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Richard Perle: Don't Blame Neocons for Iraqi Crisis

By Cathy Burke | Tuesday, 17 Jun 2014 03:56 PM

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Pat Buchanan's blaming President George W. Bush "and the **neocons**" for the current Iraq crisis shows he not only "misunderstood" U.S. policy but also derogatorily used a term used by "hateful critics" to refer to Jewish Americans, Richard Perle charged Tuesday.

The former assistant secretary of defense, who is now a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, told "The Steve Malzberg Show" on **Newsmax TV** that the "connotations" of "neocon" are anything but subtle.

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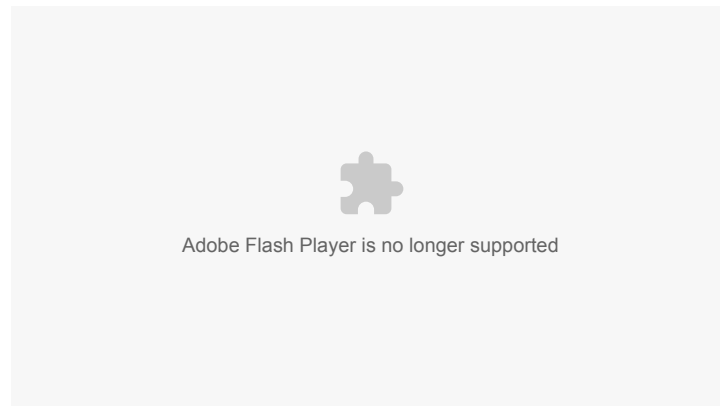
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"It's often used to describe Jewish Americans because, as it happens, some of the original thinkers whose ideas have now been characterized by this general term 'neoconservative' were in fact Jewish, and it often carries conspiratorial tones on the part of people who throw the term around," he said, adding that Buchanan has used the word in that context "for a long time."

"The truth is that if you Google neoconservative and you read any number of randomly read articles about neoconservatives you will discover that neoconservatives themselves are almost never quoted. They are not permitted to define their own views – their views are being defined by their critics and in some cases quite hateful critics."

Perle also noted that Buchanan is opposed to going into **Iraq** now, and had the same view when the U.S. took military action under the Bush administration.

"He misunderstood the reasons that some of us advocated it," Perle said. "We were not doing it to bring democracy to Iraq, we were not doing it as he has sometimes suggested on behalf of any other government. We believed the intelligence that was available at the time that the CIA and other intelligence organizations . . . that Saddam [Hussein] had weapons of

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mass destruction and there was a danger after 9/11 that he would share those weapons.

"That was the only reason for going into Iraq," Perle added. "The idea that this was some sort of crusade on behalf of democracy is simply wrong. After the failure to find the weapons of mass destruction that were believed to be there, people often as a kind of rationalization began to talk about the virtues of democracy. I agree about the virtues of democracy, but that was not the reason for going into Iraq, so for Pat Buchanan to claim that it was a mistake . . . seems to me to be rewriting the history."

Perle believes the "mistake in American policies that have brought us" to the current chaos in Iraq "is the way in which we departed in 2011."

"But perhaps more important is the failure to recognize that if we stood by and did nothing in Syria, support would flow to the most radical elements and that's exactly what happened and so now we have a terrible situation in Syria, it is spilled over into Iraq and the administration — astonishing as this may seem — is actually thinking about going to the Iranians to help deal with the situation that we allowed to develop and that the Iranians had been encouraging."

Perle blasted President Barack Obama for making "certain there would be no status of forces agreement" to keep some troops in Iraq.

"He wanted to leave completely," Perle said. "Even though it was premature, even though it was foolish and I suspect he now regrets it, but he wanted out."

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