

OMNI NEWSLETTER: MCCAIN WATCH #2

FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE, JUNE 17, 2008

Compiled by Dick Bennett (First McCain Watch, April 15, 2008)

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Its always a hard thing to watch someone deny who they are and what they believe. With the amount of television coverage that McCain will get as we head to the general election campaign, this is going to be continually painful

THE REAL MCCAIN Series: Watch the video <http://bravenewfilms.org/watch/24684188/39179>

There's no question John McCain is getting a free ride from the mainstream press. But with the power of YouTube and the blogosphere, [we can provide an accurate portrayal](#) of the so-called Maverick. We can put the brakes on his [free ride!](#)

Since we first released [The Real McCain](#) a year ago, our [REAL McCain series](#) has garnered close to 2 million views, with over 13,000 comments and tens of thousands more in petition signatures! Clearly, John McCain's record is something the public wants to discuss, and yet the corporate media is doing NOTHING to present the truth. We feel obliged to continue countering the mainstream media's love of McCain. And so we thought it was high time for a sequel: The Real McCain 2.

We're doing everything to get the facts out there about McCain. Join us in making a concerted effort to tell the story that corporate media refuses to tell. [E-mail this video](#) to all of your friends and family members, news blogs and other local media outlets. And don't forget to [Digg it!](#)

According to Cliff Schecter, author of [The Real McCain: Why Conservatives Don't Trust Him And Why Independents Shouldn't:](#)

"It is dangerous for a democracy when a presidential candidate can lie with impunity, change positions on a whim, and physically and verbally threaten others and virtually none of it is reported by a besotted media eagerly awaiting the next moment when he might slap their backs in friendship."

The mainstream press may not do their job, but we can surely do ours. It is crucial that we alert the public to the REAL McCain, and it is crucial we act now, before it's too late.

Yours, Robert Greenwald, and the Brave New Team Brave New Films is located at 10510 Culver Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232.

You can get our latest videos on email, iTunes, RSS, Facebook, and YouTube [here](#).

MCCAIN IN THE MEDIA

"The Press Corps' Unshakeable Crush on McCain" by Peter Hart, *Extra! (May-June 2008)*. The corporate media follows the GOP line. In same no. see "Failing to Use the 1st Amendment to Defend the Bill of Rights" by Cynthia Cooper: Media don't probe candidates on civil liberties.

MEDIA AND MCCAIN

Isabel Macdonald. "Endorsing a Different Standard for McCain, Obama." *Extra! Update* (April 2008). Corporate media were more interested in examining Obama's connections (Rev. Wright) than McCain's.

Peter Hart, "McCain's Iraq War 'Advantage.'" *Extra! Update* (April 2008). Pundits have treated the Iraq War as an advantage for McCain over his Democratic opponent, even though he is as hawkish as Bush, because they believe he has a built-in advantage on military matters.

MCCAIN AND HAMAS

EXPOSED: McCain a Complete Hypocrite on Hamas!

<http://www.alternet.org/blogs/video/85587>

McCain was for talking to Hamas before he was against it.

MCCAIN VS. FAIR PAY FOR WOMEN

Recently, Senate Republicans filibustered the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, a law that would have overturned an appalling Supreme Court decision that practically abolished remedies for gender-based compensation discrimination in the workplace. In opposing this legislation, Senator John McCain said that if women want better-paying jobs, they just need more "education and training."

Let's tell Senator McCain that he should stop blocking an up or down vote on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Women don't need more "education and training." They need the Senate to ensure equal rights for women under the law. Please have a look and take action. <http://act.credoaction.com/r/?r=142&id=191-433089-di3gfa&t=42>

Thanks! Edrene

Dear Dick,

John McCain is lying to America. He claims to be a straight-talking maverick. He publicly distances himself from the wildly unpopular Bush administration.

But it's just more of the same. Making windfall corporate profits the law of the land. Pandering to the religious right. Endless war. McCain's latest ingenious policy proposal is his idea to lift the gas tax during the summer months to supposedly help ease the burden on vacationing families. **McCain's idea is so out of touch** that everyone from Paul Krugman to Bush's council of economic advisors thinks it's a horrible idea.

McCain's proposal is not about making life easier for families.

McCain's real special interest is big oil. They get huge tax breaks to help them continue to rake in record profits, even as prices soar at the pump.

Democracy for America wants the voters to know the truth. We need to make an impact now while the issue is hot. **Our goal: 2,000 donors contributing \$50 each to fight back.**

<https://democracyforamerica.com/contribute/mccain>

DFA will run a people-powered campaign, using radio ads to target the very voters McCain hopes to shore up with his gas tax holiday. We will go after white men and independents, running our aggressive persuasion ads on drive time sports radio in upcoming primary states.

It is imperative that we stop McCain from taking us deeper into economic despair with nonsense proposals designed to pander to a key voting bloc in an election year.

The time is now. Together we will unmask the McCain myth. Join us today and contribute \$50.

<https://democracyforamerica.com/contribute/mccain>

This is only the beginning. The more DFA members take action, the faster we can escalate the attack. DFA's people-powered campaigns will use sophisticated micro-targeting to contact voters who are crucial to a Democratic victory in November.

McCain is appealing to working and middle class Americans. He wants folks to think he is working for them. The gas tax holiday is no exception. A recent Reuters article connects the not-so-subtle dots:

*"Economists said that since refineries cannot increase their supply of gasoline in the space of a few summer months, lower prices will just boost demand and **the benefits will flow to oil companies, not consumers.**" You are just going to push up the price of gas by almost the size of the tax cut," said Eric Toder, a senior fellow at the Urban-*



MCCAIN TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ: WAR FOR OIL AND A CORPORATE MEDIA SPOKESMAN AGREES

"My friends, I will have an energy policy which will eliminate our dependence on oil from Middle East that will then prevent us from having ever to send our young men and women into conflict again in the Middle East." --McCain, May 2, 08

Chris Matthews opines:

"You know, if somebody else were to say that, they would be accused of being a communist, or radical, or a leftist. For John McCain, a war hero, to say that we're fighting in the Middle East to protect our oil sources is an astounding development." --

<http://www.crooksandliars.com/2008/05/02/john-mccain-admits-iraq-war-was-over-oil/>

MCCAIN WINNING GOP CONSERVATIVES

"All Aboard the McCain Express" by Rick Perlstein, *The Nation* (April 21, 2008). Between 2001 and 2006 the Republicans conservative movement controlled the gov't., with the result of a crashing economy, a rotting infrastructure, a failed war, and a less safe world. It's this Party McCain is leading.

GI BENEFITS

A letter in the NWTimes today gives yet another reason to oppose McCain. His is the first of 3 names on a bill competing with another bill which would expand GI benefits. McCain's bill apparently preserves the status quo and discriminates against the Natl Guard and Reservist guys who have been fighting, and also favors soldiers who have been in the service longer over those who have fought several tours of combat. ---Coralie

How McCain Lost in Pennsylvania

Frank Rich

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/27/opinion/27rich.html?ref=opinion>

McCain: The 'Anti-Lobbyist' Who Works With Lobbyists

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/02/22/mccain-the-antilobbyis n 87941.html>

A Developer, His Deals and His Ties to McCain

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/22/us/politics/22diamond.html? r=1&oref=slogin&pagewanted=all>

Jim Hightower has compiled some good information about **donors and finances** of Clinton, Obama, and McCain.

Scroll to end of the first article.

-Carl

<http://www.hightowerlowdown.org/node/1654>

MORE ON DONORS from The Real McCain Series

psst... DO SOMETHING!



1. [Watch the video](#)
2. [Forward it to others](#)

Dear Dick,

Gas prices are hitting all-time highs. Our country is in the midst of a recession thanks in part to our crippling dependence on oil, so what's John McCain's plan? Will he hold [the corporate leaders of the energy industry](#) accountable when he addresses them today in Houston? Probably not, considering they are some of his biggest fund-raisers.

The Center for Responsive Politics finds that [McCain has accepted over \\$1 million](#) from the oil and gas industry. Many of McCain's top advisers have lobbied for big oil, which is why he now acts in their best interests, [opposing environmental legislation](#) and

alternative energy plans. And that's exactly why we want everyone to know The REAL McCain.

Watch the video: http://bravenewfilms.org/watch/24684188/42047?utm_source=rgemail

McCain is desperate to distance himself from President Bush. But according to the [Center for American Progress Action Fund](#), McCain has received millions in donations from the same oil, coal, nuclear, chemical, utility, and auto companies that helped the Bush administration create its energy plan—a plan that has raised gasoline to \$4 a gallon.

Here's what you can do: [Send this e-mail](#) to ten of your friends, family members, and colleagues. Tell them to send it on to ten people they know. [And don't forget to Digg it!](#) Spread the word that McCain is taking major contributions from wealthy oil executives like Bob Mosbacher, just one of the special interest leaders he'll be addressing in Houston.

Make sure everyone gets to know The REAL McCain, [subscribe to Brave New Films today](#).

Yours,

Robert Greenwald

and the Brave New Team

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MCCAIN AND HAGEE, OBAMA AND WRIGHT

Frank Rich on target. Ed Herman

The New York Times May 4, 2008 Sunday Late Edition - Final

“The All-White Elephant in the Room,” By FRANK RICH

SECTION: Section WK; Column 0; Editorial Desk; OP-ED COLUMNIST; Pg. 12

BORED by those endless replays of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright? If so, go directly to YouTube, search for "John Hagee Roman Church Hitler," and be recharged by a fresh jolt of clerical jive.

What you'll find is a white televangelist, the Rev. John Hagee, lecturing in front of an enormous diorama. Wielding a pointer, he pokes at the image of a woman with Pamela Anderson-sized breasts, her hand raising a golden chalice. The woman is "the Great Whore," Mr. Hagee explains, and she is drinking "the blood of the Jewish people." That's because the Great Whore represents "the Roman Church," which, in his view, has thirsted for Jewish blood throughout history, from the Crusades to the Holocaust.

Mr. Hagee is not a fringe kook but the pastor of a Texas megachurch. On Feb. 27, he stood with John McCain and endorsed him over the religious conservatives' favorite, Mike Huckabee, who was then still in the race.

Are we really to believe that neither Mr. McCain nor his camp knew anything then about Mr. Hagee's views? This particular YouTube video -- far from the only one -- was posted on Jan. 1, nearly two months before the Hagee-McCain press conference. Mr. Hagee appears on multiple religious networks, including twice daily on the largest, Trinity Broadcasting, which reaches 75 million homes. Any 12-year-old with a laptop could have vetted this preacher in 30 seconds, tops.

Since then, Mr. McCain has been shocked to learn that his clerical ally has made many other outrageous statements. Mr. Hagee, it's true, did not blame the American government for concocting AIDS. But he did say that God created Hurricane Katrina to punish New Orleans for its sins, particularly a scheduled "homosexual parade there on the Monday that Katrina came."

Mr. Hagee didn't make that claim in obscure circumstances, either. He broadcast it on one of America's most widely heard radio programs, "Fresh Air" on NPR, back in September 2006. He reaffirmed it in a radio interview less than two weeks ago. Only after a reporter asked Mr. McCain about this Katrina homily on April 24 did the candidate brand it as "nonsense" and the preacher retract it.

Mr. McCain says he does not endorse any of Mr. Hagee's calumnies, any more than Barack Obama endorses Mr. Wright's. But those who try to give Mr. McCain a pass for his embrace of a problematic preacher have a thin case. It boils down to this: Mr. McCain was not a parishioner for 20 years at Mr. Hagee's church.

That defense implies, incorrectly, that Mr. McCain was a passive recipient of this bigot's endorsement. In fact, by his own account, Mr. McCain sought out Mr. Hagee, who is perhaps best known for trying to drum up a pre-emptive "holy war" with Iran. (This preacher's rantings may tell us more about Mr. McCain's policy views than Mr. Wright's tell us about Mr. Obama's.) Even after Mr. Hagee's Catholic bashing bubbled up in the mainstream media, Mr. McCain still did not reject and denounce him, as Mr. Obama did an unsolicited endorser, Louis Farrakhan, at the urging of Tim Russert and Hillary Clinton. Mr. McCain instead told George Stephanopoulos two Sundays ago that while he condemns any "anti-anything" remarks by Mr. Hagee, he is still "glad to have his endorsement."

I wonder if Mr. McCain would have given the same answer had Mr. Stephanopoulos confronted him with the graphic video of the pastor in full "Great Whore" glory. But Mr. McCain didn't have to fear so rude a transgression.

Mr. Hagee's videos have never had the same circulation on television as Mr. Wright's. A sonorous white preacher spouting venom just doesn't have the telegenic zing of a theatrical black man.

Perhaps that's why virtually no one has rebroadcast the highly relevant prototype for Mr. Wright's fiery claim that 9/11 was America's chickens "coming home to roost." That would be the Sept. 13, 2001, televised exchange between Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, who blamed the attacks on America's abortionists, feminists, gays and A.C.L.U. lawyers. (Mr. Wright blamed the attacks on America's foreign policy.) Had that video re-emerged in the frenzied cable-news rotation, Mr. McCain might have been asked to explain why he no longer calls these preachers "agents of intolerance" and chose to cozy up to Mr. Falwell by speaking at his Liberty University in 2006.

None of this is to say that two wacky white preachers make a Wright right. It is entirely fair for any voter to weigh Mr. Obama's long relationship with his pastor in assessing his fitness for office. It is also fair to weigh Mr. Obama's judgment in handling this personal and political crisis as it has repeatedly boiled over. But whatever that verdict, it is disingenuous to pretend that there isn't a double standard operating here. If we're to judge black candidates on their most controversial associates -- and how quickly, sternly and completely they disown them -- we must judge white politicians by the same yardstick.

When Rudy Giuliani, still a viable candidate, successfully courted Pat Robertson for an endorsement last year, few replayed Mr. Robertson's greatest past insanities. Among them is his best-selling 1991 tome, "The New World Order," which peddled some of the same old dark conspiracy theories about "European bankers" (who just happened to be named Warburg, Schiff and Rothschild) that Mr. Farrakhan has trafficked in. Nor was Mr. Giuliani ever seriously pressed to explain why his cronies on the payroll at Giuliani Partners included a priest barred from the ministry by his Long Island diocese in 2002 following allegations of sexual abuse. Much as Mr. Wright officiated at the Obamas' wedding, so this priest officiated at (one of) Mr. Giuliani's. Did you even hear about it?

There is not just a double standard for black and white politicians at play in too much of the news media and political establishment, but there is also a glaring double standard for our political parties. The Clintons and Mr. Obama are always held accountable for their racial stands, as they should be, but the elephant in the room of our politics is rarely acknowledged: In the 21st century, the so-called party of Lincoln does not have a single African-American among its collective 247 senators and representatives in Washington. Yes, there are appointees like Clarence Thomas and Condi Rice, but, as we learned during the Mark Foley scandal, even gay men may hold more G.O.P. positions of power than blacks.

A near half-century after the civil rights acts of the 1960s, this is quite an achievement. Yet the holier-than-thou politicians and pundits on the right passing shrill moral judgment over every Democratic racial skirmish are almost never asked to confront or even acknowledge the racial dysfunction in their own house. In our mainstream political culture, this de facto apartheid is simply accepted as an intractable given, unworthy of notice, and just too embarrassing to mention aloud in polite Beltway company. Those who dare are instantly accused of "political correctness" or "reverse racism."

An all-white Congressional delegation doesn't happen by accident. It's the legacy of race cards that have been dealt since the birth of the Southern strategy in the Nixon era. No one knows this better than Mr. McCain, whose own adopted daughter of color was the subject of a vicious smear in his party's South Carolina primary of 2000.

This year Mr. McCain has called for a respectful (i.e., non-race-baiting) campaign and has gone so far as to criticize (ineffectually) North Carolina's Republican Party for running a Wright-demonizing ad in that state's current primary. Mr. McCain has been posing (awkwardly) with black people in his tour of "forgotten" America. Speaking of Katrina in New Orleans, he promised that "never again" would a federal recovery effort be botched on so grand a scale.

This is all surely sincere, and a big improvement over Mitt Romney's dreams of his father marching with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Up to a point. Here, too, there's a double standard. Mr. McCain is graded on a curve because the G.O.P. bar is set so low. But at a time when the latest Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll shows that President Bush is an even greater drag on his popularity than Mr. Wright is on Mr. Obama's, Mr. McCain's New Orleans visit is more about the self-interested politics of distancing himself from Mr. Bush than the recalibration of policy.

Mr. McCain took his party's stingier line on Katrina aid and twice opposed an independent commission to investigate the failed government response. Asked on his tour what should happen to the Ninth Ward now, he called for "a conversation" about whether anyone should "rebuild it, tear it down, you know, whatever it is." Whatever, whenever, never mind.

For all this primary season's obsession with the single (and declining) demographic of white working-class men in Rust Belt states, America is changing rapidly across all racial, generational and ethnic lines. The Census Bureau announced last week that half the country's population growth since 2000 is due to Hispanics, another group

understandably alienated from the G.O.P.

Anyone who does the math knows that America is on track to become a white-minority nation in three to four decades. Yet if there's any coherent message to be gleaned from the hypocrisy whipped up by Hurricane Jeremiah, it's that this nation's perennially promised candid conversation on race has yet to begin.

MORE ON MCCAIN AND MEDIA

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/what-john-mccain-told-me_b_100183.html

Second Update: [McCain and Me: Hero Worship Dies Hard \(But When It Does...\)](#)

Update: Through a spokesperson with the colorful name Tucker Bounds, McCain has denied telling me he didn't vote for Bush in 2000. "It's not true," Bounds [told the Washington Post](#), "and I ask you to consider the source."

My sentiments exactly -- because John McCain has a long history of issuing heartfelt denials of things that were actually true.

He denied ever talking with John Kerry about his leaving the GOP to be Kerry's '04 running mate -- then later [admitted he had](#), insisting: "Everybody knows that I had a conversation."

He denied admitting that he didn't know much about economics, even though he'd said exactly that [to the Wall Street Journal](#). And the [Boston Globe](#). And the [Baltimore Sun](#).

He denied ever having asked for a budget earmark for Arizona, [even though he had](#). On the record.

He denied that he'd ever had a meeting with comely lobbyist Vicki Iseman and her client Lowell Paxon, [even though he had](#). And had admitted it [in a legal deposition](#).

And those are just the outright denials. He's also repeatedly tried to spin away statements he regretted making (see: 100-year war, Iraq was a war for oil, etc.).

So, yes, by all means, "consider the source."

Original Post: At a dinner party in Los Angeles not long after the 2000 election, I was talking to a man and his wife, both prominent Republicans. The conversation soon turned to the new president. "I didn't vote for George Bush" the man confessed. "I didn't either," his wife added. Their names: John and Cindy McCain (Cindy told me she had cast a write-in vote for her husband).

The fact that this man was so angry at what George Bush had done to him, and at what Bush represented for their party, that he did not even vote for him in 2000 shows just how far he has fallen since then in his hunger for the presidency. By abandoning his core principles and embracing Bush -- both literally and metaphorically -- he has morphed into an older and crankier version of the man he couldn't stomach voting for in 2000.

McCain's fall has been Shakespearean -- and really hard to watch for those, like myself, who so admired and even loved him. His nobility and his true reformer years have given way to pandering in the service of ambition.

But a large portion of the electorate hasn't noticed the Shakespearean fall. How else to explain The 28/48 Disconnect -- wherein only a die-hard 28 percent of voters [still approve of Bush](#), but [48 percent say](#) they'd vote for McCain, who is running on the "more of the same" platform?

The thing is, these voters clearly still think of McCain as the maverick of 2000, a straight shooter who would never seek the embrace of a man he couldn't bring himself to vote for, nor accept the regular counsel of Karl Rove, the man behind the vile, race-baiting attacks on him during the 2000 campaign.

And the main reason for The 28/48 Disconnect is the mainstream media's ongoing membership in the John McCain Protection Society. They too continue to party -- and report on McCain -- like it's 1999.

Look at the slack they cut him after his infamous stroll through a Baghdad market was [revealed as an utter sham](#). James Frey was eviscerated for far less. Or the slack they cut him after his [repeated confusion of Sunni and Shia](#). Or the slack they cut him when his promise to run a "respectful" campaign ran aground on his [sleazy attempt to connect Barack Obama and Hamas](#).

Every time McCain screws up, the media jump all over themselves to make it better, as if grandpa had said something embarrassing at the dinner table and it needed to be smoothed over as quickly as possible.

The latest example came late last week when the Straight Talk Express hit an oil slick and skidded off the road. Click [here for the blow by blow](#), but, in short, McCain implied that Iraq is essentially a war for oil, then tried to take it back, explaining that he was actually talking about the first Gulf War, then, when pressed, denied that he was actually talking about the first Gulf War.

And, by and large, the media gave him a pass. [Chris Matthews called](#) the original war for oil comment "an astounding development," but most everyone else was too busy picking over the bones of the Wright/Obama carcass to give it much play.

Interestingly, McCain's mental meltdown over the reason we invaded Iraq was prompted by a comment from a McCain supporter who said he hoped a group called "Swift Boats for McCain" would be formed to help McCain in the campaign.

The gentleman needn't worry. The group already exists. It's called "the media." And they are very well-funded, and highly motivated. The Swift Boat Media for McCain are, for instance, going to make sure that we hear a lot more about the nuances of Obama's decision to not wear a flag pin on his lapel than about McCain's ideas on a little thing like the Iraq war.

Witness the reaction to McCain's repeated declarations that he thinks we should be in Iraq for "100 years." The DNC had the gall to [use McCain's own words in an ad, causing McCain to flip out](#): "My friends, it's a direct falsification," he said, "and I'm sorry that political campaigns have to deteriorate in this fashion."

So, to review: using a candidate's own words against him is off limits, but making disgraceful insinuations about Hamas and Obama isn't.

But instead of nailing McCain on the "deterioration" of his ethics -- to say nothing of his logic and reasoning -- the Swift Boat Media dutifully repeated his talking points, as in this [AP lede claiming, without reservation, that the DNC ad](#) "falsely suggests John McCain wants a 100-year war in Iraq."

McCain tries to wriggle away from his "100 year" comment by saying that he wasn't talking about a hundred year war, but a very long

term commitment of U.S. troops, like we have in Germany or South Korea. Maybe so, but the last time I looked no one was blowing up American soldiers in Wiesbaden.

The *New Yorker's* Rick Hertzberg, a writer who hasn't drunk the It's Still 2000 Kool-Aid, [sums up McCain's Strangelovian "vision"](#): "McCain wants to stay in Iraq until no more Americans are getting killed, no matter how long it takes and how many Americans get killed achieving that goal -- that is, the goal of not getting any more Americans killed. And once that goal is achieved, we'll stay."

The John McCain the media fell in love with in 2000 isn't on the ballot in 2008. And the proof has all but jumped up and grabbed the media by the throat: the ring-kiss of ["agents of intolerance" Falwell and Robertson](#); the decision to [make permanent](#) tax cuts he [twice voted against, saying](#) he could not "in good conscience support" them; the campaign finance reformer replaced with a candidate whose [campaign is run by lobbyists](#) and fueled by [loophole rides on his wife's jet](#); the hard-line stance against torture replaced by a [vote allowing waterboarding](#); the guarded-by-a-battalion stroll through [the "safe" neighborhoods of Baghdad](#); the [use of Karl Rove as an advisor](#)... and the embracing of the disastrous policies of a man he so abhorred he would not vote for him.

What will it take for the Swift Boat Media to realize that John McCain jumped the shark a long, long time ago?

February 12, 2008

John McCain and the Neocon Resurgence

The neoconservatives, who have never been right about anything, have lately suffered more knockdowns than "The Bull of the Pampas," Luis Firpo, did in his first round with Jack Dempsey in 1923, but hopes for their demise as a political force have unfortunately proven to be premature. Part of the problem is that the blog and counterculture world where the neocons have been eviscerated is not the world of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, Fox News, or the *Wall Street Journal*, where they continue to set the pace on the editorial and opinion pages. The presence of two neoconservatives, William Kristol and David Brooks, at the ostensibly liberal *New York Times* is a testimony to their resiliency, as is the *Times'* endorsement of John McCain as the Republican presidential nominee. Beyond the media, the neocons have deeply embedded themselves in the political system and continue to play a major role in the campaigns of the various presidential candidates of both parties, frequently as foreign policy advisers.

With the withdrawal of Romney, Washington pundits unanimously agree that John McCain will defeat Huckabee to become the Republican nominee. McCain is the neocons' anointed choice for president of the United States, and has been so for many years. He was their candidate when he ran against George Bush in the primaries in 2000 and again when he announced his candidacy for 2008. When McCain's campaign underachieved last summer and it appeared that Rudy Giuliani would be the Republican candidate, many leading neocons, including Norman Podhoretz and Daniel Pipes, joined the *New Yorker's* campaign. Now that Giuliani has withdrawn, they will presumably return home again, rejoining Robert Kagan and James Woolsey, both of whom have been with McCain since early 2007. That McCain is no traditional conservative if measured by his views on cultural and fiscal issues matters not at all, because the Israel-and-empire-fixated neocons consider such issues unimportant. Nor is there any concern for McCain's hypocrisy on other issues, such as torture, where he publicly opposed the administration before agreeing to a White House-supported bill that permitted waterboarding and other practices.

With McCain as their nominee, the Republicans will be running on a "fear" platform, emphasizing the threat posed by terrorism. Mitt Romney withdrew citing the necessity of winning in Iraq and not surrendering to the terrorists, implying that such pusillanimity is precisely what one might expect from the Democrats if the Republicans do not present a united front. McCain's subsequent speech at the American Conservative Union (ACU) convention provided more of the same, calling for action against Iran and victory over Islamic extremists. On the following day, President Bush called for Republican unity and made essentially the same points about terrorists. It is clear that the Republicans will be the party of war and that they will emphasize their ability to deal with international threats better than the Democrats.

The neocons and McCain do not disguise their belief that Iran must be dealt with by military means because diplomacy has failed. Indeed, one might well regard de-fanging Iran as their principal foreign policy objective, one that they share with the White House and the Israeli government. John McCain's sentiment toward Iran is unrelentingly belligerent. One only has to recall his rendition of the Beach Boys' song "Barbara Ann" substituting the words "Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" to realize that the ideologically driven Arizona Republican is not interested in talk if cruise missiles are available. McCain's version of "straight talk" on Iran suggests that he lacks the basic good judgment the American public would presumably like to see in a president.

McCain's speech before the ACU revealed that he supports the U.S. presence in Iraq until there is a "victory," that he will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon, and that he is committed to fighting against "Islamic extremists" for as long as it takes to defeat them. In an earlier speech in New Hampshire he stated that it would be fine with him if the U.S. were to remain in Iraq for one hundred years. In Florida, shortly before that state's primary, McCain declared that there would be "other wars" in America's future, but that "we will never surrender." There should be no confusion about McCain's intentions, which are basically all war all the time. He has also declared that the United States has a right to deal with "rogue states" as it sees fit, and he has thrown down a challenge to Russia, insisting that Moscow should be expelled from the G-8 group of industrialized nations and that NATO should be expanded to include the Ukraine and Georgia, which the Kremlin would see as a direct threat. Ronald Reagan, who won the first Cold War, would undoubtedly be horrified by McCain's intention to start a second one.

Many observers in Washington believe that McCain intends to pull a shrewd maneuver to enhance his electability by packaging himself as someone who can end the partisan divide in Congress. McCain knows that the Republican Party's conservative base, which mistrusts him, has nowhere else to go in national elections. Able to take them for granted, he is already speaking of reaching out to moderates, liberals, and traditional Democrats. He has worked closely with the Democrats on many occasions, and his voting record on many issues is decidedly non-Republican. He co-sponsored the McCain-Feingold legislation on political contributions and collaborated on the stillborn McCain-Kennedy amnesty plan for illegal immigrants, both of which were opposed by the Republican Party's conservative base.

To turn himself into a one-man bridge over troubled political waters, McCain will reportedly insist that his vice president be Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a lifelong Democrat who currently calls himself an independent. Lieberman endorsed McCain at the end of December and campaigned actively on his behalf in New Hampshire, Michigan, South Carolina, and Florida. In Florida he spoke to numerous Jewish groups around Miami, emphasizing McCain's support for Israel. Photos of McCain campaigning frequently feature Lieberman standing in the background. Joe Lieberman is also no social conservative, so he and McCain should get along just fine on most issues. Sources in Washington believe that Lieberman will conveniently become a Republican to gain the GOP's acceptance.

Joe Lieberman denies that he would even consider the position of vice president with his friend McCain, but one should note that an initial denial of one's true intentions has become routine in American politics. As the self-described "conscience of the Senate," Lieberman has voted a straight Democratic Party line on most issues, though he is most definitely a hard-liner when it comes to Israel and the Middle East. When he ran against Ned Lamont for the Senate in Connecticut in 2006 he denounced the latter as weak on Israeli security, saying that Lamont had surrounded himself with "people who were ... explicitly against Israel." Lieberman, like McCain, would like to attack Iran. He was the co-sponsor of the Kyl-Lieberman amendment that passed Congress in September 2007. Kyl-Lieberman declared that Iran is killing American soldiers and led to the naming of part of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist group, which would permit military action against it without any deliberation by Congress. Lieberman is opposed to negotiating with the Iranians, claiming that it is akin to a firefighter negotiating with an arsonist. He favors military action to prevent an Iranian nuclear weapons program and asserts that Iran is already at war with the U.S.

Americans who have opposed the Iraq war and who are against another war with Iran should begin to worry, because a McCain-Lieberman ticket would be very electable. It would be promoted as a demonstration that bipartisanship can work in Washington, and it would draw support from many independents and from a Democratic base that would welcome its relatively moderate positions on social issues and immigration. Many would be attracted by its lack of close ties to the religious Right. McCain-Lieberman would also play the fear card extremely well, rallying both the Republican base, which is largely willing to ignore social issues when it comes to national security, and conservative Democrats. This would likely complete America's transition to a militarized state and would empower terrorists everywhere, resulting in constant warfare and bankrupting the United States in fairly short order. Such is the price of the neocon new world order.

END OF MCCAIN NEWSLETTER #2