

End of the Bush Political Line

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Stephen Lendman - The modern-era Bush family dynasty goes back four generations and was connected to the military-industrial complex of its day during and after WW I much like the most recent two Bush generations are to the present one. It began with George H. Walker and Samuel Prescott acting as dual founding fathers of what turned out to be a criminal enterprise run under the family name much like it is under a local Godfather except for much bigger stakes and with the government of the United States acting as protector, benefactor and enforcer.

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The End of the Bush Dynasty

Stephen Lendman

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The Bush family has been characterized in various ways including the Bush dynasty, crime family or syndicate. George Bush is just the latest in a line of unsavory characters but clearly the bad or worst seed and, in the eyes of most honest observers, the least worthy of an unworthy lot. He was supposed to be the latest in the Bush family line chosen to lay another golden egg for the dynasty but turned out instead to be an ugly duckling who's just been an embarrassment and much worse because of the course he chose and his rigid ideological obstinacy to change even in the face of failure.

The Bush family considers itself among the special chosen ones if based only on its royal heritage. The family is connected by blood to every European monarch on and off the throne including every member of the British House of Windsor. That relationship is more than familial and extends to the president's father having close business dealings with Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip who themselves are connected to the notorious Carlyle Group that also employs GHW Bush as a "senior consultant" and master-rainmaker/fixer-arranger at a very high price for his services.

George W. Bush, of course, is in the bloodline and is a distant cousin of the Queen and Prince Charles. This American "royal" family traces its heritage back to 15th century Britain at the time

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of Henry VIII or earlier, but its royal connection is not unique to Washington politicians as both Al Gore and John Kerry also have familial ties to the British crown, and ironically Gore is a distant cousin of his former presidential rival from having been a direct descendant of Charlemagne when he was emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Truth is indeed stranger or at least more ironic than fiction.

The modern-era Bush family dynasty goes back four generations and was connected to the military-industrial complex of its day during and after WW I much like the most recent two Bush generations are to the present one. It began with George H. Walker and Samuel Prescott acting as dual founding fathers of what turned out to be a criminal enterprise run under the family name much like it is under a local Godfather except for much bigger stakes and with the government of the United States acting as protector, benefactor and enforcer.

Walker was a St. Louis financier who later went to work for Averell Harriman as president of WA Harriman & Company, a banking business that invested in railroads, shipping, aviation and commodities like oil. Samuel Prescott Bush, the current president's other great grandfather, was a major Ohio industrialist and ran the Buckeye Steel Castings Co. that produced armaments. He later went to Washington to run the small arms, ammunition and ordnance section of the War Industries Board and became a close advisor to Herbert Hoover.

The president's grandfather Prescott Bush, Sam's son, had a varied career as a US Senator, Wall Street investment banker with Brown Brothers Harriman (BBH and same Harriman) and as a director of various companies involved in war production including Dresser Industries where his son, the president's father, later worked for a time. A hundred years ago, the Bush family was also connected to John D. Rockefeller and Standard Oil and later with a number of Wall Street firms as well as with the US intelligence community since WWI.

Above all, this is a family that formed strong ties to the institutions of power that began in industry and Wall Street and was parlayed to become a powerful political dynasty that included a US senator, two governors, a congressman, vice-president, CIA director and two presidents (the current president's father, of course, having been a congressman, CIA director and vice-president before being elected president in 1988).

Prescott, the president's grandfather, had a particularly unsavory connection as recently declassified documents show. He was a director of New York based Union Banking Corporation (UBC) that was a holding company for the Nazis and represented the German steel

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industrialist Fritz Thyssen who was intimately involved with the Nazi regime. He was also a director and shareholder of various other companies involved with Thyssen. UBC bought and shipped millions of dollars of gold, oil, steel, coal and US treasury bonds to Germany that helped build and support the Nazi war machine. Prescott was also with Brown Brothers Harriman (BBH) when the firm did business with the Nazis during the 1930s that continued during the early years of WW II until the company's assets were seized in 1942 under the Trading with the Enemy Act.

What BBH did and paid a price for, many other US corporations did as well, prospered from and were never held to account for their lawlessness. Charles Higham documented much of it in his 1983 book called Trading with the Enemy in which he showed evidence of how major companies in America like the Rockefellers' Chase Bank and Standard Oil, Ford, General Motors and other corporate giants had no political or ideological problem doing business routinely with Nazi Germany during the war. It was just business with another good customer, no matter what the customer's business was.

Particularly heinous was the role of IBM Headquarters System Engineering, Design Automation and Management (not covered in the Highman book) when it was run by Thomas Watson. The company used IBM tabulation equipment to set up a system for the Nazis to locate all the Jews of Europe and then sort, file and categorize them for extermination in the death camps using the company's equipment and whose camp personnel IBM employees trained. All the while this went on, IBM managed to fend off US War Department probes into its illicit activities so it could continue to profit handsomely from the Nazi genocide the company knew was taking place and was facilitating - all for the big "blood money" profits involved. Current shareholders of the company's stock might wish to take note of this and reconsider their investment choice.

BBH had no problem cashing in either, and by the late 1930s claimed to be the world's largest investment banking firm in business like all others to make money, and like most others, as willing to do it with regimes like the Nazis as with any other customer. George Herbert Walker and Averell Harriman, who later became a prominent politician and diplomat serving under four US presidents, have been characterized by some as two evil geniuses who saw no difference in dealing with the Bolsheviks in Russia as with Hitler and the Nazis. For them, business was business just the way it is today and in the 1980s when GHW Bush as vice-president and president was willing and eager to be part of the scheme to arm Saddam Hussein who then became public enemy number one to be demonized for using the weapons supplied him by US and other western corporations when he was an ally.

Before his son succeeded him in the Oval Office (8 years removed), GHW Bush was involved in

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a long laundry list of criminal activities he never could have gotten away with under a system of law and order with those violating it held to account. He never was. As CIA chief in 1976 under Gerald Ford, the elder Bush was in charge of covering up the Agency's involvement in coup d'etats and assassinations of foreign leaders including its connection to an earlier September 11 - the one in 1973 ousting and murdering democratically elected President Salvador Allende in Chile that established the 17 year fascist dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet who, despite his despotism, became a close US ally.

The president's father was also deeply involved in the secret, illegal negotiations with Iran in the 1980s, when he was vice-president, that led to the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal that broke in 1986. With the help of friends in the Congress, including Dick Cheney who served then in the House and the corporate media that always looks the other way, he was able to escape investigation and scrutiny. They helped him get away with a strategy of lies and aggressive cover-ups to stay untarnished. It freed him to pursue and secure the Republican presidential nomination in 1988 and the highest office in the land he always wanted to hold, maybe because he felt his royal blood entitled him to it.

In 1992, Iran-Contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh (who took his job seriously unlike his successors) uncovered evidence linking the president to the illegal operation and lying to the public about it, but "trickier-than-Nixon" Bush pardoned six indicted Iran-Contra figures shortly before he left office to bury the evidence against himself and slither away unscathed again. He's now seen as an esteemed elder statesman, his past buried, forgotten and above rebuke. No matter the truth is quite another matter that went down "the memory hole" and is no longer part of the "official" historical record. That judgmental error paved the way for a member of the next Bush generation to ascend to the nation's highest office, a move not turning out as planned.

A Dynastic Success Story Now on Shaky Footing

A Bush family tradition of lying with impunity, operating freely outside the law and getting away with it was no obstacle for the next family member in line, George W. Bush, to be chosen by his party to enter the presidential race in 2000. He got the nomination after serving six years as Texas governor distinguished only by a record of indifference to the public and a total dedication to the business interests in the state. It meant giant corporations were salivating at the thought of having a man like this in the White House serving them in that capacity the same way he did it for the business community in Texas. Thanks to a fraud-laden election, he got the job the old-fashioned way - his influential friends and family stole it for him as arranged by family consigliere and master-fixer Jim Baker securing the necessary 25 Florida electoral votes helped

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along by the complicity of five friendly Supreme Court justices who had to be in on the scheme.

The corporate interests got their main man in Washington, and for a short time seemed to be in "good hands" with him. But lying and getting away with it only works when the schemes lied about go according to plan. Bumps aside, the rise of the Bush dynasty to prominence and power, went well through the ascendancy and tenure of George Herbert Walker Bush, the president's father, which included the election and reelection George W. Bush's younger brother Jeb as governor of Florida after an initial failed bid for the office in 1994 and George W's time as Texas governor.

Nothing lasts forever though, and as best laid as the plans were, they went awry with the misguided selection of the younger George to carry the family banner as the rightful successor to assume the position of supreme leader of the free world and lord and master of the universe. He wasn't the family's first choice and only got bumped up to that spot in line after brother Jeb's initial gubernatorial defeat - one the family must now look back on as a major turning point in the family's political fortunes that going forward may be irreversible.

It should have been an omen of things to come when if it hadn't been for the intervention of Jim Baker and those five arrogant High Court justices, in an election Al Gore clearly won, George Bush would have had to have found another line of work. The justices chose to rewrite the law giving themselves the power to annul the vote of the electorate to install their preferred candidate in the office they gifted to him the same way he's gotten everything else in his privileged life he never deserved and never had to work for. It's the way it's always been for a man of questionable ability and dubious character going back to his days as a youth when at best his behavior could only be charitably described as mischievous and without significant achievement. This is a man who rose to the top the way former Texas governor Ann Richards described it - as "someone born on third base (thinking) he hit a triple."

Six disastrous years later, this man now must not only choose a new career path in two more years, he must also employ a good legal defense team at the ready for the inevitable law suits sure to be filed against him once he leaves office in January, 2009 - a time that can't come soon enough for most and that many wanting him impeached and ousted aren't willing to wait for and may press their demands he go a lot sooner and face the music for his high crimes of war, against humanity and against the people of the United States.

As the current holder of the nation's highest office, George Bush is not unique. As Noam

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Chomsky rightfully observes: "If the Nuremberg laws were applied, then every post-(WW II) American president would have to be hanged (like the worst of the Nazi war criminals found guilty)." Other than the Vietnam era (that family influence let him bypass in a comfortable Texas National Guard slot he rarely showed up for), and arguably the Korean war one as well, the only difference about George Bush as president is the immensity of his crimes and his hard line arrogance and indifference about them and toward the people he's harmed at home and abroad. He's undeterred and committed to press on with what he sees as a messianic mission, or even royal prerogative, and that makes him stand out as a special rogue who's already surpassed all others before him holding the nation's highest office.

Plans to Save the Bush Administration and Its Disastrous Misadventure in Iraq

With a lot of help from the Congress and complicit corporate media that continues to shield him, George Bush not only took the nation to war against two countries that never threatened us based on lies, deceit and cover-up, he's determined to push on to a victory that can't be won and is listening to sinister advice from the wrong people telling him to do it. Proposals of what happens going forward are showing up in a number of reports (related to the work of the Iraq Study Group - ISG) including one on November 16 in the London Guardian and a later one on November 30 discussed below. They follow a meeting George Bush, the vice-president and key administration officials had with the ISG, or Baker Commission, that was formed in March to draft a new course in Iraq because the current one isn't working, and it's led many high level business and political figures to believe it's leading the country to an inevitable disastrous train wreck unless redirected. It's also trying to rescue the family's reputation and presidency of the current incumbent, but it will be hard-pressed to do either.

The Guardian reported that the president told his senior advisors (or more likely Dick Cheney and other hard liners told him) the US military (with any help it can get) must make "a last big push" to win the war in Iraq and instead of beginning a drawdown in force strength, he may send an additional 20,000 more soldiers into this cauldron even against the advice of his Central Command (CENTCOM) commander-in-chief on the ground General John Abizaid who testified before Congress the same day the president was ignoring his advice that now may be changing after hearing what his boss had to say.

Whatever is said publicly or is released in the ISG report, all that matters is what, in fact, will happen going forward and that may be a clear example of a clinical definition of insanity - continuing to do the same things (more or less) that have failed, expecting a different result. It may also be more evidence that was first reported in Capitol Hill Blue on September 5 that Bush has gone over the edge and that Republican and Bush family insiders, including the president's

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father, are worried George Bush may be heading for a "full-fledged mental breakdown" judging by his bizarre or irrational behavior.

Jeffrey Steinberg writing in Executive Intelligence Review said GHW Bush fears his son is obsessed with his messianic mission and is "unreachable" even by some of his closest advisors like Secretary Rice. That view was also stated by prominent psychiatrist Dr. Justin Frank, who wrote *Bush on the Couch: Inside the Mind of the President*. He said: "With every passing week, President Bush marches deeper and deeper into a world of his own making. Central to Bush's world is an iron will which demands that external reality be changed to conform to his personal view of how things are." Dr. Frank added that George Bush needs psychiatric help.

The US military and the public along with all Iraqis better hope it comes soon before he inflames the entire Middle East and a lot more with it. That's what the Baker Commission and president's father are determined to avoid even though the plan they draft, or what we're told about it, will likely have no better solution in the end than the one Bush and his hard liners are now pursuing.

According to the Guardian report, the ISG is circulating its recommendations in a four-point "victory strategy" developed with help from Pentagon officials advising them. It's also getting lots of advice from a number of influential conservative think tanks whose members are part of "working groups" dealing with issues of the military and security, the economy and reconstruction, the political structure, and fine-tuning geostrategy that includes no change in the country's imperial agenda meaning the US military is in Iraq to stay whatever the final ISG report says.

Point One - calls for an initial increase in force size that may be the 20,000 George Bush is calling for to "secure Baghdad" where along with most all of al-Anbar province is where most of the country's violence is.

Point Two - stresses the importance of regional cooperation that will have to include Iran and Syria along with Iraq's other immediate neighbors. It could involve convening an international conference requesting diplomatic, political and financial help - the latter mostly from the Saudis and Kuwaitis.

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Jim Baker knows without Iranian and Syrian cooperation, any hope for conflict resolution in Iraq is impossible, and even with it it's doubtful at best. Unspoken in the report and commentary is the one player with all the trump cards that's left out of the high-level consultations - the Iraqi resistance and great majority of Iraqi people who'll settle for nothing less than what the Baker Commission will never propose and George Bush and the neocons will never agree to - a full and unconditional withdrawal, no strings attached with reparations for the damage done that's almost incalculable. That reality is what all the high-level thinkers and planners are up against. Jim Baker surely knows this whatever his final proposal is. In another article on the ISG, this writer characterized Baker's efforts as a job for Superman and then some, and any hope for success is even more than the redoubtable Jim Baker and his high-level insider team are likely to achieve. Making it even harder will be the influence of the powerful Israeli Lobby that wants the US to press on at least with an attack against Iran and surely not engage the Iranians or Syrians in constructive dialogue about Iraq or anything else.

Point Three - focuses on an effort toward reconciliation among the sectarian ethnic and religious groups to win over consensus among them. The report cited the belief that doing this is crucial to convincing neighboring countries that Iraq can again become a fully functioning state, but conflicting reports about this idea are now surfacing days ahead of the ISG report's release.

If these ideas end up being adopted, they'll violate everything the Bush administration did since March, 2003 when the strategy was, and still is, to destroy all the institutions of a modern secular society in the country along with its historical treasures to transform this once modern and prosperous nation into an impotent desert kingdom populated by easily controlled serfs. It will take more than just a major effort, if one is even intended, to put that "Humpty Dumpty" back together again.

Oddly, or maybe in just a momentary case of bad judgment, the Guardian writer said neocon ideas about "imposing" western-style democracy will have to be set aside. It's hard to imagine the writer doesn't understand that's the one thing US imperial strategy never tolerates and was never part of the plan for "the new Iraq." A nation of serfs is not one of democracy, and predatory capitalism and democracy go no better together than fire and water.

The report goes on to say that partitioning Iraq into a tripartite loose federation won't be recommended as it would only lead to a large-scale humanitarian crisis. It's hard to imagine anything worse than the US-created one now on the ground that's out-of-control by any measure.

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Point Four - calls for increased resources to be allocated for additional troop deployments and to train and equip an expanded Iraqi army and police. It will also call for efforts to stem corruption that reportedly has involved the theft of billions, most of which has been pilfered by US contractors like Halliburton and Bechtel Corporation (closely tied to the White House) that either did shoddy work they were assigned (other than for US installations) or little or none at all but still pocketed many billions of US taxpayer dollars with nary a wink or nod of disapproval from the Bush administration that effectively gave them and others a license to steal.

This point also will call for improving local government and curtailing the power of religious courts and mentions that Bush may be mesmerized by the "Svengali" or "Rasputin" advice of fellow war-criminal Henry Kissinger who believes winning in Iraq is just a matter of "political will" - just the way it worked for Henry in Vietnam. Bush echoed that advice ironically while visiting the capital of the country's last "Waterloo." When arriving in Vietnam for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, he was asked about comparisons of Iraq to Vietnam and said: "We'll succeed unless we quit. We tend to want there to be instant success in the world, and the task in Iraq is going to take a while."

It's taking quite a long while as the US has now been at war in Iraq against a guerrilla resistance longer than it took the country to defeat the Nazis and Japanese in WW II, and those countries had a lot more going for them than car and roadside bombs to fight us. That reality and Bush's remarks show how in denial this man is just like the country's leadership was in the 1960s and 70s believing (in their public statements at least) staying the course would achieve the victory beyond their reach.

But hold on - Bush's "Svengali" seems to be advising him one way and commenting another in a BBC November 19 interview where away from the US media spotlight he said he now believes military victory in Iraq is no longer possible, the administration's policy failed and is headed for "disastrous consequences (to haunt the world) for many years....we have to redefine the course ("stay" is now "redefine")....I don't think the alternative is between military victory....or total withdrawal," and there should be a regional conference of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and Iraq's regional neighbors including Iran to work out a way forward - meaning the Bush administration got us into this mess so will Iraq's regional neighbors and other world powers please help get us out of it. Now which way is it Henry - will the real Henry Kissinger please stand up and show us who the real one is.

He may or may not be helped by a November 30 report in the New York Times, Washington Post, online in Capitol Hill Blue and elsewhere. It cites a well-placed source saying the ISG decided to recommend a major withdrawal of US forces from Iraq in a process of transitioning

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from a combat to a support role over the next year or so but with no specific timetable recommended. It all depends "on a series of conditions and qualifications" governing the drawdown in language suggesting as much smoke and mirrors backside-covering fudging as any real substantive change of policy.

That's apparently the message from national security advisor Stephen Hadley in a November memo to George Bush saying (the ISG report) "is neither 'cut and run' nor 'stay the course.'" It's also what an unnamed senior Pentagon military officer involved in crafting Iraq policy likely meant when he said: "The question is whether it doesn't look like a timeline to Bush, and does to (Iraq prime minister) al-Maliki." It's another example of what the New York Times calls "a classic Washington compromise" - meaning "now you see a change of policy, and now you don't."

In harsher terms, it's what Newsweek magazine writer Michael Hirsh calls "A Bust in Bakerville" in his November 29 article subtitled "Iraq can no longer be won or lost. Why the study group won't solve anything." But Hirsh spoils his article toward its end by suggesting Iraq is "manageable" and what's needed, instead of consensus, is a "no-nonsense negotiator who can grapple with the reality of the American failure....and seek the most honorable way out (like a) Richard Holbrooke or Henry Kissinger....(or) the best hope for....an adult solution (from Defense Secretary-designate) Robert Gates."

It all seems surreal at this point, but what it comes down to is an attempt to pacify the US public and critics of the war. It's to buy more time for a failed Bush presidency looking more all the time like a house of cards nearing collapse, hoping to save it along with the family's name and reputation. By couching recommendations in terms of possibilities to be decided later depending on conditions in the country, the ISG report apparently will be "much ado about nothing" signaling no real change at all and a faint hope at best to rescue George Bush from the fate he deserves.

There's no hiding from the fact that conditions in Iraq are deplorable and out-of-the-control of the US military looking pathetic against an opponent it can't even see and impossible to subdue. It's not likely to fare much better going forward than it has up to now in the face of a determined resistance and mass Iraqi opposition to an occupation they want to end and will keep fighting against it until it does whether the US military stays in the streets or is hunkered down in its self-contained permanent super-bases.

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Still, with a brave face, the report apparently will recommend that US forces redeploy to its key bases inside the country and elsewhere in the region and turn over more responsibility to Iraqi security forces for frontline operations when and if they can handle them. So far they can't and aren't likely to do much better ahead as many recruited into them are from the very resistance forces the US military is fighting and most others joined up for a paycheck with no ideological commitment to the occupying power offered in return for it - not the best set of circumstances for building an effective satrap security force.

The report will also call for convening a regional conference of Iraq's neighbors that will have to include Iran and Syria which the Israeli Lobby is fighting to prevent and so far the Bush administration has preconditions for unacceptable at least to the Iranians.

Further, the report mentions recommendations being considered by the Pentagon Joint Chiefs who seem to be leaning toward a brief increase in force size followed by a partial drawdown and a shift, like the ISG plan, from a combat role to one involving training, advising and backup. The Pentagon option is called "go long" and apparently calls for a large US military presence in Iraq for five to ten years which sounds very much like cover saying there will be no exit strategy just the way it turned out in South Korea still occupied by about 30,000 US forces a half century after the war there ended, and there are no hostilities or threats unless the US provokes one. The Times and Post said the ISG report (said to be about 100 pages) will be released on December 6, at least whatever portion of it the public gets to see.

One other supposedly "classified memorandum" on the war showed up on pages of the New York Times on December 3. It's from former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld sent to the White House on November 6, two days before he was sacked from the job he showed he couldn't handle long ago. On the one hand, it's a rather surprising admission of personal failure and need for a change of course, but on the other it may more of a thinly-veiled, late-in-the-game attempt to burnish an image too tarnished for any public relations makeover at this stage. But you can't blame the guy for trying, and he'll probably get some media-directed help ahead for what little good it may do.

In language trying to convey an image of elder statesman but dripping with mea culpas, Rumsfeld acknowledges "In my view it is time for a major adjustment....Clearly, what US forces are currently doing in Iraq is not working well enough or fast enough." Of course, they're doing what he ordered them to do, and he, more than anyone else, bears the most responsibility for all that's happened in Iraq since the war began - but you won't hear that in the media-directed attempted makeover.

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The former secretary then lays out the policy changes he recommends in a set of attractive "Above the Line Illustrative Options" and less attractive "Below the Line" ones. Some of it sounds much like what the ISG will propose and the "new" direction the Pentagon seems to be leaning to in its planning. But Rumsfeld can't resist suggesting a lot of the blame goes to the Iraqi puppet government that must "pull up (its) socks" and change its "bad behavior." This kind of talk is now coming out of the White House and echoed in the corporate media - a shameless attempt to shift blame for what US forces have done and bear full responsibility for to an installed Iraqi government with no authority and no power to do anything more in the country than clear away the daily carnage on the streets caused by the US presence there. Mr. Rumsfeld and his administration allies planned, directed and lied their way into this mess, and now he and they are trying to lie their way out of it by shifting the blame to the Iraqis that had nothing to do with it with a lot of help from their corporate media allies. It's a classic example of Washington-spin dutifully picked up and echoed in the mainstream hoping to make the victim look like the responsible party.

Cheerleading 101 - It's What the Dominant Corporate-Controlled Media Does Best, and They're At It Again

When in trouble, as the Bush administration clearly is, it can count on its corporate media allies to step up and help out just as they did it during the Johnson-Nixon years when they backed their "stay the course" and "Vietnamization" agendas. They're always out in front delivering the "proper message" and leading the cheerleading as they are now for what's highlighted above and the new Bush rhetoric of "success" however Henry Kissinger and others define it. It's highlighted in a November 16 article by media critic and columnist Norman Solomon titled *The New Media Offensive to Prolong the Iraq War* posted on Counterpunch. In it, he says the pro-war cheerleading is being featured on the front page of the *New York Times* (as it always is) by columnist Michael Gordon just like it was in the run-up to March, 2003 by the now-disgraced Judith Miller in her daily hawkish screeds practically pleading for hostilities and echoing the propaganda handed her by the White House and Pentagon.

This is the same Michael Gordon today who was the lead reporter on the *Times* front page in the lead-up to the Iraq war who wrote the false and discredited story (he never apologized for) about the threat of Saddam's aluminum tubes. Michael's back now and again doing what's expected of him as a paid propagandist for "the newspaper of record" that never met an act of US aggression it didn't support even when it turned out to be a hopeless debacle as is true now.

The Gordon piece on November 15 is certain to be followed by more. It's another in a long line of thinly-veiled NYT empire-supportive kinds of "journalism" leading the media pack with its

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cheerleading even when war crimes are committed or the public interest is being ignored or harmed. The Times, as always, knows what its role is, and no journalist need apply for work there without being willing to be part of the same dirty business that includes supporting all imperial wars the nation pursues. So it is now. And Solomon goes on to say many other journalists are joining the chorus against the pullout option in Iraq the same way they did during the Vietnam era. They go even further warning Democrats that, despite strong public opinion to the contrary, not to go that far "if they know what's good for them," and, right or wrong, it's the president's call in all cases whether to go to war or continue one, and the Congress should stay out of it - even if they have lie to the public to do it the way the New ork Times does.

These journalists need a lesson in constitutional law as that view is fraudulent on its face and contradicts what the founders stood for and put in the Constitution for those who care to read it. It's a further reckless endangerment of a democratic republic scarcely able to draw breathe anymore. It's the result of corrupted government officials and complicit corporate media journalists ignoring what Thomas Jefferson helped codify, teach us, believed in passionately and said: "The most effectual means of preventing the perversion of power into tyranny are to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people....Light and liberty go together.....Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day."

Jefferson added no nation can ever be free if it's kept ignorant, and no part of the corporate-controlled media is more guilty of that sin than the "paper of record" that's the closest thing in the country to an official ministry of information and propaganda that's leading the way for all the others. It functions to serve the interests of wealth and power violating the Jeffersonian spirit and the constitutional law of the land he helped draft in 1787.

It allows George Bush to sell his war agenda knowing it'll be supported in the echo chambers of major front page dailies and headlined on TV newscasts. It may be his last gasp, but he's at it again calling for a "last push" strategy for victory in Iraq in a futile attempt to refurbish his image and give Republicans time to regroup from their drubbing in the mid-term elections and prepare for the 2008 presidential campaign. It's hard to imagine how continuing what hasn't worked up to now and won't will accomplish anything more than raise the level of public anger wanting change and not getting it.

The Real State of Things in Iraq the Corporate Media Won't Report

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To learn what's really happening in Iraq just read unembedded independent journalist Patrick Cockburn's November 28 column in the London Independent (and all his others there) called Slaughter House Iraq. In it he says "Iraq is rending itself apart. The signs of collapse are everywhere. In Baghdad, the police often pick up more than 100 tortured and mutilated bodies in a single day. Government ministries make war on each other." He goes on to explain the country is in an "ominous stage of disintegration" and may be approaching what the Americans call "the Saigon moment" when it's plain as day "the government is expiring."

Covering the region, freelance journalist and author Nir Rosen is just as ominous in his latest article in the Boston Review on November 27, 2006 called Anatomy of a Civil War - Iraq's descent into chaos. Rosen says: "Shia religious parties such as the Iran-supported Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) controlled the country, and Shia militias had become the Iraqi police and the Iraqi army, running their own secret prisons, arresting, torturing, and executing Sunnis in what was clearly a civil war. And the Americans were merely one more militia among the many, watching, occasionally intervening, and in the end only making things worse."

Almost everyone in Washington and Whitehall know all this except Bush and Blair and their most loyal acolytes who've lost all touch with reality and are in a state of denial that the longer the occupation continues the worse things will get. The human toll, according to Cockburn, is 1000 Iraqis killed each week and 1000 US forces killed or wounded every month, and these may be low estimates of even greater numbers unknown or carefully concealed preventing people at home from knowing how desperate things really are, what the human cost is, that the war in Iraq is lost, and the longer US forces stay in the country the worse things will get.

And consider what publisher and editor Bob Chapman writes in his November 29 edition of his long-running, well-respected online publication The International Forecaster. He says "the insurgency in Iraq is now self-sustaining financially, raising millions of dollars a year from oil smuggling, kidnapping, counterfeiting, connivance by corrupt Islamic charities and other crimes the occupation has been unable to prevent." He believes they raise \$70 - \$200 million a year from these activities and concludes with the dramatic observation that the resistance groups can hold off the most powerful military in the world with that amount of money compared to \$100 billion or more spent by the Pentagon with all their super-weapons trying and failing to defeat them. It can't and won't no matter how many more billions are spend or for how long.

That's the dilemma mandarins like Jim Baker and the heavyweights on his Commission have to deal with. The spillage of six disastrous years under the younger Bush is so immense, and the fallout from it so beyond repair, that two years from now or sooner the rule and influence of a

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family dynasty will end and whatever succeeds it will inherit less power than any US administration since WW II as the American empire heads into an irreversible decline that didn't begin under George Bush but was measurably accelerated under his discredited leadership that turned out to be none at all.

The Price of Imperial Overreach

After a mediocre start to his presidency, fate, or more likely a sinister master-plan, handed George Bush and his allies their chance to be untethered from any restraint and be able to go for the big prize they wanted all along but needed public support to do it. It was the gift of the 9/11 tragedy his administration ruthlessly exploited as a launching platform to pursue an imperial agenda of permanent war against enemies invented for the enterprise including former CIA asset against the Soviets in Afghanistan Osama bin Laden in the lead role.

With the help and complicity of round-the-clock daily corporate media fed invented terror threat warnings, color-coded on television for added impact, it scared the public enough and made the Congress willing enough to go along with the scheme the administration had in mind all along and had envisioned from the work of the right wing Project for the New American Century think tank (PNAC) document called Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century. Conceived by future key Bush administration officials, it was a grand imperial plan for US global dominance to extend well into the future to be enforced with unchallengeable military power - a blueprint for the current "war on terror" now rebranded as a "long war" against "Islamic fascism" with goals spelled out in the May, 2000 Department of Defense (DOD) Joint Vision 2020 calling for "full spectrum (world) dominance" that was code language meaning total control over all land, sea, air, outer space and information with enough overwhelming power to defeat any potential challenger or adversary with no restraint on the use of any weapons, including nuclear ones.

This "Vision" was one of several imperial documents looking ahead that included the Nuclear Policy Review of 2001, the FY 2004 Air Force Space Command Strategic Master Plan, the Pentagon's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review and the National Security Strategy of 2002, updated in 2006. Together they laid out a "grand imperial strategy" that included the notion of "preventive war" updated to a "long war" against "Islamofascists" that was set in motion by the trigger of the 9/11 tragedy to target those parts of the world of greatest strategic value like the oil-rich Greater Middle East including Central Asia and its Caspian Basin riches.

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These plans were embellished on October 6, 2006 when George Bush quietly signed the National Space Policy superceding a September, 1996 version of the same directive. The plan lays out US space policy goals that include implementing an "innovative human and robotic exploration program" to extend the presence of humans in space. It calls on NASA to "execute a sustained and affordable human and robotic program of space exploration and develop, acquire, and use civil space systems to advance fundamental scientific knowledge of our Earth system, solar system, and universe." It supports the use of nuclear power systems and implies without so stating that includes nuclear weapons that will be deployed there to use when and if necessary. That's very much the message from the language that this policy is designed "to ensure space capabilities....to further US national security, homeland security, and foreign policy objectives (that include defending) our interests there....(and having The Director of National Intelligence) provide a robust foreign space intelligence collection and analysis capability....to support national and homeland security."

With all the pieces of its grand imperial scheme in place, the best-laid plans, nonetheless, don't always go as designed especially when they encompass more than can be digested and the forces against them are determined enough to resist and do it effectively. What began with world support for a global "war on terror" began to unravel in the wake of the Bush administration's notion of endless wars and its unilateral intent to invade and occupy Iraq in spite of growing opposition to it that was ridiculed, spurned and arrogantly defied. Even the world's only superpower should have known no nation, no matter how powerful, can challenge the rest of the world and get away with it without enough support, especially when the two adventures it undertook in Iraq and Afghanistan unravelled so fast and the economic and political costs incurred from them are so enormous and increasing they've made visible fissures in the hegemon's superstructure making it vulnerable.

The cost of Bush administration go-it-alone adventurism accelerated a decline of US imperial power that began, according to some astute observers, with its futile losing gambit in Vietnam. It's now repeating it and then some in the Greater Middle East and as a result lost its stature as a failed model of a once democratic state flaunting the rule of law and ignoring the values it claims to stand for while doing just the opposite in reckless pursuit of its own interests. It's now seen for what it is - an out-of-control rogue state threatening all others wanting no part of it and a growing number of them willing to challenge its supremacy in the process.

This behavior fits the definition of what Noam Chomsky calls a "failed state" in his 2006 book titled Failed States while explaining the notion of what this means, in fact, is imprecise at best. It may be a nation unable to protect its citizens from violence or destruction but could also be one that flaunts the rule of international law and acts as an aggressor. The US uses this term for nations seen as potential threats to our security we feel justified intervening against in self-defense. Chomsky says if we evaluate our own agenda by that definition "we should have

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little difficulty in finding the characteristics of 'failed states' right at home."

Blame much of it on how noted historian and author Gabriel Kolko characterizes the Bush administration - "the worst set of incompetents ever to hold power in Washington. It 'shocked and awed'....itself." Winston Churchill called himself an optimist and once remarked that "the United States invariably does the right thing, after having exhausted every other alternative." Not a chance as long as George Bush is president and neocons are in charge. That's a hurdle even Churchill's optimism couldn't have cleared.

It shows how a once proud country lost its legitimacy and with it the power to face down a growing number of nations willing to confront its authority and get away with it, even small players that once wouldn't have dared. In the hemisphere, Cuba has been joined by Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua on November 7 with the reelection of Sandinista FSLN leader and former US nemesis Daniel Ortega, and now in Ecuador on November 26 with the impressive election of populist candidate Rafeal Correa in the run-off presidential election against the Washington-backed billionaire oligarch.

Elsewhere in Asia, China and North Korea have defied US authority as has Russia in Eurasia and Iran and Syria in the Middle East. Resistance groups everywhere have now learned the lessons from Iraq, Afghanistan and Hezbollah in Lebanon. These groups have asymmetrical guerrilla-tactic power that when used effectively can hold their own against the most powerful nation on earth beating it at its own game by outlasting it or rendering its super-weapons useless against an opponent that can't be seen until its bombs go off and bullets start flying and often not even then. They've also inspired the courageous people of Mexico and their epicenter of resistance in Oaxaca taking to the streets in their courageous fight against electoral fraud and an end to decades of abuse and injustice and doing it with little more than their bodies and a redoubtable spirit that won't quit.

Add to this the growing unease and discontent of an aroused and angered public at home. It sent a powerful message of disgust and contempt for six failed years of imperial madness and corrupted right wing neocon Republican rule by drubbing its candidates in the mid-term elections. It wants change in Washington even though there's little chance to get it when the new leadership takes control of the Congress in January. Beyond the usual post-election continuation of campaign-style rhetoric, already it's clear the Democrat party mission is to move the ship of state forward with its agenda largely intact but with them in charge including in the White House if they can prevail in the 2008 election. It's the way things always work in the nation's Capitol where those holding power owe their allegiance to the interests of wealth and power that put them there, and, in the end, the people be damned and "let 'em eat cake" but the

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language is more subtle.

It won't work for the new congressional leadership any more than it did for the president who brought down the house of Bush ending the family dynasty's reign while turning the nation's imperial dreams into its death throes by his arrogance and ineptness. He'll now live in infamy as the man who accelerated the American empire's decline. His imperial madness buried it in the caves and rubble of Afghanistan and the burning sands of the Middle East financing it with an unrepayable mountain of Federal Reserve-created debt in an age of aberrant capitalism gone wild and transformed into a fiscal weapon of mass-destruction that may end up throttling the US and world economies. It's what out-of-control greed and delusions of grandeur always lead to - self-aggrandizing excess that eventually undermines the "irrationally exuberant" dreams of fools and despots that go well beyond the limits of reason or any hope for success.

If George Bush lasts another two years, it'll be thanks to the kindness of his dwindling number of hard core friends and strangers who still think they can pick something from the bones of his tenure before payment for his imperial overreach comes due. When it does, it'll be high, painful and inevitable just like it always is the way it was for that French queen of "let em eat cake" fame who along with her husband, King Louis XVI, lost their heads for their misdeeds. "King" George may keep his, but the family dynasty has been undone and defrocked by the sins of the unworthy scion ill-chosen to carry its reign forward to pass on to the next in line after him. It wasn't to be as the dominance of another powerful family passes into history, never to be trusted again with the seat of power in a nation accelerating in decline in the new century that was planned to be an American one but already is not six years into it.

Whereto from here with a disgraced head of state and unindicted war criminal already an artifact or relic of an era past, his power ebbing and marking time going through the motions despite the same bravado, smirk and all, that resonates less with each public appearance. It's intended to keep his weakened presidency from collapsing that may just take one more good shove to do it. Despite desperate efforts to save it, in the end who but the family will care if it does and who will ever again believe a serial liar once exposed and disgraced making him unwelcome in the halls of power that once embraced him. Success, as they say, has many parents and friends, but failure is an unwanted orphan, and it's showing up as some of the hard core faithful voice their displeasure openly and walk away.

It now remains for his final exit that can't come soon enough for most who want him out now and may act to force it if the Congress won't act as a majority of the public demands. Whatever happens from here, the king is dead (even with his head in place), and with it the power and influence of a family dynasty brought down by the poisoned chalice of its ill-chosen successor,

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unworthy and unable to wear the crown and pass it to the next in line. Henceforth, all will know what should have been clear all along. Behind every "Bush," there's a crime, and some of them are too great to hide, make up for or overcome. So it is with the lesson of George Bush, a very bad seed and a president only a mother can love. And even that's in doubt in a family that doesn't take defeat very well. Give them time, they'll acclimate.

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