

that allowed those attacks to occur in the first place should be enough to raise a few eyebrows.

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice once intimated that it was beyond anyone's imagination that terrorists would fly planes into buildings. She later amended her remark in her testimony before the 9/11 Commission: "I probably should have said, I could not have imagined, because within two days, people started to come to me and say, 'Oh, but there were these reports in 1998 and 1999.' The intelligence community did look at information about this."⁹

As the president's National Security Adviser, one could reasonably assume that part of Rice's job would be to study available intelligence on possible attack scenarios. Exactly what kind of national security advice was she providing?

Let us give the Bush administration the benefit of the doubt and assume that 9/11 was a complete surprise. What conclusions are we to draw from the administration's reaction to the deaths of 3,000 Americans? When it was learned that hijackers armed with nothing but box cutters brought down the World Trade Center, why weren't airline pilots immediately granted permission to carry firearms? When Congress finally did approve a bill to allow guns in cockpits, why did numerous administration officials drag their feet to implement the plan? And why is the Transportation Security Administration, an agency created in direct response to

9/11, continuing to delay pilots from obtaining the necessary training?¹⁰

The only explanation is that those in power do not believe in the ability of Americans to defend themselves. Both Democrats and Republicans refuse to validate the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and there is no one in the current administration actively defending the inalienable right of American citizens to keep and bear arms.

What this means is that we cannot rely on the “lesser of two evils” when it comes to homeland defense. In the three years since the 9/11 attacks, no prominent Republican has acknowledged the fact that one or two armed pilots or passengers on those planes could have saved 3,000 lives. Since 2001, not a single federal gun law—virtually all of which are unconstitutional—has been repealed (the sunset of the assault weapons ban notwithstanding). In fact, the Bush administration has stepped up enforcement of such laws, undermining the very nature of the Second Amendment.

Thanks to the efforts of President Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft, Project Safe Neighborhoods was launched to help end gun violence. It was designed to foster “unprecedented partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement,”¹¹ and so far has seen a 32 percent increase in federal gun crime prosecutions.¹²

This may sound like good news, but what supporters of projects like PSN fail to understand is that the Constitution forbids

the federal government to infringe on the right to keep and bear arms. Any comfort taken in the increase of federal gun prosecutions is comfort taken in the usurpation of the Constitution and an expansion of power the federal government was never meant to have. When you consider that the president supported the Clinton-era assault weapons ban and that administration officials like Deputy Attorney General James Comey believe “gun possession itself is a crime of violence,”¹³ you have to wonder why we continue to keep these people in power.

Politicians seem to be telling us that U.S. government should have a monopoly on self-defense. In addition to exercising control over the lives of Americans, the federal government seeks to subdue other nations as well. It is disconcerting, to say the least, when an administration actively curtailing the right to keep and bear arms at home then begins to promote a policy of pre-emptive warfare abroad.

This is nothing new. A prime example of the doctrine of pre-emption, according to columnist David Horowitz, was our country’s entry into World War I:

The First World War, in fact, was a pre-emptive war from the American point of view. America did not enter the war because it was attacked (it wasn’t), nor did Germany declare war on the United States. For three years Americans had watched the war from the sidelines. It was a European conflict in which America had had no national stake. Then, in 1917, the United States decided to go to war to

prevent a German victory, claiming that its goal was “to make the world safe for democracy.”¹⁴

It is that kind of deliberation that has earned Woodrow Wilson a prominent place in the hearts of neoconservatives. They seek to continue his legacy by using the doctrine of pre-emption in the war on terrorism.

The problem with this strategy is that it is imperialistic in nature, and the future consequences are never certain. Because of our “victory” in World War I, conditions in post-war Europe gave rise to dictators like Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini, and in less than 25 years the U.S. found itself caught up in a much longer, bloodier war. Hindsight may be 20/20, but we seem to have a problem learning from history. Like the British Empire our forefathers once opposed, we have decided to ignore the consequences of our actions and forge ahead with the divine authority to civilize the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, this only serves to foment anti-American sentiment in all parts of the globe. While there haven’t been any attacks on our soil since 2001, terrorism around the world has continued to increase following our invasion of Iraq. What else can we expect when we start attacking nations that pose no real threat to our own?

This is what the “lesser of two evils” promises: a state of perpetual war, which will stir up hatred for the U.S. abroad, and a

continuing moratorium on the right of self-defense, leaving Americans defenseless at home.

The proof is in the solutions offered by Republicans, policies that hold the state in higher regard than the individual. We are told the federal government needs more police powers and more money. We are told our political leaders must have the ability to wage pre-emptive warfare. We are told that certain liberties, like the right to a fair and speedy trial and the right to keep and bear arms, are a secondary concern when it comes to national security. Every proposal offered by the “lesser of two evils” calls for an expansion of the welfare/warfare state, and the justification for this government growth is that our survival depends on it.

This reasoning, however, is at odds with the very founding principles these so-called “conservatives” claim to be defending. It ignores the warnings of founders like Benjamin Franklin, who said, “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

If the dismantling of our constitutional republic is necessary in order to win the war on terrorism, then why are we fighting at all? Why fight to preserve the nation when the very methods used to save it lead to its inevitable demise?

That the “lesser of two evils” philosophy is a myth has never been clearer, as Republican politicians are responsible for the current state of the federal government. They have the White

House. They control both houses of Congress. The judges they have appointed and confirmed dominate the highest courts in the land. They have been given every chance to honor their oath to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States,” yet they have failed miserably.

If you want to vote Republican because you happen to agree with the campaign rhetoric, then by all means vote Republican. This is still a relatively free country. But let us dispense of the myth that a party that does exactly the opposite of what it supposedly stands for can actually represent the “lesser of two evils.” We live in a one-party nation and will continue to do so as long as there are voters content to live with a false sense of security.

CHAPTER 4

REACHING THE BREAKING POINT

A question was posed in the introduction: Would we consider voting for the “lesser of two evils” if the only two candidates running for office were Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin? Yes, this question is hyperbolic, but it is designed to make any voter think about his or her motives. Is there a point—a moral boundary, if you will—beyond which we cannot support a particular candidate or political party?

To use another example, how many times would someone need to hit you in the head with a two-by-four before you realized it hurt and decided to do something to make it stop? Once? Twice? 27 times?

Some of you might say, “Are you kidding? I would shoot the assailant before he even had a chance to swing.” Great! No one needs to experience a smashing blow to the skull to know that it would probably be a bad thing. Why, then, are some people unable to apply that same brand of common sense to politics?

How many times would your trust need to be betrayed, how much of your earnings would need to be confiscated, and how many of your freedoms would need to be stripped away by a group of elitist politicians before you took action? Would you, like Patrick Henry, stand up and shout, “Give me liberty, or give me

death!” or would you concede defeat and settle for the “lesser of two evils”?

The latter response seems to capture the prevalent attitude among professing conservatives who continue to vote Republican. Many are unhappy with the way their party has handled key political issues (education and Medicare spending, farm subsidies, campaign finance reform, etc.), but they are absolutely terrified of what could happen with the Democrats in control.

A great number of conservatives are thoroughly convinced that if there is to be any hope at all of rolling back the size and scope of government, then voting Republican is the only logical choice. And they will defend that position more vehemently than they will defend their own liberty.

These are conservatives who claim to believe in smaller government and individual freedom yet continue to support big government by electing socialist candidates to office. They believe that they are doing the right thing, and any discussion of a third party choice is cut short.

They would argue that a vote for any candidate other than a Republican is a vote for the Democrats. This is perhaps the most popular argument conservatives use to discourage support for a third party. Their fear is that if an actual conservative were to run, then votes that should be going to the Republican candidate will instead be diverted to someone who can't possibly win, thereby handing the election to the Democrats. On the surface this may

seem like a legitimate point, but could someone please explain how a vote for a Republican who continues to grow government is *not* a wasted vote?

Another argument is that there is too much at stake this close to election time to be talking about a third party. What this means is that it doesn't matter how liberal the Republican candidate is; the risk of getting a Democrat elected far outweighs any concern for principle. "Principles don't win elections," many of them will say. But if core conservative principles must be sacrificed in order to win elections, what guarantee is there that conservative principles will suddenly become a priority once that power is achieved?

Many conservatives will argue on more practical grounds, saying, "You can't change anything if you don't get elected." This is one of those "air-tight" arguments Republicans like to use to end all debate on the subject. My response is usually the same: "If you don't change anything after getting elected, what's the difference?"

It is not my intent to be condescending, and I certainly do not wish to seem flippant about such a serious topic. Believe me when I tell you that I fully understand the dilemma facing conservatives who only want what's best for this country. They may not agree wholeheartedly with their party's candidate of choice, but they honestly believe that voting for the "lesser of two evils" is sometimes necessary in order to establish a political foothold.

The thing to remember is that everyone has a breaking point. Each principled voter has a line drawn in the sand, and any candidate who crosses it will suffer the consequences. No matter how important it is to get Republicans elected, there are certain issues on which many conservatives will not compromise. For some that issue is abortion. No pro-choice Republican—regardless of the candidate’s position on other issues—will ever win their vote. For others it is the right to keep and bear arms, and I have heard quite a few Republicans say that George W. Bush would have lost their vote had the assault weapons ban been renewed.

I suppose it all boils down to where the line is drawn. As far as I’m concerned, that line is crossed as soon as a candidate pledges to do something that is at odds with the Constitution. They will never get my vote. What’s more, sitting politicians who go back on their oath of office by violating the Constitution will likewise be denied my vote. I tend to agree with libertarian journalist Karl Hess, who said, “Your vote isn’t a bet on who’s going to win the election. It’s a statement of who you are.”

Candidates running for public office need to hear a strong message from freedom-loving voters: “You want to continue the federal funding of education or, worse yet, *increase* that funding? You just lost my vote. You want more gun laws that take away my right to self-defense? You don’t deserve my support. You want to pass laws that attack free speech and protect incumbent politicians? I’ll fight you every step of the way.”

Many of you think this is naive. You might even think it is over-simplifying the issue. However, I remain convinced that if every conservative- and libertarian-minded American starts to vote according to his or her conscience, then it will only be a matter of time before real change begins to take place.

CHAPTER 5

NO REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MAJOR PARTIES

Once upon a time, there was a politician who wanted to make a difference. He had enjoyed moderate political success in his home state, but his sights were set on a much bigger prize: a congressional seat in Washington, D.C.

Although the politician was a resourceful man, he did not know how to swim. As he stood on the edge of the Potomac, gazing across the river toward the gleaming white dome of the Capitol, he wondered how he would traverse the raging waters to reach the other side.

It was about that time that a citizen was walking along the riverbank. He was happy and content and was humming a merry tune.

“Hello, citizen!” the politician called out. “I do not wish to bother you, but I am trying to get across this river to the Capitol. The problem, however, is that I cannot swim. Would you be so kind as to give me a ride on your back to the other side?”

The citizen looked concerned. “I could do it, but what assurance do I have that you would not try to stab me in the back while I was swimming?”

The politician laughed. “Silly man! If I did that, I would go down with you. We would both die, and I would not be able to fulfill my dream of making this country a better place.”

The citizen pondered this for a moment. That argument sounded convincing, but he still had his doubts. “How do I know that you will not stab me once we reach the other side?”

“Oh, you are wise indeed,” the politician said, “and you raise a valid point. I can only say that you have my solemn word that I will do no such thing. After all, I will most likely require your assistance again in the future.”

His fears assuaged, the kindly citizen agreed to carry the politician across the river. He waded into the water and, as soon as the politician was in position, began swimming with all his might.

When he was in the middle of the river, the citizen felt a sudden, searing pain between his shoulder blades. Out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight of a bloody dagger in the politician's hand.

“You fool!” the citizen cried in horror. “Now we will both surely die! Why did you stab me in the back?”

The politician just smiled and shrugged his shoulders. “It is my nature,” he said.

With that, the citizen and the politician sank beneath the surface of the Potomac to a watery grave.

The moral of the story is that one career politician is very much like another. It doesn't matter if it is a Democrat or Republican in office; it is always the citizen who suffers the consequences.

For decades we have been sold the Republican line that the only way to cut taxes and shrink government is to vote in other Republicans, regardless of their positions on any particular issue. It wasn't long before it became apparent that reducing government and protecting liberty are not part of the GOP game plan.

My suspicions were confirmed by none other than Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie. An Aug. 31, 2003, editorial in the *Manchester Union Leader*—a rather conservative publication—stated that Gillespie admits the “days of Reaganesque Republican railings against the expansion of federal government are over.”¹⁵

Gillespie, of course, denied this. In a letter to the editor, he wrote, “I joined the Republican Party because of Ronald Reagan. I believe that conservatives and millions of other Americans are Republicans because they support our positive agenda and share our beliefs, not because they have nowhere else to go.”

But Gillespie appeared on *Meet the Press* a week later and again confirmed the fact that the GOP has all but abandoned its goal of shrinking government. As soon as he defined “fiscal restraint”¹⁶ as simply reducing the rate of increase in government spending, his secret was out.

In a grand display of compassionate conservatism, Gillespie also reminded America that the Bush tax cut plan was similar in principle to that of the Democrats (i.e., the rich would still get soaked): “The fact is, the tax burden under President Bush

has shifted to the wealthy ... [T]hose who make over \$200,000 a year saw their share of the income tax burden go up from 44.8 percent to 45.4 percent.”

On the issue of education, Gillespie remarked, “I charged [Capitol] Hill harder than anybody, with Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey. We lost. We have to keep moving forward and apply conservative principles to a federal role in education.” Since when did the Constitution allow for *any* federal role in education? With that attitude among party leaders, it’s no wonder the Republicans removed from their platform such conservative positions as the elimination of the Dept. of Education.

As if Gillespie hadn’t damaged his party’s credibility enough, he was interviewed on the air by Rush Limbaugh two days later. Limbaugh confronted him about the federal government’s role in education, but Gillespie said that he didn’t believe Republicans “can constantly go back and re-fight old battles.”¹⁷

When he explained his view of the federal government’s current level of social spending, Gillespie offered, “The size of the populace grows every year, and demographics and things affect some of these mandatory spending programs.” Of Bush’s offer of prescription drug coverage to Medicare recipients, he said, “The Republicans in the Senate campaigned on a prescription drug benefit, and the president campaigned on one. We have to be as a party good to our word to the voters.”

If shrinking government is no longer the goal of the “conservative” party, then the best we can hope for from the “lesser of two evils” is a small decrease in the rate of growth. I have heard from many Republicans who believe that is precisely the attitude realistic voters should have. This defeatist approach to politics may appeal to some, but it is at odds with the framers of the Constitution.

The difference between Democrats and Republicans grows smaller with each passing day. Both parties have obviously resigned themselves to the fact that government is going to grow; the only quarrel is over how fast it should grow and which party should be in charge of that growth.

CHAPTER 6

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

The truth is that there is no real, functional difference between the Republican and Democratic Parties. They are two sides of the same counterfeit coin. So, if the objective is to restore the constitutional republic handed down by our forefathers, then there must be an alternative to the one-party political system.

There is. Unfortunately, little consideration is given to this alternative because of America's predilection for routine, comfort, and consistency. Change is a scary thing, and the thought of taking a risk on an untraditional party or candidate frightens many voters to the core. However, the only real alternative to the "lesser of two evils"—aside from avoiding the ballot box altogether—is to simply vote for a true constitutionally conservative party.

Constitutional conservatives are those Americans who cling to the antiquated notion that our country was intended to be a constitutional republic. They believe that restoring the Constitution as the supreme law of the land should be the goal of everyone who claims to adhere to conservative political values.

Michael Peroutka, the 2004 presidential candidate for the Constitution Party, reminds us that the Declaration of Independence outlines "government's foundations and purposes—that there exists a Creator God—that rights come from Him—and that the purpose of civil government is to protect and defend and

secure these God-given rights.”¹⁸ As he explains, “These are the footings upon which can be poured the structural elements of a safe and prosperous and just and decent society.”

This is a difficult sell since most professing conservatives have sworn an undying allegiance to the Republican Party. They may not agree with everything a Republican candidate stands for, but the thought of allowing any Democrat to slither into office is unthinkable.

This has led to a never-ending cycle. Conservative voters automatically resign themselves to the fact that their only hope lies in getting a Republican elected. They proceed to whittle down the number of Republican candidates through primary elections and calculated smear campaigns in an attempt to weed out the “extremists.” Constitutionally conservative Republicans (what few are left) fall by the wayside in favor of a more palatable candidate. The party loyalists then rally around the remaining Republican candidate and present him as the last, best hope for America.

Unfortunately, nothing conservative is ever accomplished. The Republican candidate inevitably uses his first term in office as a campaign for reelection, which usually means a growing list of entitlements, a further expansion of government control, and an erosion of individual liberty.

Granted, voting for a more Constitution-friendly alternative to the “lesser of two evils”—the Constitution Party, for instance—means supporting a party that most likely will not achieve a

substantial political victory in the near future. But the promotion of conservative ideals and the serious discussion of constitutional issues can have a lasting effect on the political process as a whole.

While it would be advantageous to be in a position to affect public policy, lasting change must come through education. No, I am not referring to the process of rigorous indoctrination that passes for learning in the government school system. Real education involves getting back to basics and rediscovering our political heritage. If we wish to have a future, we need to get in touch with our past. Only by understanding the constitutional and biblical foundation upon which these United States were built can we hope to see any real change for the better.

We must also rid ourselves of the belief that change must come from the top down. Conservatives cannot insist on filling political offices with Republicans simply because they appear less evil on the surface when compared to Democrats. From a political standpoint, the end result is always the same.

A habit of choosing the path of least resistance—continuing to side with the “lesser of two evils”—can only mean the imminent destruction of the greatest nation on God's green earth. After all, choosing the “lesser of two evils” is still a choice for evil. It's time for all concerned, freedom-loving Americans to put principle over politics.

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