

George W. Bush's Lie-bury

As minor African despots are dragged before the International Criminal Court, ex-President George W. Bush remains free, despite having committed major war crimes like torture and aggressive war. With the blood of hundreds of thousands on his hands, he will now celebrate his presidential library, Coleen Rowley notes.

By Coleen Rowley

A recent news report asking "Where is Dubya?" found the former president totally unengaged, spending his time painting strange portraits of himself in the bath. In what seems to be a weird personal attempt to emulate Winston Churchill (but more reminiscent of Marie Antoinette playing shepherdess in her last days), the former president calmly ignores the sickening truth that slowly but surely emerges about his administration's crimes as well as recent UN demands that U.S. leaders be charged with war crimes.

Ben Emmerson, the lead special investigator, recently described to gathered UN dignitaries a setting of self-approved legal immunity among U.S. and UK national leaders. He called the two governments' standing policy, "A policy of de facto immunity for public officials who engaged in acts of torture, rendition and secret detention, and their superiors and political masters who authorized these acts."

So the hard task will clearly fall to George W. Bush's soon-to-open Presidential Center to re-fashion history and create the legacy of the great "Decider" who, with neo-con help, so longed to be a "war president" that he decided to illegally and recklessly launch a "war of choice" (otherwise known as the illegal and catastrophic war of aggression upon Iraq based on false premises).

The new Bush Library will undoubtedly also credit their namesake with the idea of initiating the "global war on a tactic (GWOT)" that, despite a recent bipartisan congressional bill to end it, teeters on the verge of being made permanent. Bush's successor having cleverly re-named it, then stretched and expanded GWOT to so many new countries that it now has come full circle under rhetoric of "keeping *us* safe" from foreign enemies that it now targets *U.S.* citizens for what could possibly be indefinite detention and assassination and includes the *U.S.* as part of its ever-widening global battlefield.

(Though to be fair, Bush already had established those principles with his military detention of alleged terrorist and U.S. citizen Jose Padilla, arrested and imprisoned on U.S. soil as an "enemy combatant.")

Whoever said we can't look back must not have reckoned with the fact and force of such a Presidential Lie-Bury! Luckily some Dallas residents have sprung to the task of putting forward an honest "People's Response" to the deceptive refashioning of this unethical and illegal history. Here's an excerpt from their press release:

"When the George W. Bush Library and Policy Institute is dedicated on April 25, 2013, at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas, protestors will be there to demand the ex-president be held accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violations of U.S. and international law. President Barack Obama, former U.S. presidents and many heads of state are expected to attend the dedication ceremony. "

A coalition of local, state and national peace and justice groups organizing the protest is inviting people from across the country to participate in an event called "The People's Response." According to Leslie Harris of CODEPINK Greater Dallas, "The illegal invasion of a sovereign nation was declared a 'supreme crime' at the Nuremberg trials. That Bush and his advisors walk free today is unconscionable; there must be accountability so history won't repeat itself."

Reverend Bill McElvaney, professor emeritus, Perkins School of Theology at SMU, an early opponent of locating the George W. Bush Institute on campus, said, "The invasion of Iraq, and the approval of torture are violations of the United Methodist Social Principles, thus placing Southern Methodist University in contradiction to its own heritage as an institution of The United Methodist Church."

I plan to participate for a lot of reasons but most fundamentally, from having spent 24 years as an FBI agent working in the criminal justice system always and inherently focused on looking backward to solve the worst crimes, I understand the true purpose of Obama's ridiculous "only look forward" cover-up was to continue, make worse and even expand upon Bush's illegal wars, war crimes and war profiteering.

It's hard to put this into words better than author and researcher, "War Is A Crime" and "Let's Try Democracy" activist David Swanson as he explains "Why I'm Attending the Dedication of the Bush Lie Bury:"

"On April 25th the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum and General Rehabilitation Project will be dedicated in Dallas, Texas. It takes up 23 acres at Southern Methodist University, 23 acres that neither humanity nor any other species may ever reclaim for anything decent or good. I'll be there, joining in the people's response (<http://ThePeoplesResponse.org>) with those who fear that this library will amount to a Lie Bury.

" 'The BushCenter's surrounding native Texaslandscape,' the center's PR office says, 'including trees from the Bush family's Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, continues President and Mrs. Bush's longstanding commitment to land and water conservation and energy efficiency.' Does it, now? Is that what you recall? Bush the environmentalist?

"Well, maybe you and I remember things differently, but do we have a major educational institution that will effectively repeat our corrections of the Lie Bury's claims for decades to come? According to the Lie Bury, Bush was and is an education leader, saving our schools by turning them into test-taking factories and getting unqualified military officers to run them. This is something to be proud of, we're told.

"The Lie Bury's annual report shows Bush with the Dalai Lama. No blood is anywhere to be seen. The Lie Bury's website has a photo of a smiling George W. golfing for war. 'The Warrior Open,' it explains, 'is a competitive 36-hole golf tournament that takes place over two days every fall in theDallasarea. The event honorsU.S.service members wounded in the global war on terror.'

"Now, I actually know of some soldiers wounded in what they call by that name who don't feel honored by Bush's golfing, just as millions of Iraqis living as refugees within or outside of the nation he destroyed find Bush's liberty to walk outdoors, much less golf for the glory of war, offensive. But none of them has a quarter-billion dollar 'center' from which to spread the gospel of history as it actually happened – as it happened to its losers, to those water-boarded, shot in the face, or otherwise liberated by Bush and his subordinates.

"When Bush lied about excuses to start a war onIraq– as with everything else he did – he did so incompetently. As a result, a majority of Americans in the most recent polls, still say he lied to start the war. But few grasp the lesson as it should be applied to wars launched by more competent liars. And memory of Bush's lies is fading, buried under forgetfulness, avoidance, misdirection, revisionism, a mythical 'surge' success, and a radically inaccurate understanding of what our government did toIraq.

"I won't be attending the Lie Bury ceremony for vengeance, but in hopes of ridding our culture of the vengeance promoted by Bush. He based a foreign policy and a domestic stripping away of rights on the thirst for vengeance – even if misdirected vengeance. We have a responsibility to establish that we will not support that approach going forward.

"Bush himself is relevant only as his treatment can deter future crimes and abuses. No one should wish Bush or any other human being ill. In fact, we should strive to understand him, as it will help us understand others who behave as he

has. Bush, of course, knew what he was doing when he tried to launch a war while pretending a war would be his last resort, suggesting harebrained schemes to get the war going to Tony Blair. Bush knew the basic facts. He knew he was killing a lot of people for no good reason. He was not so much factually clueless as morally clueless.

“For Bush, as for many other people, killing human beings in wars exists outside the realm of morality. Morality is the area of abortions, gay marriage, shoplifting, fornicating, or discriminating. Remember when Bush said that a singer’s suggestion that he didn’t care about black people was the worst moment in his presidency? Racism may be understood by Bush as a question of morality. Mass murder not so much. Bush’s mother remarked that war deaths were not worthy of troubling her beautiful mind. Asked why he’d lied about Iraqi weapons, George W. Bush asked what difference it made. Well, 1.4 million dead bodies, but who’s counting?

“I won’t be attending the Lie Bury because Bush’s successor is an improvement. On the contrary, our failure to hold Bush accountable has predictably led to his successor being significantly worse in matters of abusing presidential power. And not just predictably, but predicted. When we used to demand Bush’s impeachment, people would accuse us of disliking him or his political party. No, we’d say, if he isn’t held accountable, future presidents will be worse, and it won’t matter from which party they come.

“I helped draft about 70 articles of impeachment against Bush, from which Congressman Dennis Kucinich selected 35 and introduced them. I later looked through those 35 and found 27 that applied to President Barack Obama, even though his own innovations in abusive behavior weren’t on the list. Bush’s lying Congress into war (not that Congress wasn’t eager to play along) is actually a standard to aspire to now. When Obama went to war in Libya, against the will of Congress, he avoided even bothering to involve the first branch of our government.

“When Bush locked people up or tortured them to death, he kept it as secret as he could. Obama – despite radically expanding secrecy powers and persecuting whistleblowers – does most of his wrongdoing wide out in the open. Warrantless spying is openly acknowledged policy. Imprisonment without trial is ‘law.’ Torture is a policy choice, and the choice these days is to outsource it. Murder is, however, the new torture. The CIA calls it ‘cleaner.’ I picture Bush’s recent paintings of himself washing off whatever filth his mind is aware he carries.

“Obama runs through a list of men, women, and children to murder on Tuesdays, picks some, and has them murdered. We don’t know this because of a whistleblower

or a journalist. We know this because the White House wanted us to know it, and to know it before the election. Think about that. We moved from the pre-insanity state we were in circa 1999 to an age in which presidents want us to know they murder people.

“That was primarily the work of George W. Bush, and every single person who yawned, who looked away, who cheered, who was too busy, who said ‘it’s more important to elect a new president than to keep presidential powers in check,’ or who said ‘impeachment would be traumatic’ – as if this isn’t.

“InGuatemala a prosecutor has charged a former dictator with genocide, remarking, ‘It’s sending the most important message of the rule of law – that nobody is above the law.’ It’s not so many years ago that theUnited Stateshad the decency at least to hypocritically propose that standard to the world. Now, we advance the standard of lawlessness, of ‘looking forward, not backward.’

“That’s why the people need to respond to the lie bury. Ann Wright is going to be there. And Diane Wilson. Robert Jensen and Ray McGovern are coming. So are Lon Burnam and Bill McElvaney and Debra Sweet. Hadi Jawad and Leah Bolger and Marjorie Cohn and Kathy Kelly are coming. As are Coleen Rowley and Bill Moyer and Jacob David George and Medea Benjamin and Chas Jacquier and Drums Not Guns.

“Also coming will be many familiar faces from the days when we used to protest in Crawford. When we’d go into that one restaurant at the intersection in Crawford, there’d be a cardboard cut-out Dubya standing there. We picked him up and stood him in the corner, facing the corner. We said he needed to stay there until he understood what he’d done wrong. In reality, of course, he was cardboard. The lesson was for everyone else in the restaurant. It’s a lesson that still needs to be taught.”

Please join us inDallas!

Coleen Rowley, a former FBI special agent and legal counsel in the Minneapolis field office, wrote a “whistleblower” memo in May 2002 and testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee about some of the FBI’s pre-9/11 failures. She retired in 2004 and is now a writer and speaker.

Obama’s Retreat to Neocon Strategies

After signaling a willingness last year to undertake serious negotiations on Iran and Syria, President Obama appears to have slid back into the default U.S. position of “tough-guy-ism.” Obama’s retreat to that neocon-favored posture

could bring chaos to the Mideast, warns Adil E. Shamoo.

By Adil E. Shamoo

With Syria and Iran, President Barack Obama faces getting mired in two wars that could set the entire Middle East aflame, and perhaps the rest of the Islamic world, too.

Such an outcome would be in part due to Mr. Obama's Middle Eastern policy, and the willingness of the current U.S. Congress to support Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's aggressive posture toward Iran. The lobbying effort in the U.S. by hard-line, pro-Israel interests is a pivotal factor here we cannot ignore.

In his first presidential visit to Israel last week, Mr. Obama gave every assurance to its citizens that the United States will stand by Israel. Fair enough, but which Israel? Since Mr. Obama became president, Israeli settlers on the West Bank increased from 500,000 to 560,000.

Israel is creating new political realities on the ground those voting settlers will never leave their homes. Can Mr. Obama guarantee that if peace negotiations limp along for another decade, or two, the number of settlers won't reach a million? Let us be frank, Netanyahu and his supporters have used the negotiations to create more settlements while Palestinians are increasingly reduced to living in tiny, non-state enclaves on the West Bank, under the tutelage of Israel.

Simply put, after four decades of negotiations, Palestine (as a viable political entity) is no longer feasible.

Consider that Mr. Obama was not invited to address the Knesset (Parliament) perchance he might be booed by Israeli legislators. In 2011, Mr. Netanyahu received 29 standing ovations from members of our own Congress as he denounced the U.S. President's Middle East peace initiative. Mr. Obama instead spoke to an audience of 2,000 young Israelis in Jerusalem.

While reports point out that attendees were handpicked to ensure maximum audience support, he should know that the broader Israeli youth do not favor a two-state solution, nor do they believe in equal rights for Palestinians. According to a 2010 survey by the Jewish organization B'nai B'rith, only 40 percent of Israelis ages 18 to 24 favored a Palestinian state. Moreover, it will take several decades for these young Israelis to have any real influence on the Israeli leadership.

The fact is, that with the help of U.S. lobbyists and the neoconservative wing of the Republican Party, Mr. Netanyahu outsmarted Mr. Obama by changing the conversation three years ago from furthering peace negotiations with the Palestinians to setting red lines on Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program.

Mr. Obama dutifully changed his own policy from containment to preventing Iran from ever having nuclear weapons based upon these arbitrary red lines. In last week's visit to Israel, Obama emphasized that if Iran does not comply with U.S. and Israeli demands, then all options are on the table (read: a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities).

Never mind that Israel for decades has maintained over 200 nuclear bombs, and, scholars generally agree, has contemplated using them. Iran, for its own part, signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, while Israel never did.

Furthermore, America and Israel are becoming isolated from the world community due to their policies, which are increasingly perceived to be unfair and inhumane where the Palestinians are concerned. This isolation was demonstrated last year in the United Nations General Assembly's vote for the Palestinian right to non-voting member status at the U.N. With all the U.S. allies around the world, the U.S. marshaled only seven out of 190 members to vote against granting the Palestinians this status.

Indications are that Mr. Obama does not desire sending troops overseas if wars in Iran and Syria become a reality. Yet he seems convinced that drones and missiles might achieve our national security goals with less consequence. If it sounds familiar, it is because the same neoconservative voices were advising Washington politicians and saturating the media prior to Iraq invasion ten years ago.

Now, the war hawks are busy convincing the press and Washington's agenda-setters that a humanitarian crisis in Syria demands our intervention. These same neoconservatives showed no such concern when the post-invasion killing in Iraq far exceeded the numbers in Syria. We call this selective morality.

If we get engaged in two new wars, hatred toward America will skyrocket among people of the Middle East and Islamic countries. The war will spread quickly from Syria and Iran to Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, and Egypt. The blow back to Western countries and especially to the U.S, will be immense. Let us hope that cooler heads in Congress and among Mr. Obama's trusted advisers, will prevail.

Adil E. Shamoo is an associate fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies, a senior analyst for Foreign Policy in Focus, and the author of *Equal Worth When Humanity Will Have Peace*. He can be reached at ashamoo@som.umaryland.edu.

Obsessing Too Much on 'Terror'

After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. intelligence community threw extraordinary resources into the hunt for al-Qaeda terrorists, so much so that some experts fear a possible new blindness to other threats, a dilemma addressed by ex-CIA analyst Paul R. Pillar.

By Paul R. Pillar

A common current piece of advice to U.S. intelligence agencies, coming from many places including reportedly from official advisory panels, is that those agencies ought to de-emphasize whacking terrorists and redirect some of that effort to traditional functions of collecting and analyzing intelligence, lest the United States be blind-sided by something in China or the Middle East or elsewhere.

Just about everyone who comments on what U.S. intelligence agencies ought to be doing seems to be saying something along that line; we don't need to turn to any official panels with privileged access to hear that. The message has an appealing, back-to-basics ring to it, as well as having the appeal of sounding forward-looking. And the message is substantively sound; intelligence agencies ought indeed to focus on the core missions of collecting and analyzing information about the world outside the United States.

Sound though this particular message is, it is another illustration of publicly expressed conventional wisdom about intelligence that exists as a sort of parallel universe, separate from what the intelligence agencies are actually doing, of which, given the classified nature of that activity, the public commentators know little.

Without access to the real thing, purveyors of conventional wisdom feed on each other's output until the conventional wisdom gets treated as if it were hard fact. When the conventional wisdom says something about how the intelligence community has been devoting too much attention to one topic and ought to shift attention to something else, this is really much more a reflection of where the public commentary itself has been devoting attention.

The same is true of what counts as a "surprise"; this often has less to do with what intelligence agencies were or were not telling their official customers behind closed doors than with what the public had or had not been conditioned to expect, based on public statements and discussion. Amid pronouncements coming

from the parallel universe, several realities about the actual world of intelligence ought to be noted.

One is that disproportionate public attention to certain subjects or activities does not reflect the actual allocation within the agencies of resources and priorities. What is controversial or receives much public attention does not necessarily seize the attention of senior managers who have to deal with Congress. But that is not true of the large majority of the work force, most of which has always been focused on the core missions of collecting and analyzing intelligence, or directly supporting those who do.

Another reality is that the swing of the pendulum of attention from one topic to another in the actual world of intelligence is not nearly as exaggerated as swings in the parallel universe. This gives rise to myths, such as that during the Cold War the intelligence community devoted nearly all of its attention to matters involving the Soviet Union.

Yet another reality is that the intelligence community devotes much effort on its own to keeping its priorities well-grounded and up-to-date, applying the dual criteria of what is of long-term importance to the country and what the policy-makers of the day most want to hear about. Here the mistaken myth is that it takes kicks in the pants from outsiders such as advisory panels to make priorities up to date.

It is true, and here is where the two otherwise parallel universes intersect, that some of what the intelligence agencies do in reallocating resources is in response to shifting public demands. The agencies certainly expanded work on terrorism greatly after 9/11.

This was not because the nature of the terrorist threat had suddenly changed (it didn't) or because before 9/11 the intelligence community did not understand that threat (it did). It was because with the sudden and enormous change in the public mood and public concerns, intelligence managers had to show Congress and others on the outside that they were beefing up work in this area.

What does not get nearly as much public attention in such circumstances is what trade-offs are involved in any such reallocation. With resources always limited, responding to public demands on one thing may increase the chance of genuine surprise in the future on something else, something that inhabitants of the parallel universe probably are paying scant attention to today.

Paul R. Pillar, in his 28 years at the Central Intelligence Agency, rose to be one of the agency's top analysts. He is now a visiting professor at Georgetown University for security studies. (This article first appeared as [a blog post](#) at

Reaping the Seeds of Nuke Tests

The warnings about fallout from nuclear tests six decades ago often noted that cancers from the radiation would probably not begin appearing in large numbers for many years. But that time is now and medical experts are wondering whether the surge in some cancers is a result, writes John LaForge.

By John LaForge

Back in the 1950s and 1960s, the Atomic Energy Commission doused the entire United States with thyroid cancer-causing iodine-131, and 300 other radioisotopes, by exploding atomic and hydrogen bombs above ground. To protect the dirty, secretive, militarized bomb-building industry, the government chose to warn the photographic film industry about the radioactive fallout patterns, but not the general public.

In 1951, the Eastman Kodak Company had threatened a federal lawsuit over the nuclear fallout that was fogging its bulk film shipments. Film was not packed in bubble wrap then, but in corn stalks that were sometimes being fallout-contaminated.

By agreeing to warn Kodak, etc., the AEC and the bomb program avoided the public uproar, and the bomb testing program's possible cancellation, that a lawsuit would have precipitated. The settlement kept the deadliness of the fallout hidden from farmers and the public, even though the government well knew that fallout endangered all the people it was supposed to be defending.

This staggering revelation was heralded on Sept. 30, 1997, in the New York Times headline, "U.S. Warned Film Plants, Not Public, About Nuclear Fallout." The article began, "[W]hile the Government reassured the public that there was no health threat from atmospheric nuclear tests" The fallout's radioactive iodine-131 delivered thyroid doses to virtually all 160 million people in the U.S. at the time.

According to the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER) in Takoma Park, Maryland, which discovered the cover-up, children were especially affected and received higher doses because they generally consumed more milk than adults and since their thyroids are smaller and growing more rapidly. The "milk pathway" moves radioiodine from grass, to cows, to milk with extreme

efficiency, a fact known to the government as early as 1951.

Ingested iodine-131 concentrates in the thyroid gland where it can cause cancer. Average doses to children averaged between 6 and 14 rad, with some as high as 112 rad. Prior to 1997, the government claimed that thyroid doses to children were 15 to 70 times less.

Every Corner of the U.S.

My friend Steve O'Neil of Duluth, Minnesota, who was born in 1951, has been a public spirited political activist all of his adult life, an advocate for the homeless and a campaigner against the causes of homelessness.

As a St. Louis County Commissioner in his third term, Steve made headlines this month by announcing that he has been attacked by an aggressive form of thyroid cancer. Steve is not alone in his affliction, more than 60,000 thyroid cancers will be spotted this year in the U.S. Tens of thousands of them have been caused by our government's nuclear weapons establishment.

The National Cancer Institute disclosed in 1997 that some 75,000 thyroid cancer cases can be expected in the U.S. from just 90, out of a total of 235, above-ground bomb tests and that 10 percent of them will be fatal. That year, the NCI said, about 70 percent of the thyroid cancers caused by iodine-131 fallout from those 90 tests had not yet been diagnosed but would appear years or decades later.

The 14-year NCI study also said the 90 bomb blasts produced more than 100 times the radioactive iodine-131 than the government had earlier claimed. The NCI estimated that they dispersed "about 150 million curies of iodine-131, mainly in the years 1952, 1953, 1955, and 1957."

The study reported that all 160 million people in the country at the time were exposed to the iodine-131 (the only isotope out of more than 300 that were dispersed by the bomb blasts that it studied). Children under 15, like Steve O'Neil and all the Baby Boomers, were particularly at risk. High doses of fallout were spread nation-wide. Wind patterns and local rainfall caused "hot spots" from Montana and Idaho to South Dakota, Minnesota, Missouri and beyond.

In 1962, according to IEER, officials in Utah and Minnesota diverted possibly contaminated milk from the market when iodine-131 levels exceeded radiation guidelines set by the Federal Radiation Council (FRC). The FRC reacted harshly and declared that it did "not recommend such actions." The FRC also announced that its radiation guidelines should not be applied to bomb test fallout because "any possible health risk which may be associated with exposures even many times above the guide levels would not result in a detectable increase in the

incidence of disease.”

IEER’s scientists condemned this fabulously implausible assurance, writing: “Since thyroid cancers can develop many years after radiation exposure and are therefore not immediately detectable, this reassurance was highly misleading.”

Tip of Cancer Iceberg

The National Cancer Institute’s 1997 study said about 16,000 cases of thyroid cancer were diagnosed in the U.S. annually, and that 1,230 would die from the disease. This estimate turned out to be a gross under-statement.

Today the NCI reports that 60,220 new cases of thyroid cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year, and that 1,850 of them will be fatal. The thyroid cancer “balloon” is with us because the nuclear weapons complex under Presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy attacked the very people it was said to be defending. Yet, it gets worse.

The UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation says that iodine-131 doses comprise only two percent of the overall radiation dose from weapons testing. Ninety-eight percent of our fallout dose is from 300 other isotopes produced by the Bomb.

It is not idle speculation to suggest that the cancer pandemic afflicting the people of the U.S. has been caused by our own government’s deliberately secret and viciously reckless weapons program.

John LaForge works for Nukewatch, a nuclear watchdog group in Wisconsin, edits its Quarterly newsletter, and is syndicated through [PeaceVoice](#).
