

Cracked Facade: The Coming Crumbling of the Bush Era

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[W]hy the mighty Bush apparatus and its legions of propagandists and sycophants feel so threatened by a few expressions of dissent, a few facts, and a simple ethical statement. Could it be that they know that their edifice of lies will come crashing down if anyone is allowed to utter dissent or a word of truth? - **PCR**

"I wanted John Ashcroft to come busting through the wall with a submachine gun to round everyone up for an immediate trip to Gitmo, with Charles Graner on hand for interrogation." - **T. A. Frank**
, *The New Republic*

The Conservative Media

Bush's Willing Sycophants

By PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS

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CounterPunch.org

The conservative media will never recover from its role as Chief Sycophant for the Bush administration. Journalists who demanded that Clinton be held accountable for a minor sex scandal (Monica Lewinsky) and a minor financial scandal (Whitewater) now serve as apologists and propagandists for the Bush administration's major war scandals. The Republican House of Representatives saw fit to impeach President Clinton for lying about sex. The same Republicans defend to the hilt Bush's lies that launched America into an unjustified war that has killed and maimed tens of thousands of Iraqis and Americans, cost taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, ruined America's reputation, and lost forever the hearts and minds of Muslims.

No decent or sensible person can have confidence in journalists and politicians who take partisanship to such extreme lengths.

There is plenty of room in journalism and politics for arguments over issues and policies. But two solid years of lies is beyond the pale. Conservative journalists and Republican politicians not only lie through their teeth, but also seek to destroy everyone who utters a word of dissent or truth.

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For example, T.A. Frank of The New Republic (once considered to be part of the hated "liberal press") recently expressed his thoughts in that unfortunate magazine. Frank wrote that dissenters from Bush's gratuitous war should be beaten and even killed. He expressed his wish that Arnold Schwarzenegger would punch Stan Goff in the face. He wrote that seeing Arundhati Roy taken out with a "bunker buster" would be a satisfying experience. As for Sherry Wolf and other dissenters, "I wanted John Ashcroft to come busting through the wall with a submachine gun to round everyone up for an immediate trip to Gitmo, with Charles Graner on hand for interrogation."

What have Stan Goff, Arundhati Roy and Sherry Wolf done to inspire Tom Frank to reveal his brownshirted inner self?

A former Delta Force soldier, Goff joined up with Military Families Speak Out. Roy penned a defense of the right of Iraqis to resist military occupation, and Wolf agreed that Iraqis have a right to resist Bush's occupation of Iraq. Frank views beatings, arrests, interrogations, torture, and death as appropriate responses to these peaceful expressions of dissent. Conservatives regard dissent as a serious offense, but they think it is treasonous to give the public real information, as contrasted with Fox "News" propaganda. Former Newt Gingrich operative and current Washington Times editorial page editor Tony Blankley believes America's premier investigative journalist, Seymour Hersh, should be arrested for treason and perhaps shot for warning Americans about the Bush administration's plans to start a war with Iran.

"Conservative" talk radio hosts and Republican politicians are foaming at the mouth over Ward Churchill, a University of Colorado professor of ethics. The professor's crime--and the crazed Republicans mean the word literally-- is to have stated that the US should apply to itself the same standards it applies to other countries.

Those conservatives who have not joined the New Brownshirts might ask themselves why the mighty Bush apparatus and its legions of propagandists and sycophants feel so threatened by a few expressions of dissent, a few facts, and a simple ethical statement. Could it be that they know that their edifice of lies will come crashing down if anyone is allowed to utter dissent or a word of truth? The conservative media has blown its great chance to gain credibility by holding Bush accountable as it did Clinton. Instead, the conservative media and talk radio have shown themselves to be political partisans who fight against truth. Justify Bush at all costs is their operative rule.

At least the German press and the Soviet press were forced into these roles by Hitler and Stalin. The American conservative media willingly adopted the role on its own. The function of a journalist is to speak truth to power and to hold accountable those with power. Abandoning this

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role, the conservative media cheerleads for war, incompetent leaders, and a police state.

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