

Title:

Only the Delusioned Now Support Bush

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Summary:

Bush's foreign policy organization is in the hands of Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The State Department is cut out and the result is chaos and horrible mismanagement.

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DETROIT -- The last semblance of broad public support for President George W. Bush is the diminishing number of Americans who continue to believe his administration does a good job with national security. "Bush makes me feel safer," they foolishly proclaim.

Those who advance just slightly beyond their visceral emotions and think at all are arriving at an inescapable conclusion: George W. Bush's policies fail to protect us and his approach to national security is a disaster.

The testimony and evidence for that conclusion comes, not from the Democrats, the left, pacifists or anti-imperialists, but rather from seasoned military people and national security experts who served in the administrations of Bush the Elder and his impetuous, reckless son, Bush the Lesser.

We already know from former White House terrorism czar Richard Clarke and former treasury secretary and National Security Council member Paul O'Neill how Bush wanted to use the Sept. 11 attacks as the pretext to invade Iraq. We know from them that Bush was fixated on Saddam Hussein and would willfully meld him into the terrorists who struck the United States, although not a scrap of evidence supported that great lie for the ages.

Up until now, Clarke and O'Neill were the only insiders with the honesty and courage to publicly reveal how Bush the puppet and his radical neocon string-pullers would use Sept. 11 to carry out their long-established goal of attacking Iraq. They wanted to control the oil and have a strategic military presence in the Middle East. In their most pixilated moments, they actually claimed the

aggression would help plant democracy in the region and make Israel more secure.

Lawrence Wilkerson is a retired U.S. Army colonel and Vietnam veteran who once served as deputy director of the U.S. Marine Corps War College. After his military service, he went to work for Colin Powell, serving as his chief of staff from August 2001 through the end of Bush's first term.

Wilkerson had a front-row seat and what he saw was narrowness and secrecy in the decision-making process controlled by Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and their operatives. They successfully cut off others from whatever they were plotting. The deliberate decision to keep others in the dark "courted disaster," Wilkerson said.

He made his remarks in a speech last week before the New American Foundation, a think tank. Wilkerson, who worked for Powell for 16 years at the Pentagon and State Department, said his former boss was "not happy" with his decision to speak out and tell the American people about his profound concerns.

Powell, ever the loyal soldier, is a diminished citizen for his refusal to tell the chilling truths he knows about the madness of George W. Bush and his gang. In the best light, Powell may think speaking the truth will make the world even more dangerous and make the nation even weaker than Bush has.

In the worst light, Powell is trying to protect the value of his book deal and his own reputation from the public exposure of the horrible decisions he joined in and the lies he helped propagate.

Wilkerson has no similar motives. He praised President Bush -- the Elder, that is. He said George H.W. Bush is "one of the finest presidents we have ever had" and knew how to make foreign policy work. The current president, Wilkerson said, is "not versed in international relations and not much interested in them either."

That's certainly why George W. Bush is content with an arrangement that allows him to focus on issues like establishing the religious right as the state religion, promoting cronies for high office and doing the bidding of his corporate sponsors and the National Rifle Association.

Delegating these foreign policy matters also serves Bush's personal pleasure, allowing him ample time to relax at his ranch, clear brush, play video games and watch sports on TV.

International relations would be the exclusive domain of Lord Halliburton and

Field Marshall Donald Rumsfeld. Career military and government people, national security staffers and the State Department play no role in the isolated decision-making. Just two voices, always in harmony, would sing the tune that becomes U.S. policy. They let the president know what they have decided, but his participation is never really needed or wanted. What the hell does he know, anyhow?

Congress has enacted laws that prescribe how the Defense Department, State Department, National Security Council and other agencies are to perform and interact to assure some uniformity and continuity in these important relationships and a decision-making process subject to review and oversight. Cheney and Rumsfeld will have no part of that system.

Wilkerson saw "dysfunction within the administration" and an organization that is essentially outside conventional government and rules.

"I have never seen in my studies of aberration, bastardizations, changes to the national security process what I saw. (It) was a cabal between the Vice President of the United States Richard Cheney and the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on critical issues that made decisions that the bureaucracy did not know were being made," Wilkerson said.

Confusion and chaos resulted, Wilkerson observed, "and then when the bureaucracy was presented with these decisions and carried them out, it was presented in such a disjointed, incredible way that the bureaucracy often didn't know what it was doing as it moved to carry them out."

But here's where the National Security Council is supposed to take charge, sort through the confusion, coordinate the work and make sense out of the decisions. That responsibility is enshrined in law. But not with Condoleezza Rice running the show. Rice, the vastly overrated professional sycophant, didn't do her job, but spent her time telling Bush everything was hunky-dory.

"She was part of the problem," Wilkerson said, adding that "she would side with the president to build her intimacy with the president."

Rice's private ploys harmed public welfare. "What I saw was an extremely weak national security adviser," Wilkerson said. That calculated, ambitious weakness landed Rice the secretary of state's job with the blessings of Cheney and Rumsfeld, who knew she would continue to enable their cabal.

The State Department offered its resources and expertise to plan what would be done in Iraq following the invasion. The department traditionally handled those

situations and had experienced people to step in and do the job.

But Cheney and Rumsfeld told Powell he could keep his people and plans at home. They would handle everything through their man, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith.

Feith was put in charge of immediate post-war Iraq and was given carte blanche "to tell the State Department to go screw themselves in a closet somewhere," according to Wilkerson.

Feith played a key role in centralizing control, ignoring the State Department's career officers and weakening national security in the process. For Cheney and Rumsfeld, his credentials were impeccable. He is a neocon who consistently favors force over diplomacy.

Feith has long been linked to fringe elements in Israeli politics, has proclaimed Israel's "moral superiority" over Arabs, and insists Palestinians are not a "national group as such." Feith condemned Jimmy Carter's Camp David agreement. He's opposed any pressure on Israel to withdraw from occupied territory. He sees a strong and permanent U.S. military presence in the Middle East as necessary for Israel's security.

While Feith's Zionist credentials are sterling, his U.S. foreign policy and intelligence credentials are tarnished, to say the least. Wilkerson seemed generous when he said of Feith in his speech, "Seldom in my life have I met a dumber man."

Retired Gen. Tommy Franks, who led the invasion of Iraq, had even spicier words for him when he referred to the bad intelligence Feith fed to the military about Iraq. Franks called Feith the "f-----g stupidest man on the face of the earth."

But Feith is just the kind of man Cheney, Rumsfeld and Bush want to keep on top at the Pentagon. He's credited with urging that Saddam's phantom weapons of mass destruction be used as the chief rationale for the war. Feith's office was in charge of prisons in Iraq when the torture and abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib occurred. Wilkerson sees those horrors as "a concrete example" of the decision-making problem, with Bush and the Cheney-Rumsfeld cabal effectively blessing U.S. soldiers' use of torture.

The Busheviks have condoned all the lies, deceptions and indecencies that have made our nation despised around the world and our people demonstrably less secure. In an unnecessary war that cannot be won, tens of thousands of Iraqis have died and soon our own dead will top 2,000.

Bush has shown no regard for international law, constitutional protections, the Bill of Rights, our own laws, democratic institutions or human decency.

More people will inevitably come forward and tell the truth about this dangerous assault on our national freedom and security. More inside stories could be revealed as Special Prosecutor Patrick J. Fitzgerald prepares indictments in the CIA leak case, but that testimony will likely be nipped in the bud.

The president's "brain," Karl Rove, and Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the vice president's chief of staff, are targets for indictments. What they did in outing CIA officer Valerie Plame was treacherous and treasonous. The purpose was to warn others not to do what Plame's husband, former ambassador Joseph Wilson, did. He told the truth when he exposed the Bushevik lie that Saddam was looking for enriched uranium to use for nuclear weapons.

Rove and Libby have no moral or legal defense for what they did, only a political defense. They will be indicted, each will plead no contest to one felony count, and the president will then pardon them immediately. No trials. No truth. No impeachments for Bush and Cheney.

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