



The Harmful Effects of the Possible Cato Takeover on Foreign Policy Debate

Daniel Larison March 6th, 2012

Justin Logan [details](#) the implications of a Koch takeover of the Cato Institute for foreign policy debate: So what does all of this mean for foreign policy? The implications seem clear. Given the Koch brothers' stated desire to turn Cato into a research arm of Americans for Prosperity, Cato's foreign policy would in the best case be abolished and in the worst case would be influenced by people like John Hinderaker, who was nominated to Cato's board despite calling himself a "neocon" and describing George W. Bush as "a man of extraordinary vision and brilliance approaching to genius." Other neoconservative Republican partisans like Charles Krauthammer have served as keynote speakers at recent Koch confabs. To the extent Cato had foreign policy output at all, it would be used to ratify the foreign-policy decisions made by the Republican political elite. The quality of those decisions in recent decades has been terrible, and I, for one, could not act in such a role.

This seems to be the consensus of everyone associated with Cato, and I don't doubt that Logan is right about what the takeover would mean for Cato's work on foreign policy. The end of the Institute's independence would be an enormous loss for anyone interested in the causes of liberty and peace, and it is particularly the damage to the latter that is most worrisome. U.S. foreign policy is as militarized today as it has been at almost any point in my lifetime, and there are few signs of it getting any less so in the near future. That is why it is so important to have an independent, credible organization that consistently opposes policies of perpetual war.