

The American Presidency, what presidency?

by Sheila Stuff via fray Sunday, Feb 7 2010, 6:03am

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Walk a Mile...

It boggles the mind reading this very accurate account of the completely ineffective role of the U.S. President today. From George H Bush, Clinton to Obama the exact same status quo is in operation and the same private ruling interests are in control of the nation! However, the American people continue to argue the toss regarding Obama's total lack of credibility and influence in the REAL affairs of the nation. Instead of confronting the reality of a paper mache 'Hope and Change' President, we get distracting Obama blah blah! American democracy is dead, the Republic has been lost to private, vested interests for decades!

My friend Bernie says he's suffering from Afghanistan information exhaustion. "During all those months that Obama was dragging his feet about escalating the war in Afghanistan, did you ever get the impression," he asked, "that foxes were in the hen house, chickens were squawking and running around crazily, wolves were tearing the foxes to pieces, and farmers were shooting wildly into the coop with no regard for the innocent?"

I stared at him, mouth agape, my mind trying to shore up all that activity. "Well ... I --"

"And that's just the generals -- David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal -- and their boss, or cohort, defense secretary Robert Gates. They were everywhere -- everywhere!" Bernie said, rolling his eyes. "And still are. Turn on the TV, pick up a newspaper, open a magazine, check out Congress, look under a rock -- peek behind a tree -- and there they are. They're a three-man brigade -- "we're going in, we're coming out -- we're winning, we're losing. Or maybe not. We won't know for 15 years...20 years...or until it's over --"

Bernie shook his head in disgust, and headed for the door. "You keep telling me to walk a mile in Obama's shoes; that he's got a lot on his plate. Well," Bernie said grimly, "every time I try to do that, I nearly drown. And, if you're paying attention, you know he's having trouble keeping his own balance out there on those turbulent partisan political seas."

President...who?

Bernie says he'd like to give President Obama credit, or blame him, for the decision to expand the war in Afghanistan, but is convinced that Obama's input was neither wanted nor accepted by the three top war dogs. I agree. What those of us familiar with military protocol -- with a properly functioning chain of command -- witnessed was a crude, but effective, military coup.

Aided by an eager and complicit media, for months these insubordinates fueled the fire of Obama's inability to come to a quick decision to meet their demands. They brushed him aside as idealistic and inexperienced. Commander-in-Chief? C'mon, get real. During the recent health-care fiasco, Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) [put into words](#) what all Republicans, not a few Democrats, and far too many military brass think of Obama...

"...I believe he didn't serve in government long enough to understand really how things work...Remember, he was in the Senate four years, but effectively only two years because he spent two years where he was hardly ever here at all -- he was campaigning for president. He really does not have an understanding of how Congress operates."

The hateful audacity of Chuck "Obama wants to kill your grandma" Grassley is the typical Republican mindset concerning this president. Each time Republicans push him or challenge him, rather than push back or kick ass, Obama backs down, preferring to compromise to reach a bipartisan agreement. Unfortunately, Republicans don't work that way. They want it all, and the only way they know to get it is to -- as Weekly Standard's Bill Kristol said -- "go for the kill."

The military also goes for the kill. But that is its mission -- what it is trained to do. And Obama needs to understand the military does not function on compromises or bipartisanship. It has a chain of command, and when the Commander-in-Chief, after considering input from field commanders, makes his decision -- gives an order -- all those throughout that chain of command, whether they agree or not, salute and continue to march.

That is not happening here. After ten "war council" meetings and months of considering input, an angry Obama rejected McChrystal's plan that had been leaked to Bob Woodward at the Washington Post, and informed McChrystal that his goal of doubling the force would not be met.

Two days later, on Dec 1, Obama announced his decision from the US Military Academy at West Point. He didn't mention smoking terrorists out, getting them on the run and bringing them to justice, but he dredged up 9/11 and why we should remain convulsed in fear. He spoke of "huge challenges," "bold action," "seizing the initiative," and "long-term consequences." While we were trying to figure out if former president George Bush had left a copy of his speech on the Academy podium, Obama announced he was sending an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan but insisted since America has no interest in fighting an endless war, 2011 was a definite time frame. He said unequivocally that there would be no counterinsurgency and, beginning in July of 2011, the troops would begin to come home.

Or not. Nobody saluted. Gates, Petraeus and McChrystal, along with Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Adm. Michael G. Mullen continued to march in lockstep. They raced to the media both here and abroad, where they shrugged aside Obama's promise of a July 2011 transition, saying it was an "open issue." They insisted that counterinsurgency and special ops remained "embedded" in their war strategy. Ten days after being rejected by Obama, McChrystal's request to double the size of the Army and police to 400,000 remained unchanged.

Foxes, Chickens and Wolves

Obama should take a long, hard look at the Dick Cheney ["stay behinds"](#) who are wreaking havoc, especially in defense; insubordinates who openly challenge his decisions and defy his orders while whipping up confusion with daily conflicting announcements and interviews. Perhaps he should start with Cheney who not only stayed behind but remains in his Virginia bunker, just a stone's throw from CIA headquarters, where he "goes for the kill" by giving hate speeches and issuing press releases accusing Obama of being a coward that are [published verbatim](#) by the media.

Just hours after Obama's speech, the placid, eerily serene Gates, along with Mullen and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, testified before Congress that troop withdrawal depended on conditions on the ground rather than a deadline. The consensus seemed to be that their commander-in-chief was simply indulging in "wishful thinking."

Days later, according to [Think Progress](#), Gates, Petraeus, Clinton, and another Cheney "stay behind," National Security Adviser James Jones, were all over the Sunday talk shows. Gates told CBS Meet the Press, "We will have a significant -- we will have 100,000 forces -- troops there. And they are [not leaving](#) -- in July of 2011."

Jones agreed with Gates on CNN's State of the Union, repeating what he had [told BBC](#) two days earlier -- "It's very important that people in Afghanistan hear this very clearly: this is not a withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in 2011, it is a decision to turn over to the Afghans some of the responsibility where they are ready to accept that responsibility. But in no manner, shape or form is the United States leaving Afghanistan in 2011." (Emphasis added)

These stay behinds, their shoulders blazing with stars, now so eager to expand their military industrial killing spree throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan -- even Iran -- are like wolves circling their prey. They are presenting a powerful, united front against Obama.

And none has refused to follow orders more relentlessly than McChrystal, former commander of the clandestine Joint Special Operations Command, whose secret assassination teams answered only to him, and he answered to no one. McChrystal is a frightening lone wolf. Check him out [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

It's difficult to imagine President Obama, after promising change -- promising to stand guard and end our wars of aggression -- deliberately putting himself in a position where he appears impotent when he is ignored and over-ruled by subordinates. He has been [warned](#) by those who have been there, done that. He is being warned by the people who are gathering for massive national [anti-war marches](#) in Washington D.C., Los Angeles and San Francisco on March 20 -- the seventh anniversary of Bush and Cheney's illegal war of aggression against Iraq.

It's time for Obama to put aside empty, soaring speeches and come to grips with who his enemies really are. It's time for him to step onto dry land and walk a mile in his own shoes -- while he still has a pair.

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<http://sheilastuff.blogspot.com/2010/02/i-know-you-need-your-sleep-now-i-know.html>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-1822.html>