

## Neocons Advocate Wasting Americans' Money



Posted by [Doug Bandow](#) on 10/01/09 2:35 PM

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[[Older: Another Neocon Adventure Gone Bad](#)]

Not only do neocons advocate perpetual war. They apparently prefer bankruptcy. In critiquing Boston University's Andy Bacevich, [Gary Schmitt of the American Enterprise Institute writes](#):

Nor is there any evidence that a less expansive (and hence less expensive) foreign and defense policy would free up monies that miraculously would solve a problem like poverty or second-rate schools. To the contrary, more government funds could well confound finding the policies that would actually help alleviate those problems.

Of course, the real alternative to wasting money attempting to bring good governance to Afghanistan isn't a bigger welfare state at home. It is letting Americans keep more of their own money. Or paying down the endless debts run up by Washington.

But if the only way to stop Washington from spending too much money domestically is war overseas, then by Schmitt's logic shouldn't we invade a few more countries? Obviously nearly a trillion dollars spent on Iraq and Afghanistan so far didn't stop President George W. Bush from increasing money for education or Presidents Bush and Barack Obama from undertaking endless bail-outs of the well-connected on Wall Street. So how about several more wars--Syria, Burma, Iran, Cuba, and North Korea might make up a good hit list?

Still, they are all relatively small fry. The only way to defund a government which spent nearly \$4 trillion this year would be a REALLY BIG war. That means a great power, which suggests a country with nuclear weapons. Either China or Russia. Or both. In that case the U.S. government wouldn't have any extra money to spend to get in the way of discovering the real solutions to American social problems.

In fact, there's a good argument that the government should spend less money on social programs *in the interest of the supposed beneficiaries*. But that is not an argument for more wars. Especially when the latter are being justified as *transforming foreign societies for the better*. [My Cato Institute Justin Logan](#)

[generously calls this argument "profoundly incoherent,"](#) but nutty probably would be a more accurate characterization.

Neocons have made a lot of curious arguments on behalf of attempting to coercively remake the globe. But wasting Americans' money attempting to solve the world's social problems so the U.S. government will better solve social problems at home must be the most creative.

Doug Bandow, American Conservative Defense Alliance

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Posted  
10/01/09 11:09  
AM



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It has gotten to the point of insanity. These guys are just out right delusional.

End the wars. End the occupations. Be done with the loss of American lives.

We are all ready for a fight when the time comes. But you can't be prepared if you are in the midst of economic armageddon.

Posted 10/02/09  
01:56 AM



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Mr. Bandow severely distorts Mr. Schmitt's views in order to make a point which is no way related to the criticism expressed in the quoted essay. Schmitt simply argues that even if we were to withdraw from Afghanistan, this would not save enough money to solve US domestic problems (which Professor Bacevich believes to be a better way of leading the world). Thus, there is not a choice between fighting terrorism with military power and fighting it by becoming a more just society.

Mr. Bandow, rather than creating straw men to knock down and thus encouraging C4L readers to believe the