



*To reduce the threat of violence, war and terrorism,
working through peaceful, just and democratic means.*

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Why shouldn't peace be a priority for the Right?

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March 16th, 2010

by Francis Chiappa

With the Tea Party folks clamoring for smaller government and lower taxes, peaceniks on the Left might wonder why they aren't up in arms over military as well as domestic spending. After all, the tripling of the national debt during George W. Bush's 8 years in office had two root causes - fighting two wars, with ballooning military spending, and, simultaneously, cutting taxes. You'd think the Right thinks that big government is just fine, as the long as the Pentagon is the only elephant in the room.

Think again. Many in the Libertarian wing of the Right think that military spending is just as bad, if not worse than domestic spending. War may not be the answer to much of anything, but from a Libertarian perspective, it fosters centralization and the growing power of the State. Few on the Left would disagree with this. Ron Paul is the name most associated with an anti-war Libertarian viewpoint.

To really find out how war and defense spending look to many Libertarians, check out the Cato Institute, whose priorities are "individual liberty, free markets, and peace." A dear old friend, with strong Libertarian sympathies, recently complained that the Cleveland Peace Action website did not mention the Cato Institute. And I agree, this is a serious omission.

So I now refer you to a wonderful 2008 article by [Justin Logan, in the Cato Policy Report](#).

He portrays the division among Libertarians on war and peace issues and articulates why peace should be a priority for those on the Right. Here's a representative quote: "War historically has been the most effective generator of big government."

If the Left and Right are going to talk to each other and find some common ground - and I'd argue that in these contentious times, we desperately need such connection - then I'd urge Leftists to check out the Cato Institute. Ron Paul is speaking from an intellectual tradition and it's one that the anti-war Left would do well to understand and in some ways embrace.

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