

Self-Identified Cato Libertarian Suggests YAF Should Be Expelled from the Conservative Movement for Daring to Criticize Ron Paul's Isolationist Views

Oh man, the Ronulans are back in force. Outraged at YAF's expulsion of Rep. Ron Paul from its national advisory board, Cato Institute's foreign policy director [Christopher Preble suggests that YAF be expelled](#) from the conservative movement.

Who is Preble? Just so you know where he's coming from, Preble wrote a book entitled *How American Military Dominance Makes Us Less Safe, Less Prosperous, and Less Free*. He's a self-described libertarian who, in his own words, "is neither a conservative, nor have I ever been a member of Young Americans for Freedom." That doesn't stop him from suggesting that YAF be purged from the conservative movement.

His op-ed in the Daily Caller is a not-very-well-crafted compilation of non sequiturs and logical fallacies. I take it apart below the fold, not because it is particularly worthy of response, but because I want to remind readers that a Paulbot is just a Paulbot, whether he's a greasy-haired student bussed into CPAC to vote in a straw poll or he's stuffed into a suit and called "director" at a libertarian think tank.

First, Preble's op-ed is purportedly a reply to [this one](#) from YAF's vice-chairman, Chris Bedford, who explained that YAF expelled Ron Paul because his foreign policy views are incompatible with the organization's guiding document, [the Sharon Statement](#). Among other things, the Sharon Statement calls for conservatives to fight for victory rather than mere co-existence with overseas threats to American sovereignty.

So you'd think that Preble would at least argue that Paul's views on foreign disengagement aren't completely the opposite of the Sharon Statement's, which, as I wrote, is the guiding document for YAF. He doesn't. Instead, in what would be a jaw-dropping non sequitur if it weren't so predictable for a libertarian, he writes that the Sharon Statement must be understood in light of its "context." Enter the history lesson:

The Sharon Statement was drafted in the final year of Dwight Eisenhower's presidency, a tense time when the Soviet Union appeared on the march, and when communist ideology was supposedly sweeping the planet. The YAFers were competing with liberal groups such as Americans for Democratic Action, who blasted President Eisenhower for failing to halt the Soviet's seemingly inexorable ascendance. YAF also opposed those liberals within the Republican Party who leveled similar charges at Ike, most notably New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

Still waiting to see how this is going to demonstrate why YAF was wrong to expel Ron Paul and "what this says about the conservative movement", as promised in the headline...

Liberals accused Eisenhower of allowing his conservative philosophy to override strategic imperatives. They claimed that his prudence and restraint in avoiding a large-

scale confrontation with the Soviets was tantamount to surrender. They scorned his resistance to matching the Soviets missile for missile, and plane for plane. They claimed that he had allowed the Soviets to open a missile gap with the United States. (Eisenhower knew better; there was a missile gap, but it favored the United States.)

Interesting, but still waiting on why this "context" means that YAF's understanding of its own founding document is flawed and why Ron Paul's soft-isolationism is consistent with the Sharon Statement's refusal to accept mere co-existence with tyrannical enemies who threaten American sovereignty.

The liberals' critique was grounded in an assault on Ike's economic philosophy. Keynesian economists such as John Kenneth Galbraith, James Tobin, Paul Samuelson and Leon Keyserling castigated Eisenhower for his views on government spending. They scorned his belief that the public sector should be kept as small as possible. They rejected his contention that America's dynamic private sector was the true source of the nation's power.

Things never change; sounds like libs back then were making the same idiot mistakes they make now. Oh, did anybody find any "context" in there about YAF? I thought this Preble guy was trying to make an argument. Maybe it's coming up:

Kennedy's victory over Richard Nixon in 1960 represented a repudiation of Eisenhower's conservative philosophy, but the general-president got in a parting shot in his farewell address when he advised his fellow Americans to be on guard against the interest groups who had contributed to the dramatic growth of the federal government.

Well, damn. I was sure Preble would at least say something about YAF or maybe conservatism or maybe Paul's views on retreating from overseas engagement. Because I don't know what the hell that just was, but it did nothing to make the case that Preble claims he's making--that YAF's vice-chair doesn't understand the Sharon Statement.

If you've read this far, I know what you're saying to yourself: "why did Gabe make me read all this? I'm totally going to smack him upside the head at the next meetup." The answer is coming up in the next quoted paragraph. Textually, it follows immediately after the history lesson quoted above. Logically . . . well, maybe you can make this jump, but for me all I heard was the needle getting bumped off the vinyl:

Today's neoconservatives are the intellectual descendants of the liberal hawks whom Buckley and other conservatives had banded together to defeat. These are the individuals whom Bedford apparently wishes to welcome within the conservative movement; libertarians are to be shown the door. The neocons in 2011 choose not to dwell on the size and scope of government, and they scorn those who do.

Ah. There's the argument, as much as it can be called "argument" and not *ad hominem*. Preble's objection is not about the Sharon Statement after all or YAF's understanding of it. It's that YAF is too welcoming to dirty, dirty neoconservatives. He says.

But take note: YAF didn't say a thing about the size and scope of government in determining that Paul's isolationist tendencies are incompatible with a strong national defense. Nor did they talk about domestic spending issues. Nor has YAF or its leadership claimed to be neoconservatives. That doesn't stop Preble from pulling out the neocon label, which for libertarians and especially for Ron Paul devotees is only slightly better than being an outright fascist.

SIDEBAR: Also, given Ron Paul's flirtation (at a minimum) with anti-Semitism in the past, it has to unfortunately be mentioned: "neocon" is quite often used as code for "Jew", both on the Left and among Paul followers. I don't believe Preble is using it that way, but it at least has to be noted. I'm deeply suspicious about individuals who rant about "neoconservatives", particularly when the occasion for the rant is a blatant non sequitur as in Preble's "argument" against YAF. Ordinarily we don't call those who advocate unbridled government spending "neocons", we call them "liberals" or "Democrats." Which is why I wonder if we're watching a game of Pin the Tail on the Hebe.

Anyway, there you have it. The director of foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute really did just write an op-ed to namecall at YAF. I omitted it from the above because I have to leave something at the Daily Caller so you'll click over, but Preble also calls YAF "irrelevant", "moribund", and "dwarfed" by Ron Paul's legions.

This is sloppy, embarrassing work for a supposedly serious think tank director, but it gets worse. Because after attempting to slander YAF by saying it is catering to the dreaded neocon menace, the self-identified libertarian who confesses that he has never been a conservative also suggests that YAF be expelled from the conservative movement:

YAF may be a shadow of its former self; but the conservative movement should expel big-government advocates from its midst, and embrace prudence and restraint, both at home and abroad.

Here's a suggestion: tend to your own flock, libertarian, and let conservatives tend to theirs.

Posted by: Gabriel Malor at [05:08 PM](#)