

## **Newt and I and W**

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(Combining "Newt's Sweet Dreams" Unpublished, 1995, and information about the New American Century Project)

I first met Newt Gingrich when he was still teaching history at Georgia Western University. He and I were involved in the activities of the Committee for Anticipatory Democracy that Alvin Toffler created in the mid 1970s. Then for several years after he was first elected to Congress as a Republican from Georgia in 1978--and being a Republican in Georgia was unthinkable at the time--I would visit with Newt whenever I was in Washington, and it was mutually convenient.

Without a doubt the most memorable visit I had with Gingrich was on June 10, 1981.

On the next day, June 11, Newt was going to give a presentation in the Oval Office to President Reagan, Jim Baker, and other members of the President's staff. On the 10th, he was giving a dry run of that briefing to some staff members of the Congressional Planning Committee of the Republican Party. Newt invited me to sit in, as the only "outsider" present.

With Newt's permission, I collected the handouts, and took notes of that meeting. On June 12, I presented them to a hastily-convened seminar of the UH Political Science Department. Some of you will remember that.

What follows is based on those notes and handouts, and my continuing to follow Gingrich's career subsequently, though more recently, only from afar.

Now, as much as I may disagree with most of Newt's rhetoric and policies, he is no more (or less) a flake than is (or was) any other US political figure before he became famous (and/or powerful).

Dator's Second Law of the Future is, "Any useful statement about the future should seem ridiculous." The corollary is that when futurists make useful statements about the future, they should expect to be ridiculed and laughed at.

Futurists have no problem with that. Unfortunately, the media, willfully ignorant of the utility of futures studies, only knows how to ridicule and laugh. Generally speaking, it does not know how to identify and evaluate presently-laughable but futuristically-important statements, and to place them in their proper context.

Before 1776 (or so), the ridiculous ideas about the separation of Church and State espoused by a farmer known as Thomas Jefferson could be dismissed out of hand. Didn't

he know that ALL nations (and England's colonies) had Established Religions? How in the world was he going to separate the church from the state, for heaven's sake?

Before 1819 (or so), the idea that a business organization could be considered a "person" which should be accorded many of the rights that a live human being holds under the US Constitution must certainly have been laughable (I must say I still consider it pernicious, as well as ridiculous).

Before 1863 (or so), who would have dared believe the US would abolish slavery--an honored and "natural" institution since the dawn of time?

Before 1991 (or so), who would have dared believe the Mighty Evil Empire would crumble and fall with scarcely any bloodshed and without any foreign invasion?

And before 1994, who would have dared believe the mighty Liberal Welfare State, the brilliant and necessary creation of the Brain Trust of the 1930s (vastly aided by the Second World War, and greatly imitated by every other nation in the world) could be brought to its knees--no: pushed flat on its face--by one Newt and a bunch of very carefully picked, prepped and cultivated Republican candidates, aided by, of all things radio! Talk radio--and this in the era of the digital SuperHighway, never mind television!

But it is all right there in my 1981 notes; in Newt's mimeographed handouts, titled, "Key steps in developing a survivable United States," written by Newt Gingrich and one Marianne Ginther); along with a 23-point handout titled "Creating a Republican legislative agenda for a Conservative Opportunity State" and in later material, including a 21 page article titled, "Building the Conservative Opportunity Society: The Challenge in 1982 for America," this time written by Marianne and Newt Gingrich; various pieces of future-oriented legislation (one co-introduced by Albert Gore in the Senate and Gingrich in the House in 1983 for "the continuous assessment of critical trends and alternative futures"), and ending (for me) with a handout from "the Baltimore Conference" of October 1983, titled "America at the Crossroads: Creating a Conservative Opportunity Society and a Republican Majority," and, in 1984, with a copy of the book, Window of Opportunity: A Blueprint for the Future, by The Honorable Newt Gingrich, with David Drake and Marianne Gingrich, with supporting blurbs by Alvin Toffler and Hans Mark (Deputy Administrator of NASA).

It is all there, folks.

Newt Gingrich did not suddenly appear on the political scene. The "Contract with/on/against America" is absolutely nothing new. Absolutely nothing is secret or surprising here.

The election of Reagan in 1980 was, Newt believed, a fluke, not a trend. "Republicans," he said to me in 1981, "have been 'the minority,' 'the opposition' for so long that we cannot realize that now we must be 'the government.' But if we play our cards right, we can be 'the government' for the rest of our lives." "We have the opportunity to build a

new coalition that will be as revolutionary in its way as that built by Roosevelt and the New Deal."

Newt then described a plan which begins with a vision of a preferred future for America, which he then termed (as you can tell from the material cited above) "The Conservative Opportunity Society." This positive vision, he said, should be clearly articulated in contrast to the "Liberal Democrat Worldview" which is all bad.

US government operates (said Gingrich, and many American Government textbooks agree), not according to the formal "separation of powers" between Congress, the President, and the Courts, but rather by "iron triangles" which are composed of interest groups focused on one particular economic or ideological issue; members of the congressional committees (often from the place where the interest groups are most powerful) which formulate policy relative to the issue; and the bureaucrats in the executive branch who are responsible for carrying out the policies of Congress for the benefit of the members of the interest group.

Every issue of importance has its own "iron triangle," and American government works, Newt believed, by and through these triangles, with each triangle leaving the other triangles alone as long as no other triangle bothers them.

Nonetheless, Newt believed it was necessary to strengthen, or create, Conservative Opportunity triangles, while attacking and belittling Liberal ones. Newt proposed doing this by utilizing under-utilized media, since the major media were "captured" by the Liberals. As Newt said, according to my notes, "We have got to get Amway to use their Mutual Broadcasting System to get our message across. Freedom of the Press doesn't only mean that the Washington Post has the right to gut us. We have the right to get our message across too."

In addition to getting a positive, clear and compelling message formulated and across (and in sharp contrast to conventional Republican--or Democratic--party politics of the time), Newt said, according to my notes, "Richard Nixon helped us enormously by wiping out half of the senior Republicans, leaving a great vacuum which we, the survivors of the 70s, are alone to fill. We will not fill it with our friends and cronies, as has been done in the past, but with professionals, trained in campaign managing professionally, and thoroughly imbued with, and loyal to, our Worldview. If folks won't go along with us, we'll just say, thank you and good bye. Get on the team, or thank you, goodbye."

Virtually all of the newly-elected signers of the Contract are loyally "on the team," and fully willing and able to enact and try to carry out its provisions, I believe.

Throughout the 1981 briefing, Gingrich spoke admiringly of two models around which he planned to restructure the Republican Party, thereby turning it into "the government for the rest of our lives," namely, Amway, and the German Army, the Wehrmacht. He believed that the Wehrmacht was an excellent army, having an admirable chain of

command within which information flowed freely up and down between the top and the bottom. The German Army lost the war, in his judgment, not because it was inferior to the American Army, but only because of the insanity of the goals it was asked to pursue. "We should," I quoted him in my notes as saying, "organize the Republican Party like the Wehrmacht" but pursuing, of course, the goals of the Conservative Opportunity Society.

Unlike most freshmen congress members, who wish to get on committees of substantive interest to their constituents, Newt chose to ride to power by restructuring the Republican Party.

Like a good futurist, he had a vision which he tirelessly espoused and refined; he had a plan of action, which he tirelessly enacted and improved; and he became a tireless leader who recruited enough loyal followers to fulfill his plan and achieve his vision.

Barring some event or other which removes Gingrich from the political arena, he and his supporters are fully able and capable of enacting the policies they propose. If they do, he is in my judgment understating the situation when he says it will be a revolution in American politics as great as the New Deal, resulting in policies and procedures as different from those followed since the New Deal as the New Deal was from the policies and procedures which preceded it.

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Now, as you all know, Gingrich overreached, and was personally an abusive jerk, and so he came down, and Clinton was re-elected President. But the vision and strategy of the Republican Party remained the same, and so in the mid 1990s, a group of Republicans formed "The Project for a New American Century" and on June 3, 1997 issued the following statement which begins:

"American foreign and defense policy is adrift. Conservatives have criticized the incoherent policies of the Clinton Administration. They have also resisted isolationist impulses from within their own ranks. But conservatives have not confidently advanced a strategic vision of America's role in the world. They have not set forth guiding principles for American foreign policy. They have allowed differences over tactics to obscure potential agreement on strategic objectives. And they have not fought for a defense budget that would maintain American security and advance American interests in the new century. We aim to change this. We aim to make the case and rally support for American global leadership" FN: <  
<http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>>.

The "Statement of Principles" then concludes:

- "we need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;
- "we need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
  
- "we need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;

- "we need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles.

Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next." [FN: loc cit.]

The Statement was signed by Elliott Abrams, Gary Bauer, William J. Bennett, Jeb Bush, Dick Cheney, Eliot A. Cohen, Midge Decter, Paula Dobriansky, Steve Forbe, Aaron Friedberg, Francis Fukuyama, Frank Gaffney, Fred C. Ikle, Donald Kagan, Zalmay Khalilzad, I. Lewis Libby, Norman Podhoretz, Dan Quayle, Peter W. Rodman, Stephen P. Rosen, Henry S. Rowen, Donald Rumsfeld, Vin Weber, George Weigel, Paul Wolfowitz.

When the US Supreme Court declared George W. Bush the President of the United States, and Richard Cheney Vice President, and when Cheney then became the head of the transition team responsible for choosing the major figures in the Bush administration, many of these same people found themselves in positions of governmental power that enabled them to move even closer to the opportunity to turn their principles into reality. In order to move beyond the principles, in September 2000, the group published *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, Thomas Donnelly (principal author), Washington, DC: The Project for the New American Century, September 2000  
<<http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>>

The "Key Findings" of the report are:

ESTABLISH FOUR CORE MISSIONS for U.S. military forces:

- defend the American homeland;
- fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theater wars;
- perform the "constabulary" duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions;
- transform U.S. forces to exploit the "revolution in military affairs;"

To carry out these core missions, we need to provide sufficient force and budgetary allocations. In particular, the United States must:

MAINTAIN NUCLEAR STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY, basing the U.S. nuclear deterrent upon a global, nuclear net assessment that weighs the full range of current and emerging threats, not merely the U.S.-Russia balance.

RESTORE THE PERSONNEL STRENGTH of today's force to roughly the levels anticipated in the "Base Force" outlined by the Bush Administration, an increase in active-duty strength from 1.4 million to 1.6 million.

REPOSITION U.S. FORCES to respond to 21st century strategic realities by shifting permanently-based forces to Southeast Europe and Southeast Asia, and by changing naval deployment patterns to reflect growing U.S. strategic concerns in East Asia.

MODERNIZE CURRENT U.S. FORCES SELECTIVELY, proceeding with the F-22 program while increasing purchases of lift, electronic support and other aircraft; expanding submarine and surface combatant fleets; purchasing Comanche helicopters and medium-weight ground vehicles for the Army, and the V-22 Osprey "tilt-rotor" aircraft for the Marine Corps.

CANCEL "ROADBLOCK" PROGRAMS such as the Joint Strike Fighter, CVX aircraft carrier, and Crusader howitzer system that would absorb exorbitant amounts of Pentagon funding while providing limited improvements to current capabilities. Savings from these canceled programs should be used to spur the process of military transformation.

DEVELOP AND DEPLOY GLOBAL MISSILE DEFENSES to defend the American homeland and American allies, and to provide a secure basis for U.S. power projection around the world.

CONTROL THE NEW "INTERNATIONAL COMMONS" OF SPACE AND "CYBERSPACE," and pave the way for the creation of a new military service – U.S. Space Forces – with the mission of space control.

EXPLOIT THE "REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS" to insure the long-term superiority of U.S. conventional forces. Establish a two-stage transformation process which

- maximizes the value of current weapons systems through the application of advanced technologies, and,
  - produces more profound improvements in military capabilities,
- encourages competition between single services and joint-service experimentation efforts.

INCREASE DEFENSE SPENDING gradually to a minimum level of 3.5 to 3.8 percent of gross domestic product, adding \$15 billion to \$20 billion to total defense spending annually. (p. 11f)

Still even with the policy and people now in place, the authors admitted they were not likely to be able to make the kinds of sweeping change they envisioned without a major stroke of luck. As they put it:

"Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor." (p. 62)

And then, strangely enough, the incidents of September 11, 2001 occurred, and the World Changed for America. Citizens' rights, long considered almost sacred in their inviolability, were swept away by a compliant Congress in the so-called "USA PATRIOT ACT " of 2001 [FN: "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act" (Oct. 25, 2001) HR 3162 RDS 107th CONGRESS 1st Session "AN ACT To deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to enhance law enforcement investigatory tools, and for other purposes."]

The rest is history--recent history--during which time Karl Rove and the masterminds of Republican Strategy used war and terror to whip Middle America into a fervor of righteous religious fear, while the Democrats replied not with a new, bold, attractive policy but with arguments that they could follow the Republican agenda better than the Republican could.