

Some at Sic Semper Tyrannis have asked about the successful rise of David Addington -- Vice President Cheney's chief of staff and the leading apostle of the [unitary executive](#) theory. I'll leave it to others to offer high octane legal insights, but Jane Mayer, in her excellent article "[The Hidden Power](#)", goes into great detail when describing Addington's approach. And, after reading her article, if someone asked me to choose one sentence to write on a chalkboard to sum up Addington and his weltanschauung, then I would offer the following: Addington doesn't believe in the US Constitution.

What else does anyone really need to know? If you want an academic description, I suppose one could say that Addington's intent to destroy the US Constitution is the source of his praxeology and thus drives all of his actions. One therefore can analyze his work based upon the assumption that he wants to decimate the US Constitution so as to create an imperial presidency. But, in simpler terms, this description of Addington simply sums up his "m.o.", or for those who believe he should face prosecution, his "mens rea", that is, his "guilty state of mind".

Of course, if you want to take it a step further and construct an argument against the views of Addington, then you must first decide the venue and audience. And because the tempo and motif of Sic Semper Tyrannis is one of [The Butcher's Cleaver](#) and the Confederate Secret Services, I suggest tailoring such an argument with the specific intent of triggering a particular "collective memory" of anti-imperialism -- a collective memory long forgotten. By relying in part on the insight of Dr. Christine Helms that the "[collective memory is a toolshed](#)" that may lead to social change, the hope is that the revival of this specific collective memory will help end the days of Addington and Cheney as a political power.

But, first, a clarification. For those who recoil at the idea of looking at Southern U.S. history to find a response to Addington and his gospel, please bear with me and read this essay to its end. Sometimes the answer can be found where one least expects it. Besides, as the report of the 9-11 commission stated, "The most important failure was one of imagination", so perhaps it is worthwhile to take another look at Southern history to see if any intellectual currents can help us today.

And perhaps it is important to remember that such an inquiry is done during an unique time in our nation's history -- one that Philip Weiss has called a time of "ideological disarray". No doubt that Weiss is correct on that score. The post 9-11 world has shattered all preconceptions and unraveled all the intellectual, cultural, and historical threads that previously were woven together. Justin

Raimondo echoed the same sentiment as early as 2002 when he wrote that our nation has entered the "[Bizarro World](#)" -- a world where all has become [inverted](#) after 9-11 ruptured the space-time fabric. So it is obvious that the inquiry is really a search for new organizing principles. There really is no other choice.

Against that backdrop, one way to offer a response to the successful rise of Addington and his devotees is to head out to Arlington National Cemetery and then to Jackson Circle. Once there, you will see the Confederate Memorial Monument -- a work of art that the US Government commissioned in the early 20th century with the hope of reconciling regional differences. The monument is the vision of Moses Jacob Ezekiel, the neo-classical sculptor from Virginia who was a former Confederate and the first Jewish graduate from VMI. Ezekiel, true to his reputation, created a work of art that draws the viewer deeper and deeper into a contemplation of a myriad of eternal images that resonant throughout time. And one image of this Monument truly jumps out to the viewer, especially in this day and age. It can be found at its base, where you will find the all important Latin words, *Victrix Causa Diis Placuit Sed Victa Catoni*.

Victrix Causa Diis Placuit Sed Victa Catoni. The victorious cause was pleasing to the gods, but the lost cause to Cato. To many people, including Moses Jacob Ezekiel, this Latin phrase meant that the cause of the United States as an imperial power may have pleased the gods of government (Caesar), but not those who believed in a republic (Cato). So it is not difficult to take this Latin phrase and then analogize to today: the rise of David Addington and the gospel of the unitary executive theory may please the gods of empire but the rise of Pax Americana is not pleasing to those who hold onto the idea of the United States as a republic.

But, with that Latin phrase, deeply troubling questions arise, particularly while standing at the Confederate Memorial. The people from the "red states" of the South, more than any other region, have embraced [Cheney's Law](#) -- the law of an imperial president who can ignore the will of Congress, the judiciary and the American people. So as one looks at Ezekiel's work at Jackson Circle, one cannot help but ask: what has happened to the best part of the South? How can Southerners in the 21st century support, in such vast numbers, the very idea that at least some of their ancestors fought?

It appears that these Southerners have forgotten the reminder that Ezekiel left us and instead have attached themselves to other ideological and cultural movements, such as a numbing addiction to the images and words of a mass media that cares for them not in the least. And there also is the allegiance to neoconservatism, which calls for the unilateral projection of American military power with the intent of destroying other nations and cultures. Cheney, of course, is the CEO of the movement, and Addington is the general counsel.

And then there is the unmistakable Southern allegiance to the gospel of Pastor Hagee and the Rapture movement. This realization about the South, particularly while standing at the Confederate Memorial, leads to even more questions -- the answers to which are critical for our inquiry. Is Hagee and his desire to see the destruction of the Arab and Muslim world as tragically wrong as those antebellum ministers who held the Bible high and preached that blacks had neither the spark of divinity nor the soul of humanity within? Does Hagee reject Martin Buber's approach of the "I" and "Thou" relationships, thus portending a tragedy of untold proportions lying just over the horizon for the Middle East, America, and the world? (If Southern history is any indication, then "tragedy" is the proper word, not victory.)

One aspect of history to ponder: decide for yourself but the great luminaries of the Confederate warrior tradition -- and I most certainly include Judah Benjamin on that list -- appear to have rejected this particular aspect of the Southern religious tradition that Hagee now fulminates from the pulpit -- a tradition that preaches the lack of humanity in the other. Instead, the Confederate warrior tradition adopted, to various degrees, the outlook and views of the Virginian [St. George Tucker](#). St. George Tucker -- who fought at Yorktown during the Revolutionary War and later became one of the [great legal minds](#) of early Virginia -- saw the humanity of the "other" and wrote [a tract calling for the general abolition of slavery](#).

And, while Tucker's views were rejected by Virginian legislators and other politicians of the day (much to his dismay), history is replete with examples of Confederate military leaders who by the 1850's questioned, if not opposed, slavery, and some even opposed secession. From the generals to the foot soldiers if you asked them why they fought, the response typically was along the lines of, "It's my home" or "It's my land". As but one example, General Robert E. Lee stated the following in April, 1861, after he resigned his commission from the US Army: "I cannot raise my hand against my birthplace, my home, my children." And as lore would have it, a captured barefoot Confederate soldier in Tennessee was asked by a "Yankee" soldier why he fought so hard. The response was, "Cuz yer here". So no doubt there was a spirit of anti-imperialism resonating throughout the Southern military tradition. (And you'll find that this particular tradition, in keeping with the ideas of St. George Tucker, also argued for the emancipation of Southern blacks in return for service in the Confederate military. Judah Benjamin was a one of the more vocal proponents of this idea.)

So, at this point, you can see that the collective memory of the South splits into two traditions or cultural threads that weave through history. One tradition was best represented by those of the Confederate military who believed they were fighting a government that would unleash aggression against an internal population -- Southerners. This type of aggression is exactly the same as

neoconservatism today but simply one applied internally to a different region and a vastly different culture. And one can further point out that pursuing the forerunner of the neoconservative ideology led to what the CIA today calls "blowback". The "blowback", or unintended consequences of an imperial policy came in the form of Mosby, Jackson, Longstreet, and Lee.

And then we have the other tradition at work in the South -- the one that rejected the idea of St. George Tucker. The people of this other tradition refused to see the "humanity" in the other. They vehemently refused to view the institution of slavery in more classical terms, where it, historically, was seen as an opportunity for social mobility. Instead they began to defend slavery as a type of caste system for African-Americans, one that laid the groundwork for an attempt to justify later an apartheid state. And, it was this tradition that held the day in the South at the time, and it is the one that led to the Southern defeat.

The truly great Confederate warriors -- Generals Lee and Longstreet, Colonel Mosby, and innumerable others -- accepted this defeat and said, "So be it". The defeat was God's will. Both Longstreet and Mosby became Republicans -- a heresy among those Southerners of the other tradition who were trying to glorify a defeat, which of course meant holding onto their "obstinacy" at all costs. (And to make matters worse, Longstreet after the war was seen as converting to another heresy-- Catholicism). In fact, certain Southerners wanted to assassinate Longstreet after he employed blacks in a New Orleans militia. And these Southerners felt the same about Colonel Mosby, as they burnt down Mosby's boyhood house in Virginia and even plotted to assassinate him as well.

The vilification of this military tradition is one of the truly ironic twists in all of history because Colonel Mosby and General Longstreet are the very ones who knew how to win. Mosby developed what today is called asymmetrical tactics against an imperial power. He was one of the most feared fighters of the Confederacy. As for General Longstreet, more and more people are recognizing that if Lee had followed Longstreet's advice at Gettysburg, then history would have gone down a vastly different path. And even as late in the war as the battle of Chickamauga, Longstreet nearly turned it all around when he broke Union lines.

One cannot help but speculate that, after the war, General Longstreet and Colonel Mosby must have experienced from time to time the cognitive dissonance known as a "love-hate" relationship with the South while, of course, always holding onto an undying loyalty. Little wonder that after the war both of them accepted government assignments abroad -- General Longstreet to Turkey and Colonel Mosby to Hong Kong. But as a result of their struggle, they give us today a very important point to remember: to understand the collective memory of the South, it is necessary to recognize the significant distinction between the two cultural

traditions -- the one of the Confederate military and the one that was not-- and then track the two clashing traditions to today.

So this leads us back to today as well as to Jackson Circle and Ezekiel's work of art. And from there, all you have to do while standing at the Confederate Memorial is take a few steps east, head towards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and then you will see our nation's Capitol far off in the distance. And while staring at the Capitol, the questions return with more clarity: are those Southern politicians of today who support the views of Addington, in reality, embracing the very imperial cause that this particular Confederate military tradition fought? Are Southern neoconservatives of today disgracing the best of the South? Do they spiritually even belong with the tradition so beautifully represented at Jackson Circle?

One thing is for certain: by supporting the idea of a "unitary executive", Southern neoconservatives oppose the motto and spirit of the Old Dominion State -- [Sic Semper Tyrannis](#). In fact, if ever there was a symbol that represented opposition to Cheney and Addington, it is that of the [Virginia state flag](#). Additionally, by endorsing the neoconservative idea of empire and imperialism, these Southerners indisputably reject the message left to us by Moses Ezekiel: "*Victrix Causa Diis Placuit Sed Victa Catoni*". Finally, by supporting a theology that refuses to see the humanity in the other, they place themselves at odds with the tradition left to us by the jurist and Virginian St. George Tucker. And, of course, all one has to do is look at Southern history to see that those who fail to see the humanity of "the other" are headed towards a military disaster.

So for those who are not of the South, hopefully it now is easier to find the gift of Southern history, and it is the collective memory that offers an answer to Addington's theory of the unitary executive theory. No doubt, to find this long forgotten memory, one must put all aside and dig deep into history, much like what is done at an archaeological site. But dig deep enough and through all the layers of history with their various interpretations, and you will find the treasure of the Southern collective memory, so to speak. *Victrix Causa Diis Placuit Sed Victa Catoni*, courtesy of Moses Jacob Ezekiel.

And for Southerners, once you grab onto the idea and ponder it for awhile, a startling realization may occur. Over 400,000 Confederate ancestors did not spill their blood all over the South and beyond so that Southern Congressmen in 2008 can prim away at some beauty parlor located at the Capitol while, all the time, talking glibly about imperial ventures and further promoting State sponsored "torture" as an American value. No, the bloody sacrifice of the Confederate military tradition stood for the exact opposite. *Sic Semper Tyrannis*.

So the gift of the South to the world is the collective memory preserved by the artist Moses Jacob Ezekiel at Arlington National Cemetery, not the one espoused by Southern politicians of the neoconservative bent and through the gospel according to their court theologian -- Pastor Hagee. And the gift left to us by Moses Jacob Ezekiel is the collective memory of a military tradition that opposes a government of Addington's making -- one that promotes imperialism and torture through an all powerful executive branch.

One hopes in this day and age, people can make their way through all the smoke screens left by history and see this intellectual and cultural memory as one to be shared with others. Seen in that light, it is a gift to such people as those of Wyoming, who surely are as tired as everyone else of Addington and their State's very own Dick Cheney. In fact, it is a Southern gift of friendship offered to all the States and even those beyond -- Korea, Germany, and the rest. And, in keeping with the purpose of Ezekiel's monument, which was to promote reconciliation, it is offered in friendship to all who see the greatness of Lawrence Joshua Chamberlain and consider themselves part of his tradition at Little Round Top. Perhaps, at this time, it is best to recall the words of Winston Churchill that the war was the "least avoidable of all great mass conflicts of which till then there was record".

And, ah yes, now for the lingering suspicion. It is offered to black Americans as well, at least the ones who hate imperialism and State sponsored torture too. Maybe one day people will ask Shelby Steele, Larry Thompson, and others about their views on a US foreign policy that not only promotes imperialism and torture but also espouses a tradition that fails to see the humanity in the other. (Larry Thompson already may have offered an answer by leaving the Bush Administration at first chance). But surely in this post 9-11 world, those who have looked to MLK Jr. for inspiration will find common ground with those who oppose a central government that violates the right of an individual. Surely they will see that the only military tradition that wins is one that sees the humanity in the other.

And, for the remaining doubters, few people seem to realize, perhaps out of convenience, that the Southern warrior tradition in which we now have defined went through the office of [US District Court Judge Frank Johnson](#), as well as those who aligned themselves with his constitutional view. Judge Johnson, a man born in [Alabama](#) and who received two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star for heroic service rendered during WWII, arguably represented the tradition of the South that traces itself back to St. George Tucker. Of course, the other tradition -- the one that the mainstream media has popularized and the one that lingers in the national consciousness -- refused to recognize Judge Johnson's contributions to the South and, in fact, vilified him in exactly the same manner as others vilified General Longstreet and Colonel Mosby from decades past.

So once again we have the two disparate, if not antithetical, traditions winding their way through Southern history -- one leading to the idea of George Washington and Robert E. Lee, so to speak, and the other to an unmitigated disaster. A modern day analogy perhaps is best visualized today by Southern neoconservative politicians, Pastor Hagee, and others thumping their Bibles and chanting in unison, "Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" in total disrespect to a military tradition that holds otherwise and, in fact, gave us the 2007 NIE. And it is significant to note that these Southern neoconservatives have shown nothing but disdain for the analysis by those of the military and intelligence community who took the lessons of the Vietnam War experience and warned us of a debacle in the Middle East. Seems that some things never change.

But, fortunately for others, Moses Jacob Ezekiel has given us a different path to follow, and it begins in the heart of Jackson Circle at Arlington National Cemetery. Follow Moses Jacob Ezekiel and you will gain a deeper understanding of the collective memory of the South. With Ezekiel as your guide, hopefully you now can stand back and watch the ghosts of the Southern past come alive-- St. George Tucker, Judah Benjamin, Generals Lee and Longstreet, Colonel Mosby, and Judge Johnson among others. Once resurrected, they all point to David Addington as the enemy of the US Constitution as well as the American people and the world. And they do so under the eternal banner of "*Victrix Causa Diis Placuit Sed Victa Catoni*". From there, each must look within and then choose the preferred path to follow as well as the proper battle cry.

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