

The new American coup

REGULAR readers of this column and the alternative press in general no doubt have noticed a recent reliance on military and government intelligence sources who are cited in exposes about the Bush administration. In my last two national columns, for example, I've cited a former Marine intelligence officer, an Army Private, an Army Major, an Army Lt. Colonel, an Army Colonel and a CIA counterterrorism specialist. And these aren't your typical retired octogenarian one-foot-in-purgatory ex-military types turned peacenik as they rethink their lives in the shadow of impending death. To the contrary, these are unrepentant warriors who still harbor no qualms about killing on command. Most of them self-identify politically as conservative pro-military Republicans who voted for Ronald Reagan and both Bushes.

Suddenly hard core militarists are joining forces with moderate Democrats and anti-war activists to attack the Bush administration's foreign policy and their use of American troops. And it's these new voices that are supplying the hard evidence exposing how George W. Bush lied to the Congress and the American people in order to garner support for his invasion of Iraq.

THE NEW AMERICAN COUP / 2

The most shocking information available about Bush administration behavior regarding 9/11 and the ensuing wars doesn't come these days from conspiracy theorists on the left, but from right wing military sources. Take recent allegations, for instance, that the CIA attempted to plant weapons of mass destruction in Iraq , only to have their team "taken out" by "friendly fire." This information supposedly comes from a Department of Defense debriefer who has been on the job for 28 years. Her allegations, which I've yet to see proven or disproven, were made public by a former Navy Lt. Commander. While I haven't seen enough evidence to validate this story, it is an example of how current and former military officials are attempting to discredit the Bush administration and those in the intelligence community who still support them.

Spooks split

Even the intelligence community is split, with some of the strongest allegations that Bush purposefully lied about WMDs coming from official reports issued by the CIA itself. CIA officials are upset that the Bush administration chose to ignore their intelligence about Iraq, and instead used "intelligence" reports prepared by the Iraqi National Congress (INC), a group of Iraqi ex-patriots with close ties to the Bush family. The CIA terms their information as "unreliable." The problem with the INC, according to Vincent Cannistraro, a former CIA counter-terrorism analyst, is that "they make no distinction between intelligence and propaganda." This "cooked information," according to Cannistraro, "goes right into presidential and vice-presidential speeches." The INC's info is self-serving. It created a false threat of weapons of mass destruction which led to war, with the Bush administration now working to install the INC as the occupation government of Iraq . This was all done without the blessing of the CIA. In the end, the Bush administration botched the war exactly as they CIA said they would – and the CIA doesn't want to share the blame.

Everything we're seeing now with whistleblowers emerging from the CIA and the military points to another coup. George W. initially came to power in what Europeans call a coup-de-grace, with Jeb Bush, Kathleen Harris and their crew overseeing the intentional purging of black Democratic voters from Florida 's election roles. Despite Bush's pillaging of the economy, his lethal foreign policy blunders and his rampant attacks on the environment and on core American values (such as our former reverence for civil liberties), he seemed to be a sure-win for the 2004 election. This is the predictable result of an unprecedented propaganda campaign launched by a compliant corporate media. The last few weeks, however, have revealed major chinks in George W's armor, the likes of which even Papa Bush's former campaign director and current Fox News director,

Roger Ailes, can't mend.

What we're seeing now is a second, somewhat softer coup. Only this time, it's a military coup. By making public the very information that they would normally bury, the military and intelligence community is undoing the Bush presidency thread by thread. This wasn't always the case. At the onset, the Bush presidency was a general's wet dream. Bush nullified weapons treaties, funded bizarre new weapons programs, increased military spending beyond already astronomical levels, exempted the military from environmental regulations, appointed a former warrior as Secretary of State and gave the military a new elevated status within the national culture. He was also the best president a reactionary could hope for – giving police state surveillance powers to domestic law enforcement agencies as well as to the military intelligence agencies. But things have changed. Even ardent crackheads eventually learn disgust for their dealers.

The honeymoon between Bush and the military, in essence, is over. With Bush on the cusp of sending American troops to battle in a nuclear war in Korea, many in the military are asking for a divorce. The revolt began, as it often does, with the grunts on the front lines. The first hints of a protest rising up from within the military began shortly after Bush declared an "end" to the Iraq war on May Day, leaving over occupying 148,000 troops still bogged down and under attack. As more soldiers were injured or killed, and as morale sank, they began to send email messages of complaint around the US. Their families back home picked up the ball, organizing protests through organization such as Military Families Speak Out and Bring Them Home Now.

Chief AWOL cuts military pay

Adding insult to injury, the Bush administration both extended tours of duty in hostile areas, and cut pay to the soldiers serving on these tours. The Bush administration is now working to eliminate pay raises previously won by military personal. Hence, soldiers serving in Iraq are facing a \$75 per month cut in their "imminent danger pay" and a \$150 per month cut in their "family separation allowances." The military community found these cuts so offensive, that even the staid Army Times published an editorial condemning them. What we are seeing, in essence, is the destruction of a line that the military community would never previously have crossed, speaking out against its own Commander-in-Chief.

The problem, in the eyes of the military, is that politics aside, this Commander-in-Chief is incompetent and his civilian military leadership is lethally corrupt. Hence, military and intelligence brass seem to be joining the grassroots revolt of the grunts. The reasons for this are many. Incompetent civilian leaders are sending military units off on impossible

missions, such as assigning a relatively small force of tired warriors to occupy Iraq and transform it into a western style "democracy." The military becomes both frustrated with impossible tasks and angered by having to shoulder the perceived fault for failed missions. Most field commanders also feel a responsibility for the personnel under their command. Hence, they resent seeing them poisoned by radioactive depleted uranium weaponry or killed in unnecessary situations. For them, there now seems to be a conflict of interest pitting their concern for the welfare of their troops against White House directives.

The divide between the military and the Bush administration is exasperated by the fact that Bush and his top cabinet members all avoided military service themselves, mostly during the Vietnam war – a war that they all ideologically supported but did not want to fight in. Bush himself used his family's political connections to secure a noncombatant position in the Texas National Guard, and then went A.W.O.L. (absent without leave) for approximately one year. He again used his political connections to avoid prosecution for going A.W.O.L.

The Chickenhawk squawk

For career military officers, avoiding serving in a war that you ideologically support (without pretenses toward ideological objection), adds up to being a coward. Hence, conservatives coined the term "chickenhawks" to describe the Bush administration. The conservative New Hampshire Gazette researched not only the administration, but their pro-war supporters in congress and the corporate media, creating the chickenhawk database. They cite Dick Cheney, who avoided service, telling the media that he had "other priorities." Rush Limbaugh had a medical deferment due to "anal cysts." John Ashcroft got a deferment as a business education instructor. Elliot Abrams had a bad back. The Gazette's list of draft evaders includes Brit Hume, Richard Perle, Tommy Thompson, Paul Wolfowitz, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, Tom DeLay, Newt Gingrich, Trent Lott, Joseph Lieberman, Roger Ailes, Michael Medved, Bill O'Reilly, Sylvester Stallone, George Will, Ronald Reagan and John Wayne, among dozens of others.

The term "chickenhawk" has become increasingly popular among hawks who back up their archaic beliefs by putting their lives on the line. While they have traditionally supported the chickenhawks politically, due to the chickenhawks rhetorical support of the military, they have little love or respect for what they see as draft dodgers. Hence, when recent events forced seasoned warriors to choose between supporting their troops in the field, or supporting a cadre of hypocrites needlessly exposing their troops to danger, a brave and vocal minority chose supporting the troops. This led to the new and growing phenomenon of military and intelligence agency whistle blowers. With the Bush

THE NEW AMERICAN COUP / 5

administration now threatening to start unsustainable wars in Iran and Syria, as well as a potential nuclear conflict in Korea, expect to see more top military officials defect over to the side of reason.

As the military turns against its commander and chief, so will more and more conservative Americans. With the tide turning, journalists might once again muster up the courage to practice their profession – and their corporate employers might just allow them to do so. If current trends continue, this soft military coup will topple the Bush presidency – that is, as long as we're not distracted by another 9-11 type attack. ●

For more information about Military Families Speak Out, see www.mfso.org , for Bring Them Home Now, see www.bringthemhomenow.org. To learn more about George W. Bush's service record, see www.awolbush.com. The chickenhawk database is available at www.nhgazette.com/chickenhawks.html.