

# The Real McCain



AP Images

**Capitol Hill colleagues:** Hillary Clinton enjoys a laugh with her friend Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) during the confirmation of Senator John Kerry to become secretary of state.

Though Senator John McCain of Arizona is known as a “maverick Republican,” a look at his record reveals that he is just a typical neoconservative.

by *Christian Gomez*

**S**enator John Sidney McCain, III of Arizona, known for occasionally crossing the aisle and working with Senate Democrats on key legislative issues, has built a reputation as a “maverick Republican.” McCain was born in Panama to Admiral John S. McCain, Jr. (USN) and Roberta Wright on August 29, 1936. Graduating from the Annapolis Naval Academy in 1958, McCain served for 20 years as an aviator on ships including the USS *Enterprise*, USS *Intrepid*, and USS *Forrestal*. During the Vietnam War, he was captured by the enemy and spent five years as a prisoner of war in Communist North Vietnam.

First elected to the U.S. Senate in 1986 and now in his fifth term, McCain has earned an unimpressive 63-percent score on THE NEW AMERICAN’S “Freedom Index,” which measures votes cast by con-

gressmen according to their fidelity to the Constitution. Examining McCain’s record based on his actions, not just his rhetoric, on a few major issues underscores his poor performance in office.

### **Record in Congress on POW/MIA Issues**

For example, in 1989 McCain derailed efforts to pass H.R. 3603, a simple one-page bill that would have made virtually all government records relating to POW/MIA personnel transparent. The only exception to transparency would be records containing information about intelligence-gathering methods or the names of individuals without the consent of the POW/MIA personnel’s living family. The key portion of H.R. 3603 reads:

The head of each department or agency which holds or receives any

records and information, including live-sighting reports, which have been correlated or possibly correlated to United States personnel listed as prisoner of war or missing in action from World War II, the Korean conflict, and the Vietnam conflict shall make available to the public all such records and information held or received by that department or agency.

McCain worked behind the scenes to make sure the bill did not receive any traction, so the bill never reached the floor for a vote, and the following year when it was reintroduced, it again went nowhere. Instead, McCain introduced a watered-down version of the bill, which ultimately passed and remains the law. The “McCain Truth Bill,” as it is known, only allowed for the disclosure of records that the Department of Defense deems as not containing sensitive yet unknown “specific information.” This is a broad blanket that has allowed the Department of Defense to keep many POW and MIA records from the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Cold War classified, much to the grief of surviving relatives of POWs/MIA. Because he is a former POW, it is not surprising McCain’s bill got traction, but it is curious he did not do more to uncover the truth about those left behind.

Curious too is why McCain would have later gutted key provisions of the pro-POW/MIA Missing Service Personnel Act of 1995 through amendments. His amendments removed key enforcement provisions such as criminal penalties to “any government official who knowingly and willfully withholds from the file of a missing person any information relating to the disappearance or whereabouts and status of a missing person.”

From his support of globalist trade schemes, preemptive war, and military intervention, to his track record of supporting open borders and amnesty, McCain's neoconservative credentials are a far cry from those of a traditional conservative or constitutionalist.

Regardless of his position on POW/MIA issues in Congress, one would hope that the wartime veteran senator would have a much better record on foreign policy and the use of force. Unfortunately, rather than embracing a noninterventionist position that is consistent with the Constitution, McCain is a committed neoconservative, especially in matters of foreign intervention and preemptive war.

### McCain's Neoconservative Tendencies

Because of his wartime experience, including the years he spent as a POW, it would of course make sense that McCain would understand firsthand that war is hell and would not see it as a joking matter—even in instances where he believed unleashing death and destruction on an adversarial country was necessary. So, once again, it is curious that on April 19, 2007, during a presidential campaign stop in South Carolina, McCain answered a question about possible military action in Iran saying, “That old, uh, that old Beach Boys song, bomb Iran.” Eliciting laughter from the crowd, he sang, “Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb.” Although meant in jest, McCain's singing did not rise to the level of a commander-in-chief, a position McCain was seeking at the time, but it did highlight his predilection for military intervention and preemptive war.

But that predilection is much more seriously highlighted by his legislative career in the Senate, where he has routinely urged military intervention:

- 1994 — when it appeared North Korea might have been developing nuclear weapons, Senator McCain urged President Clinton to be aggressive. “I think we should launch some air strikes or cruise missile strikes against North Korea's nuclear facilities” in the event sanctions failed, McCain said on June 1, 1994.

- 1999 — McCain voted to authorize air strikes and missile attacks in Yugoslavia. He also voted to use “all necessary force and other means” in Yugoslavia in accordance with enforcing previous United Nations resolutions.

- 2002 — McCain voted for war against Iraq, also in accordance with enforcing UN resolutions, despite the fact that Iraq was merely exercising its sovereignty.

- 2003 — McCain called on North Korea to “immediately comply with its international obligations to abandon and dismantle its nuclear weapons programs,” further urging the United States to “the highest possible level of military readiness against the threat North Korea poses.” Three years later, McCain said on CNN's *State of the Union*, “I think it's time we talked about regime change in North Korea.”

- 2011 — McCain urged “using all of U.S. airpower” in Libya to enforce United

Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 and to topple the regime of Colonel Moammar Gadhafi for committing “crimes against humanity.” During an interview with *Fox News Sunday*, McCain lamented, “This thing could have been over a long time ago if we had brought the full weight of American airpower to bear on him and it's unfortunate.”

- 2013 — McCain applauded the Obama administration for providing weapons to Syrian rebels to topple the regime of Bashar al-Assad, and he urged further military action to “change the battlefield equation.”

- 2015 — On MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, McCain called for sending combat troops to fight against ISIS in the Middle East. “We're going to have to put boots on the ground, my friend, and we're going to have to do a whole lot more things than we're doing now if we are going to stem this tide and stop this horrific killing that's going on.”

Even though he is a U.S. Senator who should be jealous of the powers granted to Congress by the Constitution, very much including the power to declare war, McCain supports allowing the president to decide whether to go to war. For instance, on February 15, 2015, he said on NBC's *Meet the Press* that Congress should give President Obama greater military author-



**To hell and back:** John McCain spent five and a half years as a POW in Communist North Vietnam before being released on March 14, 1973.



AP Images

**The Gang's all here:** Senator McCain leads "Gang of Eight" Senators Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), and Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) during a news conference on April 18, 2013, outlining their bipartisan proposal for "immigration reform."

ity than what he previously requested in order to combat ISIS. "I think we should not restrain the president of the United States," McCain said.

If reelected to a sixth term, McCain's record suggests he would eagerly continue to vote in favor of military intervention, expanding war powers of the president, and utilizing force to enforce the dictates of the United Nations.

### Amnesty and Open Borders

Despite McCain's vigor abroad in enforcing U.S. and internationalist will, his defense of the nation's borders and stopping the invasion of illegal immigrants leaves much to be desired. McCain's campaign website may boast how he "has led the efforts in Washington to ensure that the U.S. obtains control of its southwest border"; however, he was one of the "Gang of Eight" senators who sponsored the 2013 pro-amnesty "immigration reform" bill introduced by Senator Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.). The bill, according to *THE NEW AMERICAN'S* "Freedom Index," would have provided "a transition to the open borders sought by the advocates of a North American Union and other regional government schemes threatening our national sovereignty."

McCain's disregard for defending U.S. sovereignty, securing the border, and halting the influx of mass immigration isn't new. On July 13, 1989, McCain voted for the Immigration Act of 1990, which increased legal immigration by 35 percent.

The bill was sponsored by then-Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and signed into law by President George H. W. Bush on November 29, 1990.

On May 12, 2005, McCain and Kennedy jointly introduced the so-called Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act. The McCain-Kennedy Bill, as it was also known, would have granted amnesty and expanded the guest worker program.

More recently, McCain voted to enable President Obama's unconstitutional executive actions to grant deferred action (i.e., temporary amnesty) for an estimated four million illegal immigrants in the United States through a substitute amendment. Attached to the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2015 (H.R. 240), the substitute amendment eliminated the bill's original provisions barring the use of funds for implementing President Obama's executive temporary amnesty.

### Supreme Court Circus

McCain's apathy toward constitutional overreach and the separation of powers is also evident in his cavalier confirmation of Supreme Court justices. During his 28-year tenure in office, Senator McCain has voted for seven of the nine presidential Supreme Court appointments confirmed by the Senate. Among the seven nominees McCain voted for were liberal Judges Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer, both of whom were nominated by Democratic President Bill Clinton. And

the five Republican judicial appointments McCain has confirmed have come short of strictly interpreting and abiding by the Constitution.

In 1987, then-newly elected Senator McCain voted for Reagan-appointed Judge Anthony Kennedy, who later voted to strike down state restrictions on abortions (*Planned Parenthood v. Casey*) and state anti-sodomy laws (*Lawrence v. Texas*). Justice Kennedy also voted to allow people who live in states that opted not to establish exchanges under ObamaCare to still be eligible for ObamaCare insurance subsidies (*King v. Burwell*). Most notably, Kennedy voted to legalize same-sex "marriage" by requiring all states to both issue in-state and recognize out-of-state marriage licenses for same-sex couples (*Obergefell v. Hodges*).

In 2008, McCain's presidential campaign website named Chief Justice John Roberts, whom McCain voted to confirm in 2005, "as the model for John McCain's judicial nominees." Since then, Chief Justice Roberts twice voted in favor of ObamaCare (*National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* and *King v. Burwell*). And as for President Obama's recent nomination of Judge Merrick B. Garland to the Supreme Court, McCain was one of seven Republican senators in 1997 who voted to confirm then-President Bill Clinton's nomination of Garland to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia. Garland is regarded as a "moderate" rather than a constitutionalist who would strictly interpret and abide by the Constitution. In 2007, Judge Garland voted to rescind a D.C. Circuit court's decision that struck down Washington D.C.'s stringent handgun ban.

### Globalist Pedigree for Trade

McCain's neoconservatism, and his lack of fidelity to the U.S. Constitution, is on full display regarding his support for so-called free-trade agreements that in the name of "free trade" surrender U.S. sovereignty to supranational entities. The most prominent of the trade agreements McCain has supported is the regional Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, also known as TPP. The TPP is a supposed free trade agreement negotiated among the following 12 Pacific Rim nations: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile,

Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam.

In 2015, McCain twice voted to grant President Obama Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). TPA will allow Congress to “fast-track” the TPP when it comes to a vote, meaning that debate will be limited, amendments will be prohibited, and the threshold necessary for passing it will be lowered to a simple majority (50 percent plus one) of voting senators. On June 10, 2015, McCain told the *Washington Post*, “the TPP will strengthen the American workforce and make our economy more competitive and prosperous.”

In 2014, while visiting Hanoi, the capital of the land of his former captivity, McCain delivered a statement urging “Vietnam and the United States to take a giant strategic leap together” as participants in the TPP. “We are ready to conclude a high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership, with Vietnam as a full partner,” McCain said. Of this push for unfettered trade with the Marxist-Leninist one-party dictatorship, McCain said, “We are ready to increase our military cooperation and ship visits as much as Vietnam permits.”

McCain also expressed his desire to “increase our security assistance to help Vietnam improve its maritime domain awareness and build its capacity to defend its sovereign rights.” Any “security assistance” (no doubt at the expense of U.S. taxpayers) would undoubtedly go to the People’s Army of Vietnam, the nation’s central security and armed forces under the auspices of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam. “To that end,” McCain said, “I believe the time has come for the United States to begin easing our lethal arms embargo on Vietnam.”

Not only would the TPP bolster Vietnam’s armed forces, the agreement as a whole undermines U.S. national sovereignty. On November 5, 2015, Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), who read the text of the TPP agreement, warned: “Among the TPP’s endless pages [is] ... a new interna-



**Look who's back:** Senator McCain addresses students in the Vietnamese capital city of Hanoi. Though Vietnam is ruled by a communist dictatorship, McCain wants closer trade and military cooperation with the country.

tional regulatory structure to promulgate, implement, and enforce these rules. This new structure is known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership Commission — a Pacific Union — which meets, appoints unelected bureaucrats, adopts rules, and changes the agreement after adoption.”

Sessions continued saying of the agreement, “It bears the hallmarks of a nascent European Union.” The TPP Commission is also authorized to accept new member-states into the agreement without the approval of Congress. Chapter 30 of the TPP agreement, entitled “Final Provisions,” opens TPP membership to members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), among which are Communist China and Russia. One of APEC’s primary goals is to create an APEC-wide free trade agreement, larger than even the TPP, known as the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP). In fact, the TPP agreement itself admits

expansion into the FTAAP as one of its main objectives. The final point on page two of the two-page preamble of the TPP agreement, which McCain strongly favors, states: “EXPAND their partnership by encouraging the accession of other States or separate customs territories in order to further enhance regional economic integration and create the foundation of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific.”

Throughout his legislative career, McCain has supported various trade deals detrimental to U.S. sovereignty. In 1991, he supported passage of the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), a trade agreement between the United States, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. ATPA was a precursor to the later-proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a Western Hemispheric union similar to the EU. President George H. W. Bush enacted ATPA on December 4, 1991.

In 1993, McCain voted for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed into law by President Clinton. That same year, prior to NAFTA’s implementation, the United States had a \$1.66

billion trade surplus with Mexico but by 1995, the first full year after NAFTA was enacted, the United States had a \$15.8 billion deficit with Mexico. Since its implementation, the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico has only escalated, soaring to \$24.5 billion in 2000, \$49.8 billion in 2005, and \$58.3 billion in 2015. As American manufacturing jobs continue to be outsourced to Mexico, this trade deficit will only widen.

From his support of globalist trade schemes, preemptive war, and military intervention in the name of enforcing UN resolutions, to his track record of supporting open borders and amnesty, McCain’s neoconservative credentials are a far cry from those of a traditional conservative or constitutionalist. He is a perfect example of the type of “me too Republican” echoing the Democratic Party that McCain’s conservative predecessor Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) warned about. ■