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A GREAT NATION DESERVES THE TRUTH

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Kerry a Neocon?

by Michael in New York on [10/04/2004 01:03:00 AM](#)

William Safire tries to claim John Kerry has morphed into a neocon during the election.

"First, on war-fighting in Iraq" writes Safire. "Hard-liners criticized the Bush decision this spring not to send U.S. troops in to crush Sunni resistance in the Baathist stronghold in Falluja. Our forces wanted to fight to win but soft-liners in Washington worried about the effect of heavier civilian casualties on the hearts and minds of Iraqis, and of U.S. troop losses on Americans."

Kerry supports going in full-out and Safire claims this is somehow neocon. Actually, it's called letting the military do its job and not calling off assaults for political reasons. (Bush has overruled military actions the generals wanted to take in the field several times, presumably for fear of casualties.)

Gee, think that not tying the military's hands with political concerns might be something Kerry learned in Vietnam?

"Next, to grand strategy," writes Safire. "Kerry was asked by Jim Lehrer, "What is your position on the whole concept of pre-emptive war?" In the past, Kerry has given a safe never-say-never response, but last week he gave a Strangelovian answer: "The president always has the right and always has had the right for pre-emptive strike." He pledged never to cede "the right to pre-empt in any way necessary" to protect the U.S.

"But in embracing his right to pre-empt - always derided in horror by the two-minutes-to-midnight crowd as impermissible "preventive war" - Kerry felt the need to interject: "That was a great doctrine throughout the cold war. And it was one of the things we argued about with respect to arms control.""

Safire argues that only Strangelove considered MAD (mutually assured destruction) as including preemptive strikes. But that was one of the most intimidating things about MAD. It didn't work if you waited to build a coalition. So if the Soviets launched a missile -- just one missile -- we would consider that a full-out assault and launch everything we had against them. Only right-wingers would claim this wasn't preemptive just because you didn't launch first.

And of course, no President in US history that believed we were about to be attacked would have ever felt the need to get "approval" before responding militarily or attacking first. But every President before Bush knew that huge international struggles were easier to win if you reached out to allies rather than pushing them away.

"On stopping North Korea's nuclear buildup," writes Safire, "Kerry abandoned his global-testing multilateralism; our newest neocon derided Bush's six-nation talks and demands America go it gloriously alone."

Wrong. Kerry has said repeatedly that the US having face-to-face talks with North Korea doesn't mean all the regional partners (China, Japan, etc.) have to walk away. He WANTS them to stay involved.

And Safire ignores the larger truth that George Bush has made a radical break with 50 years of foreign policy. Bush mocks our allies, mocks the UN, mocks the Geneva Convention, mocks the World Court, mocks the World Trade Organization, walks away from the Kyoto Accords and never makes a serious new offer and on and on and on. Everyone on the right keeps saying Kerry's position on Iraq is the same as Bush because they both want to bring in more allies. The difference is that Kerry hasn't seriously damaged every international

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