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Neocons Trying to Sneak Into Trump Administration

By Jason Ditz
November 11, 2016

It's a cliché to say that the cushiest positions of influence in any US administration go to figures who were seen to have brought something to the table during the campaign. Yet with the election of Donald Trump, a lot of high-ranking neoconservatives are expecting the exact opposite, figuring that they can step right into positions of power and influence despite openly campaigning against Trump.

There are more than a few people who would normally be in line for top positions in a Republican White House, but who were very publicly part of the “Never Trump” crowd, attacking him throughout the primary and the general election. These same people are now making public their “willingness” to work with Trump.

In other words, they want the usual spoils of victory, but having positioned themselves as so firmly in opposition to Trump's worldview, and to Trump in general, it's not at all clear how willing Trump's transition team is to consider such candidates for important positions.

The early indications are that a lot of the foreign policy-related positions are going to be going to high-ranking former military officials who backed Trump's candidacy, with officials noting that long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have left them with a lot of such officials to choose from.

For many of the neocons, this is likely less about getting cushy jobs or fancy titles and more about ensuring that the US remains aggressively interventionist abroad. Indeed, many of these people split with Trump in the first place over concerns he was insufficiently hawkish, and now want jobs that would put them in a position to shift the new administration in those same hawkish directions.