

The Cheney Gene

By [John Kozy](#)

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Liz Cheney, Debra Burlingame, and William Kristol have launched a new neocon site, [Keep America Safe](#) to “make the case for an unapologetic approach to fighting terrorism around the world, for victory in the wars this country fights, for democracy, freedom and human rights, and for a strong American military that is needed in the dangerous world in which we live.” Among those associated with the group are Michael Goldfarb, Aaron Harison, and Justin Germany.

Numerous things are troubling about this group, but one stands out. None has ever served in the military. Just like Dick Cheney, when their nation called, they discovered that they had priorities other than military service; yet they have no problem with beating the war drums and sending other people’s children into battle. The most well-known neocons also fall into this group. The only prominent neocon who has served in the military is Norman Podhoretz. Numerous members of Congress are also in this group, especially those in the Republican leadership. If you want to know who they are, go to the [chickenhawk database](#).

I propose that all of these people be referred to as possessors of the Cheney Gene. It is an unidentified gene that turns the belly yellow when country calls. It is possessed by people who when called to serve say, Hell no, I won’t go. People who possess this gene have given the word “conservative” new meaning. Historically it has meant save the *status quo*, the old regime. Now it means save my skin.

These people are experts on war from afar. Some of these people have held high diplomatic and Pentagon posts. Dick Cheney, James Schlesinger, Harold Brown, William Cohen, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, John R. Bolton, Elliott Abrams, Doug Feith are some of the most prominent beaters of war drums who have never served. All are neocons who chose to save their own skins; all have the Cheney gene.

Historically it has not always been this way. The elite of nations have often led their armies into battle. The word “aristocracy” originally referred to young Athenians of the ruling class who led armies by holding up their swords from the front lines. This usage passed on to the European Middle Ages in reference to a similar class of military leaders, the nobility. Numerous national leaders led their armies into battle: Sennacherib, Suleiman, Xerxes, Darius, the Spartan Kings, especially Leonidas, Alexander the Great, some Roman Caesars, Henry II of England, Philip II of France, Richard I, Frederick I Barbarossa, Leopold V of Austria, Saladin, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, Gustav II Adolf, Henry VIII, and, of course, Napoleon. No longer! Today our leaders cower behind the rhetoric of super patriotism which is no patriotism at all, just bombast meant to save their own skins.

Americans should be able to silence these people merely by calling yellow yellow. Make the

“Cheney Gene” into a common term. Let him go down in history just as Benedict Arnold and Quisling have. But if that doesn’t work, the right kind of conscription will. All that’s needed to reduce the world’s warring is ensure that those who advocate and benefit from wars are the ones who fight them.

Just imagine conscription of the following kind: Persons of military age are to be conscripted from three groups. The first to be conscripted are the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of elected office holders and appointees to governmental posts. The second to be conscripted are the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of families whose assets are valued in the billions. The third to be conscripted are the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of families whose assets are valued in the millions. And finally, no one is to be conscripted from families whose assets are valued at less than a million. If this form of conscription were adopted, wars would be rare events indeed. They are only frequent today because those who advocate them are not the ones who fight them.

Does anyone believe that George Bush and Dick Cheney would ever have started the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had they known that Barbara, Jenna, and Liz would have ended up on the battlefield?

John Kozy is a retired professor of philosophy and logic who blogs on social, political, and economic issues. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, he spent 20 years as a university professor and another 20 years working as a writer. He has published a textbook in formal logic commercially, in academic journals and a small number of commercial magazines, and has written a number of guest editorials for newspapers. His on-line pieces can be found on <http://www.jkozy.com/> and he can be emailed from that site’s homepage.

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