

## When pols fail: late inning aid from lawyers, spooks and brass

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LAWYERS STEPPING UP Katrina vanden Heuvel The Nation 12/21/2007

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Over one thousand lawyers — including former Governor Mario Cuomo and former Reagan administration official Bruce Fein — have signed onto the above statement demanding wide-ranging investigative hearings into unconstitutional and potentially criminal activity by the Bush administration. See "Read more..." for full article.

### WHEN SPIES AND GENERALS DO MORE FOR PEACE THAN DEMOCRATS

A Black Agenda Radio commentary by Glen Ford

Dec. 19-25, 2007

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Jaws dropped in capitals all around the globe when the combined intelligence agencies of the United States yanked the rationale for war with Iran, like a rug, from under George Bush's feet. It was a mutiny, centered in the CIA and in the Pentagon's nine separate intelligence agencies, designed to prevent Bush and Dick Cheney from expanding, against all military and political logic, their failed jihad in the Persian Gulf. Visibly startled, Bush behaved like he'd been knee-capped by his own men — which he had. The Pentagon-CIA revolt — witnessed by the entire planet — is unprecedented in modern times. Anyone who tells you differently is too blinded by imagined spy-novel schemes to recognize a mutiny when he sees it. See "Read more..." for full article.

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In a conference call with reporters yesterday, Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights and winner of the 2007 Puffin/Nation Prize for Creative Citizenship, said: "The majority of lawyers in this country understand that the Bush administration has really gone off the page of constitutional rights and off the page of fundamental rights, and is willing to push the Congress to restore those rights." Ratner said he was "dismayed" that a Democratic majority has failed "to push on key illegalities; the torture program, and now the destruction of the tapes involving the torture program; the warrantless wiretapping, the denial of habeas corpus, the secret sites/rendition program, special trials, and of course what we now know is the firing of US Attorneys scandal. The minimal that absolutely is needed to get us back on the page of law is to have serious investigative hearings that go up the chain of command and figure out who is responsible for what."

Ratner noted that even with regard to the US attorney's investigations, where Congressional committees held Harriet Miers, Josh Bolten, and Karl Rove in contempt, leadership has failed to enforce these actions by bringing the resolutions to a vote. "Just announcing that investigations will be held and subpoenas will be issued is terribly insufficient unless Congress is willing to enforce the subpoenas by issuing contempt citations," Ratner said. "Congress has a constitutional duty to oversee the activities of the executive branch and our entire system of government is threatened when Congress simply folds before an obstinate executive. Issuing contempt citations against Bolten, Miers, and Rove should be

Congress's first order of business in 2008."

Marjorie Cohn, president of the National Lawyers Guild, discussed the administration's torture program violating three US-ratified treaties and the US torture statute; the illegal War in Iraq violating the US-ratified UN Charter as a war of aggression; and Attorney General Michael Mukasey's conflict of interest in overseeing investigations into the torture program and the destruction of the CIA interrogations tapes.

Also speaking with reporters was Jesselyn Raddack, a former Justice Department ethics lawyer who served as an advisor during the interrogation of John Walker Lindh (the "American Taliban"). Raddack said, "My e-mails documented my advice against interrogating Lindh without a lawyer, and concluded that the FBI committed an ethics violation when it did so anyway. Both the CIA videotapes and my e-mails were destroyed, in part, because officials were concerned that they documented controversial interrogation methods that could put agency officials in legal jeopardy...". Raddack pointed to the Department of Justice's investigations of Enron and Arthur Anderson for obstruction of justice and destruction of evidence, and the need for the same aggressive oversight and legal proceedings in these scandals.

This is a vital effort by those charged with defending our constitution, as Ratner said, "This lawyers' letter and the growing number of signatures we'll have on it, and prominent people &ndash; it's a way of saying to Congress, 'You need some backbone. You need to have a serious investigation, wherever it might go, on these issues that really have taken the United States out of the mainstream of human rights.' It's absolutely critical... We've opened up the door to illegality... Unless we have accountability on those illegalities, we're going to be facing a very bleak future in which fundamental rights will not really be obeyed."

<http://www.thenation.com/blogs/notion?pid=262693>

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This is not to say that the uniformed and civilian spooks should be given medals - they simply saw disaster of unthinkable dimensions bearing down like a semi-trailer truck, and grabbed the steering wheel from the madman-in-charge before it was too late. The intelligence agencies only look like temporary saviors of the planet in comparison to the Democratic Party, which has done nothing to put the brakes on the Bush-Cheney war machine, or to hold these criminals accountable for a phone book-full impeachable offenses. When spies and generals are more useful to the cause of peace than Democrats, when career intelligence officers and life-time military men conspire to derail the insane schemes of their Commander-in-Chief - yet the opposition party offers no resistance whatsoever - then one must accept that the Party is...worthless. "If Democratic leadership really wanted to gum up the works of war, and rail to high heaven against Bush and Cheney's crimes - they could do so even without a working majority."

Democratic leadership has once again caved in to Bush on war spending, after last month shunting aside Congressman Dennis Kucinich's bill to impeach Dick Cheney. Speaker Nancy Pelosi's rationale - shared by Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers - is that impeachment is a diversion from all the great works that the Democrats want to accomplish in this and the next Congress. But of course, they have accomplished very little on the domestic front, and nothing on the peace front. They almost seem to enjoy their whippings - like suburban, weekend masochists in a red-light district. If this were not so - if Democratic leadership really wanted to gum up the works of war, and rail to high heaven against Bush and Cheney's crimes - they could do so even without a working majority. One can only conclude that Democratic leadership believes that allowing Bush to keep his war going, and permitting Bush and Cheney to pile up felony upon felony against the Constitution, is good for Democrats. From a moral standpoint, that puts the mutinous spies and generals who dared to buck their president on Iran heads and shoulders above the Democratic so-called "opposition" in Congress.

For Black Agenda Radio, I'm Glen Ford.

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