

Won't Republican Ideologies Ever Recant?

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Opinion Piece by Lou Mincer

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On energy, McCain calls for drilling, drilling and more drilling and the hell with global warming. Do we want that mentality in the White House? His buddy, Phil Gramm, another lobbyist who cashed in on his reputation, characterizes Americans as 'a nation of whiners wallowing in a mental recession.' Gramm once said, 'We're the only nation in the world where all of our poor people are fat.'

These are the riff-raff making up McCain's entourage and in all likelihood will hold important positions in his administration if elected. After all we have endured under the Bush/Cheney regime *do we honestly want 4 more years of the same?* Or for that matter *can we survive 4 more chaotic years?*

One last mention: Congressional Republicans have given Bush a free ride in using the "scorched earth policy" on the environment. His recent edict, continuing his destructive assault on terra firma is to expunge the Endangered Species Act. The gall of this president is incomprehensible beyond belief. Tragically, his fellow Republican travelers in Congress accede to his slightest whim. The GOP seldom deviates from honoring a presidential command. They follow orders diligently, regardless of their merit, or get booted out. *We cannot, and should not, condone a party that serves the president exclusively in preference to their own constituents.* As it is, the environment is already a shambles after 8 years of Bush's remorseless plunder.

Having made this lengthy commentary exposing McCain's failings insofar as his precarious health and abysmal retinue of political hacks, let me make one thing clear. In order to achieve a meeting of the minds amongst both Republicans and Democrats, one which will resuscitate and reinvigorate a nation now in trauma, *both parties must join in alliances for that singular purpose.* It will require give and take on both sides to find common ground. It's imperative that we embark on a new course wherein the people are the predominant consideration and force the government to be subservient to their wishes. In that respect we have drifted worlds apart. Yet our Republic is predicated on that postulation.

Political party affiliations are meaningless if in the end it causes our nation grievous damage. Today's campaigns are rife with hate, showing man's ruthless instincts. We must unite in peace and harmony, with a unity of purpose, to protect our country against acquisition by foreign interests. Under the present leadership, we are being sold out piecemeal - our infra-structure, banking institutions, our industrial base, 2/3 of manufacturing capacity, has been outsourced. All of government's assets, bureaus, etc. are being privatized. The Federal Government is virtually penniless, in hock to world nations. And, as a consequence, we have a devalued dollar, losing credibility world-wide, dragging us down still further. Our declining economic power, if not contained, will lead to our collapse.

We must clean out the dry rot in our system. Those charged with running our country have outlived their stay.

We need new blood and ideas to breathe life back into our Republic. We've stayed the perilous course for 8 years, careening and weaving along the edge of disaster.

Most Americans are aware of the critical situation we are mired in and will vote for drastic change in the composition of Congress and president. Mounting opposition by hardcore, entrenched Republicans wary of losing their cushy positions will pull out all the stops to

perpetuate the disintegration of our Constitutional Democracy.

The prevailing rumors were that both 2000 and 2004 presidential elections were fraught with fraud and villainy. Oversight organizations such as Common Cause and the AFL-CIO have a gut feeling that the same tactics will be used in 2008 to steal the Democratic vote.

At all costs this perfidy must be prevented. We must not allow a bogusly elected president a clean bill of health to assume office. If we continue to permit elections to be hijacked we revert to government run by thugs and vandals and in the shadows the clique that finances these treasonous acts, operating in total secrecy. Whomever they are, they represent the moneyed interests infused by corporate predators, subverting a supine government. Think about this: 41,000 lobbyists spend \$3 billion yearly in Washington D.C. coddling Congress and president. Are any of them complicit in these exploits?

It should be noted though, that those that presently control the reins of government are totally dedicated to the corporate empire who has reaped their beneficence. The corporate cartel has the most to lose if McCain is defeated. Are they perhaps the money spigots financing the nefarious activities undermining our election process? *The old saying is, "God helps those that help themselves" and by God, we need all the help we can get to reclaim our nation for its rightful owners - the people.*

This last comment on McCain. His voting record towards seeing our soldiers and veterans through trying times is abominable. It portrays a picture of a man that is willfully negligent of the troops when it comes to providing the necessities for his former brothers and sisters in arms.

Paul Hackett, an Iraq war vet and former Democratic Congressional candidate essays: "Here's a guy who touts himself as friend of the veterans but his history shows just the opposite. How can someone who cares about our men and women in the armed services vote against the GI Bill or Veteran's Health Care 10 times?"

In 2005, Senator Daniel Akaka (D, Hawaii), now chair of the Veteran's Affairs Committee, introduced legislation that would have increased veterans medical care by \$2.8 billion in 2006. He also introduced another bill that would have added \$10 million for readjustment counseling services for those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, a program started in 1979 for Vietnam veterans.

McCain voted. NO. The following year, Akaka requested \$1.5 billion for veterans' medical care and an additional \$430 million for the Department of Veteran Affairs for outpatients. Again McCain voted NO without offering an alternate plan.

In 2005, Senator Barbara Boxer, (D, Calif.) and Patty Murry (D, Wash.), saw their amendment to fund vets additional medical care and readjustment counseling killed. McCain voted NO on both measures. Again, in 2005, Senator Debbie Stabinow (D, Michigan) proposed legislation that would have indexed veteran's health care benefits to take into account the annual changes in inflation and veteran's population, to be paid for by closing the tax cuts for the wealthy and restoring the pre 2001 top tax rate for income more than a million dollars and finally, delaying proposed tax cuts for the wealthy. McCain voted an *emphatic* NO.

In early 2006, Senator Christopher Dodd (D, Conn.) proposed an amendment for additional funding to shore up the collapsing infrastructure at veterans' hospitals

around the country, which would have mandated a minor rollback in the capital gains tax cuts that Bush had lavished on the richest 1/5 of one percent of Americans. McCain, more concerned about the 100 plus lobbyists associated with his campaign than the health of the veterans, opposed the amendment.

Not long after, the Feb. 2007 Washington Post exposé about the horror stories surrounding the crumbling, infested D.C. Walter Reed Army Medical Center, which bore out Dodd's anxiety over the abject conditions that confronted our loyal troops injured under fire, made headlines in the news.

In Feb. 2006, Senator Jack Reed (D, RI) sponsored an amendment that would have rolled back Capital Gains tax cuts so that much needed equipment for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan could be purchased.

McCain and his allied Republicans made sure that those tax cuts stayed in place and as a result the troops didn't get what they needed.

Finally, in June 2006, Senator John Kerry (D, Mass.) and Russ Feingold (D, Wis.) authored a bill-S.mmdt 4442- to require the redeployment of United States armed forces from Iraq in order to further a political ally in Iraq, to encourage the people of Iraq to provide for their own security, and achieve victory in the war on terror. It received 13 votes. Needless to say McCain wasn't one of them.

The Home for Heroes Act, sponsored by Obama (D, Ill.) introduced April 2007, would have helped provide housing for low income vets and helped tackle the problem of homeless among American military veterans. The bill died. A new vote is scheduled in the Senate. Billions generously provided for tax cuts for the super rich but for veterans desperately in need, Congressional Republicans appropriate a big goose egg. They *almost* passed Sen. Jim Webb's (D, Va.) bill to provide returning troops with more robust educational benefits enjoyed by men and women following World War II. Although the bill did not make it to a vote it was incorporated into the new GI Bill that the Senate (absent McCain, who was at a fundraiser in California) passed in May. Hallelujah!

The Iraq and Afghanistan veterans of America (IAVA), the country's largest Iraq Veterans group, looked at 155 Senate votes since Sept. 2001 on legislation that affected troops, veterans or military families. It then awarded each Senator a grade comparing his or her votes, which IAVA would consider as constituting effective support for active troops, veterans and their families.

No Republican Senator received an 'A'. The worst grade received by a Senate Democrat was higher than the best grade granted to a Republican. Thirteen Senators, all Democrats, received an 'A'. Obama, a 'B+'. McCain received a 'D'. Executive director of IAVA, Paul Ruckhoff, says that "there has been no bigger obstacle to passage of the GI Bill than Senator McCain. Even though he might like to claim credit for it, he didn't even show up to vote. He thought it was more important to be in California for a fundraiser." McCain's voting record to support our troops is indicative of where his loyalty lies, placing party above principal.

Washington Post columnist David Ignatus once described McCain's fidelity to Bush as being "so profound that he wouldn't rule out giving up his Senate seat to become Secretary of Defense if Donald Rumsfeld were to leave."

His admiration of the president is almost an obsession and his commitment to the military heartless, showing a total disregard for their well being.

Judge for yourselves, fellow Americans, whether he is qualified to be Commander and Chief of the Armed Forces?

Senator John McCain is a multi-faceted individual who has been through the wringer of life. After his 5 year

incarceration, upon returning to the USA, he appeared to become a gad about town, transfixed with the feminine sex. As time went on his career in politics became predominant. During that period of transition his character hardened, becoming more bellicose. Today he is known by his fellow Republicans to have an explosive temper with a short fuse and has been quoted as using abusive language when provoked or enraged.

While his medical records raise grave concerns about his longevity, his political acumen and reactionary policies along with questionable judgment and a disposition for force to settle world-wide imbroglios, are traits that must not be accorded to one that will become the world's most powerful personage.

Herein is a partial accounting of McCain's voting record in the Senate. The number of times he has voted *against* women's choice in his legislative career — 125. Percentage of times he has voted *with* George W. Bush in 2007 -- 95%. Number of times he has voted against minimum wage -- 10. McCain's 2007 League of Conservation voters rating -- 0. Length of time, in years, McCain is willing to keep troops in Iraq — 100 years. Amount of funding McCain opposed in the 2008 GI Bill, \$52 Billion. *Number electoral votes needed to been' McCain, 270.*

McCain uttered this statement, "I would rather have a clean government than one where, quote, 'First Amendments are being respected that has become corrupted.'" (Don Imus, 4/28.06.) How can he take an oath on the Bible to honor the Constitution and publicly denounce it? His statement on Fox News 2/19/07: "I do not support Roe vs. Wade, it should be overturned."

Is McCain a neocon Rapture Evangelical who fervently desires Armageddon? There reside in Congress a large contingent of Republican neocons who lust for war. That proclivity is evident in the recent confrontation with Russia over Russian military intervention in Georgia, where US corporations are invested in oil and gas holdings. Not only has the US acquired economic interests in Georgia, but in other Russian satellite countries such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and military bases in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Those countries became independent when the Soviet Union disintegrated. America's intrusion into their realm would be comparable to Russia moving military bases into California or any other state in the union. Also, American sales of SM-3 missiles to Poland apparently incited Russia's anger.

The United States is taunting a military power that is quite capable of incinerating the world with their nuclear capacity. Russia, since its collapse, *has* abided by International rules. Why are we provoking them?

As Paul Craig Roberts so forcefully said in an article titled, *Are You Ready For Nuclear War.* "If you desire to be poor, oppressed and eventually vaporized in a Nuclear War, vote Republican."