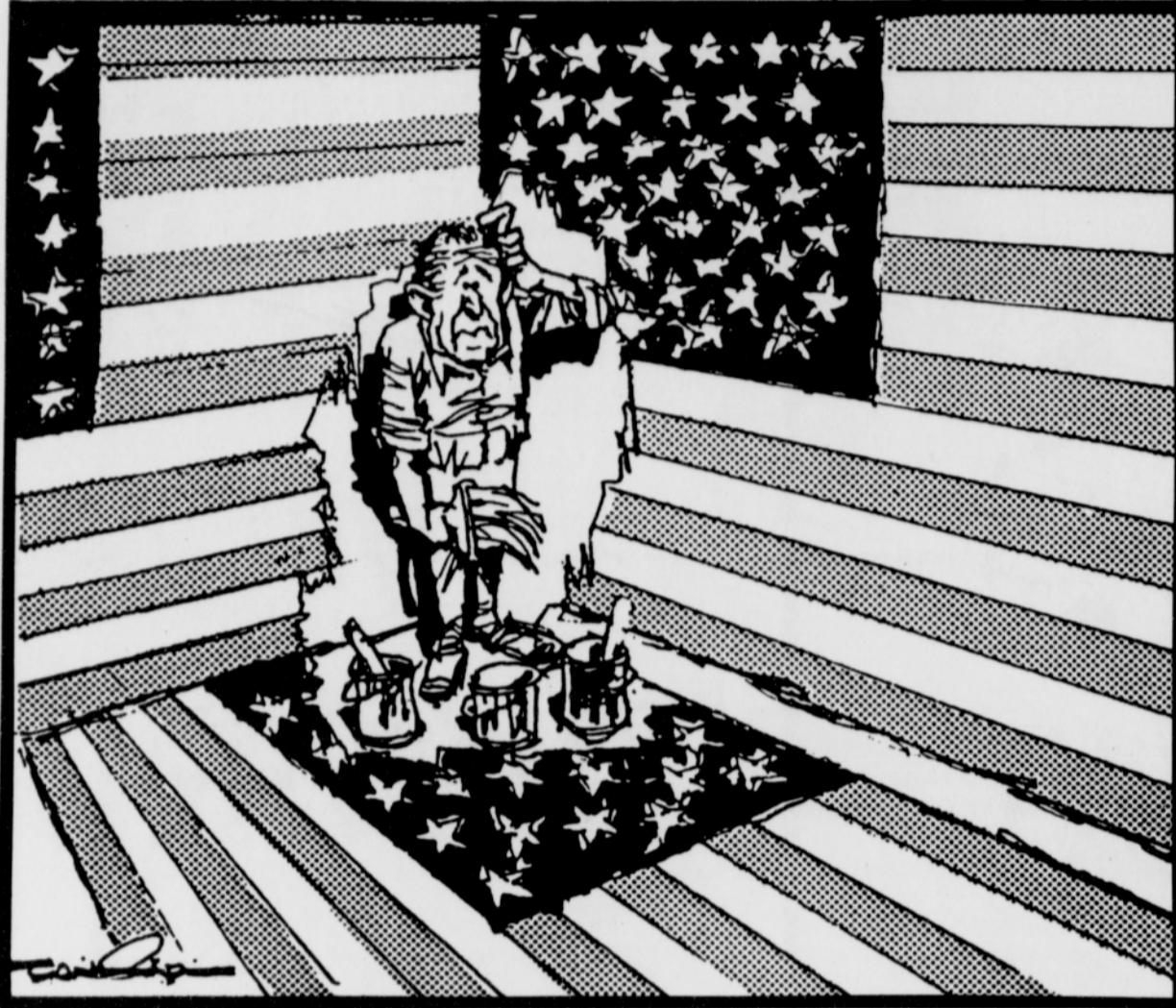


THE NEOCONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT AND THE POLITICS OF FEAR & DIVISION



PAUL CONRAD

BY LESLIE MILLER

"War brings out the patriotic bullies. In World War 1, they went around kicking dachshunds on the grounds that dachshunds were "German dogs." They did not, however, go around kicking German shepherds. The MINUTE someone impugns your patriotism for opposing this war (Iraq), turn on them like a snarling dog and explain what loving your country really means."

—MOLLY IVINS

It has been said half of U.S. citizens eligible to vote either fail to register or do not vote. Many are turned off by the two-party system, or feel their vote does not matter, so why bother? They are looking for a leader to unite the people for the common good, but all we get is someone like "dubya" who thrives on hatred and dissension. Gore Vidal said words to the effect that the American government is a rightwing organization consisting of two elements: the Republican and Democratic Parties. One might ask, with Democrats like these, who needs Republicans anyway?

All these ambivalent and powerless feelings have their repercussions. With a 50% voter turnout, it means that 26 out of every 100 people could choose politicians and policies which 74% of the people as a whole (voter and non-voter alike) have absolutely no control over. George W. Bush and his neoconservative Congress are prime examples of this political illness.

He acts as if he is the popular choice when what he has is a far cry from mandate or approval. He has taken on the mantle of the majority when in reality he represents a pitiful minority of narrow, mean, corrupt, and hideously expensive corporate interests. The majority suffers for the sake of his attitudes and policies. The wealthiest nation in the world is the stingiest in regard to its disadvantaged and persons of last means.

More domestic divisions give added power to these arrogant pretenders. Anyone who dissents is branded a traitor

WHAT GOES AROUND

BY JACK DENNON

Fear-driven American people accepted the notion that while we were busy building nuclear weapons for ourselves, we were justified in slapping Iraq around, killing thousands of innocent people who lived there, for the purpose, so we were assured, of preventing Iraq from building nuclear weapons. Never should we have allowed our government to sally forth on such a premise.

Discussion of whether the premise was true is actually irrelevant, for morally competent people should never have been suckered in by such scare tactics. If possession of nuclear weapons is a crime, then obviously we are the most guilty people on the planet.

Dr. Gordon Prather's "Clumsy Forgeries, Italian-Style," at antiwar.com, contains a hint — alluding to soccer moms — of a fundamental principle being ignored. He writes that, "if it is legitimate for me to be armed then it is legitimate for you to be armed. It is quite irrelevant whether 'you' refers to China, India, Israel, Iran, Iraq, France, Germany, Russia, what-you-will. Because comprehension of that fundamental principle evidently escaped them, the soccer moms and soccer dads of America are now implicated in the crime that is the invasion of Iraq."

He adds that in Rome, Caesar's word was law. President George W. Bush evidently leads an American people now sufficiently frightened or perhaps preoccupied enough to allow him to mount that same platform.

A thousand years after Caesar disappeared from the scene, King John put his seal on the Magna Carta. Since that day there has existed in the western world legal precedent holding no man above the law, be he sheriff, senator, president, or king.

Yet when President Bush signed into law the Defense Appropriations bill containing Senator John McCain's anti-torture amendment, he issued a "signing statement" presumably reserving to himself a right to bypass that very law. If the American people allow him to get away with this calculated move, they can say goodbye to legal protections with which they have been blessed.

And if the American people stand idly by and allow Bush to start yet another war, this time on Iran, they will have initiated themselves into "Fourth Generation" warfare described by William S. Lind at lewrockwell.com. The age of "American exceptionalism," writes Lind, is drawing to a close; Americans may learn that history's laws also apply to America.

We approach a precipice and the hour is late. Even now the American people may have neither the will nor the means to avert disaster. In a war with Iran we may relearn hard lessons that the French people learned when they allowed their own Bush, named Napoleon, to invade Russia; a vainglorious move that squandered 400,000 French lives. This time, however, it can be worse because Fourth Generation warfare is conducted not on a foreign battlefield but rather on a local main street. We have heard it said; we may now learn what it means: What goes around comes around.

Jack Dennon lives in Warrenton

and unworthy before the "god given" righteousness of the neoconservative movement. Bush's leadership does not seek 'o bring us together, rather it seems to thrive on political and religious hatred and misunderstanding. If he can keep the populace at each other's throats, they are easy to control.

It has been revealed recently that Bush ordered illegal warrantless wiretaps under his own authority. A special court was set up in response to the Nixon/Watergate fiasco wherein the President illegally placed his enemies (real and imagined) under surveillance. This was done specifically to control this type of abuse of authority by the chief executive. Out of thousands of secret warrants requested since the Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) was created, only a handful have ever been refused. This shows Bush's contempt for the system of checks and balances that are supposed to keep one branch of government from running amok. I am calling for impeachment proceedings to begin immediately.

Senator John McCain presented a bill to Congress forbidding inhumane treatment and torture of prisoners and it passed so handily in the House of Representatives and the Senate that it could not be vetoed by the President. Bush invited McCain to the White House for a handshake and photo opportunity. When he signed the bill he added to it that torture should be allowed by executive fiat. Add contempt of Congress to contempt of court to further demand impeachment.

Somewhat less recently, declassified NSA (National Security Agency) documents indicated that the Gulf of Tonkin incident never happened and therefore the resolution of the same name passed by Congress, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson unlimited authority to invade Vietnam, was a fraud. The military/industrial/congressional complex was determined to invade, therefore a hoax was perpetrated on the citizens of the United States to justify ten years of needless killing. Does this sound familiar in regard to Bush II, WMD, and Iraq?

Many people under the age of 30 did not live through the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Unlike the Bush administration's skewed or nonexistent intelligence pertaining to the invasion of Iraq, President John F. Kennedy went on national television to show us aerial photographs of nuclear missile installations being constructed by the Russians in Cuba. Never has the world come so close to thermonuclear annihilation, yet the American people stood behind Kennedy because his policy was based on fact instead of poor intelligence and wishful thinking as was Bush's invasion.

It is needless tragedy to have our young men and women killed in places like Vietnam or Iraq under false pretenses and lies. Meanwhile Osama bin Laden remains at large and his al Qaida organization is getting stronger. It is fair to say that whereas the attack on Afghanistan may have been justified because the Taliban, al Qaida and bin Laden were using it as a staging area to plan the 9/11 atrocity, the invasion of Iraq was a miscalculated and deadly wrong turn in the war on terrorism, for which President Bush should be sternly held to account for, at the loss of his office. He has become the major poster boy in the recruitment of new terrorists worldwide. He has turned many friends away from us.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Bush's father went to the United Nations and secured a resolution to lead a coalition to remove the Iraqi forces from that beleaguered nation. Even though there was pressure to go all the way to Baghdad, the President decided the objective of the resolution was attained. He stopped short of invading Iraq, and even though some people say this was a mistake, I say he did the right thing, since the objective of the UN resolution was accomplished and it showed his respect for international law. I wish the same thing could be said for his son. The younger Bush should be brought before the World Court and tried as a war criminal after he is impeached in Washington, D.C.

Leslie Miller lives in Sunset Beach, on the shore of Neacoxie Lake. He is a frequent contributor to the NCTE.

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