

The Fight to Save Antiwar.com

Our battle for survival

by [Justin Raimondo](#), February 16, 2011

For the first time since World War II, America's bipartisan foreign policy is being seriously questioned by both [conservatives](#) and [liberals](#), [Republicans](#) as well as [Democrats](#) – and the War Party is [on the run](#).

Antiwar.com has been a big part of that: for [15 years](#) we have been plugging away, not only [debunking](#) the [lies](#) that lured us into two wars, but also [providing](#) a [comprehensive analysis](#) of world events as they unfold – educating our readers and the general public on what is the most important issue of the day, the question of war and peace. What I consider our most significant outreach campaign – to self-identified fiscal conservatives – has been a tremendous success. I know for a fact that a great deal of the unrest on the Right on foreign policy issues and the rising sentiment among Republicans in Congress to cut our ridiculously bloated “defense” budget is a direct result of our efforts.

We've come a long way. When [the neoconservatives](#) were [riding high](#), right after 9/11, it seemed like the whole country was against us, screaming for war – and even some “[libertarians](#)” were backing down from their previous antiwar stance. We were virtually alone in saying that the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq was a grave error and would result in a disaster for America and the world. But we weathered the storm.

Subjected to death threats, constant denial-of-service attacks, and a vicious campaign of slander and vilification, we didn't back down and we didn't compromise our principles – and lived to see the tide turn the other way.

So why do I feel as though we are still mired in the dark days that followed the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? Why do I fear for the future of Antiwar.com?

The reason for my fear is simple: the first day of [our Spring fundraising campaign](#) has raised a grand total of a little over \$2000. If this goes on, we are *finished* – and that's the truth.

It's unfortunate that, with all that's going on in the world, all the amazing events in the Middle East that are now unfolding before our eyes, I have to stop and write this somewhat intemperate rant, begging my readers for money – but I don't have any choice in the matter. Because without your support, there is no Antiwar.com, no thrice-weekly link-filled information-packed column analyzing and making sense of the complex play of events. Without your support, the [ace reporting](#) of Jason Ditz, our news writer, will be no more. Without your immediate financial support, our daily compendium of the real news from around the world will disappear. Without your tax-deductible donation, the work of the past 15 or so years will go down the drain. Without a financial lifeline thrown

out by you, our readers, Antiwar.com's strenuous efforts to build a coalition transcending the outdated categories of "left" and "right" will fall by the wayside, a dream unfulfilled and discarded.

Every day I get letters and emails telling me how important is Antiwar.com's mission, how indispensable my own work is, and I greatly appreciate these expressions of support. They provide a large portion of the emotional fuel I need in order to keep working, keep writing, and keep fighting for a more peaceful world and a rational foreign policy for America. Now, however, we here at Antiwar.com need more than mere words – we need you to take action. We need you to [click here](#) and make your donation *now*.

Antiwar.com has never been popular with the big supposedly "liberal" groups or "progressive" foundations that one might expect would be amenable to helping fund this web site. In fact, we've never gotten a penny from these people – and now that the Obama administration is in power, we can hardly expect them to come around. Indeed, *all mention of Antiwar.com is banned from the leading "liberal" Democratic web site, DailyKos.com*, whose "[moderators](#)" have undertaken a [libelous](#) campaign against us that rivals in its ferocity any similar effort by the neoconservative warmongers who inhabit the "right" side of the web.

And we've had nothing but a bizarre mix of fear and outright hostility from the big "libertarian" donors, who might be expected to be sympathetic to our cause: the so-called "[Kochtopus](#)," the matrix of organizations connected to and funded by Charles and David Koch – which has received a lot of [publicity](#) of late – is openly hostile to Antiwar.com. Beginning shortly after the invasion of Iraq, a former Vice President of the Cato Institute began expending [a lot](#) of time and energy specializing in frothy-mouthed attacks on us, our personnel, and our editorial positions: he tirelessly insisted that Antiwar.com had called for the "death" of American soldiers in Iraq and openly accused us of sedition to anyone who would listen. Although he's no longer with Cato, he and other alleged "libertarians" associated with the self-proclaimed "respectable" wing of the libertarian movement have continued these attacks relentlessly. When they banded together to smear Ron Paul, precisely *because* of his principled opposition to US imperialism, we responded by exposing their lies – and from that day forward we've been the recipient of ignorant and incredibly slimy attacks from the "respectables." So be it.

Fear – fear of the US government – has also played an important part in the campaign against Antiwar.com, and it has badly hurt our fundraising. Let me tell you a story that illustrates this fear:

During the Bush years, a very wealthy libertarian entrepreneur – whose name I won't mention, but you'd recognize it in a minute – approached us. He said he wanted to donate a considerable sum, and I had several meetings with him. Each time, he said he wanted to contribute, and, taking him at his word, I continued to meet with him – but after a while, I began to have my doubts. Was this guy just stringing me along?

Finally, at a meeting at a San Francisco coffee shop, I asked him pointblank: was he or was he not going to make a donation? He looked at me, with a very pained expression on his face, and told me, once again, that he would love to give us a substantial sum but was *afraid* to do so: he explained that his business made it necessary for him to deal with government regulators at every turn, and that he just couldn't risk openly contributing to our coffers, for fear of government retaliation against him and his business interests. He explained that any contribution he made would have to be off the books, just our little secret, and he wanted to know: "Would you take *cash*?"

I sat there, astounded that anyone – let alone a [libertarian](#) – would confess to such craven cowardice. While I understood and sympathized with his fear of retribution by the Bush regime, I guess it's just not in me to understand this kind of wussiness: how did he think he was going to get the government he so feared off his back if he didn't stand up and fight? How did he imagine any progress toward human freedom would take place if the partisans of liberty and peace allowed themselves to be driven underground?

I sat there, shaking my head, and told him no, we couldn't and wouldn't take his fistfuls of cash. Aside from the borderline legality and ethically questionable practice of accepting a huge, unreported cash donation from him, I found the whole idea oddly insulting. This guy was talking as if we were some sort of untouchables, exiled pariahs whose activities, if not yet illegal, weren't anything to be publicly identified with by any respectable American.

I don't regret that decision – yes, even as broke and in danger of going under as we are today. I don't regret it because that would-be donor's craven attitude forced us to the conclusion that our future – if we were to have one – depends on relatively small contributions from ordinary people. People like you, who aren't billionaires, or even millionaires, but just normal Americans (and many outside the US) who have had it up to *here* with the crazed foreign policy our rulers have embarked on since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. We vowed to avoid dependency on wealthy albeit eccentric and ultimately unreliable donors, and cultivate a real grassroots support network.

And that network grew and expanded over time. For all the years since, we've been building it, while working our butts off getting out the most comprehensive news and opinion site in the foreign policy field.

No, we aren't perfect – but, given our lack of resources, we're damn close.

I swear to God, if we don't see a radical uptick in contributions by Thursday morning, I just don't know if I'll be able to bring myself to write another column, never mind another fundraising appeal.

I need some sign from you, our readers, that you care about the fate of this site and this column. I can go without that kind of acknowledgment for some time, but at some point – and we've reached that point – we have to start paying the bills. And that time is now. Our creditors can be kept at bay only so long.

I realize, of course, that it isn't just Antiwar.com that is having a hard time of it these days. The economy is bad and getting worse; people are out of work, and, in some cases, out of hope. The irony is that Antiwar.com's continued existence is evidence that hope is still alive – and that underscores the absolute necessity of *keeping* Antiwar.com alive.

Believe me, I'd much rather be writing about the amazing events we're witnessing in the Middle East. In the face of all the nonsense about how the Muslim Brotherhood is behind all the turmoil, and the unreasonable fears being stoked even by some who fancy themselves "anti-interventionists," I would greatly prefer not hitting you on the head with this frantic appeal – but, again, I don't have any choice. That's because the survival of Antiwar.com is at stake.

If you want to see Antiwar.com – and particularly if you want to see this column and my writing continue – please make your completely tax-deductible contribution today – [right now, before you forget](#). Because the future of a peace movement that goes beyond left and right is at stake.