

# Harvard's Cowardice on Chelsea Manning

**Exclusive:** In an abject display of intellectual cowardice, Harvard's Kennedy School withdrew a fellowship from Chelsea Manning after hearing protests from accomplices in the war crimes she exposed, reports Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government has shown that it is no profile in courage by withdrawing a visiting fellowship that had been awarded to Chelsea Manning, who served seven years in prison for revealing U.S. war crimes committed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Kennedy School caved in to pressure from people who shared in responsibility for those and other crimes, including former CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell, who resigned his own fellowship in protest and denounced Manning as "a convicted felon and leaker of classified information."

Of course, it is also true that Martin Luther King Jr. was jailed for criminal violations pertaining to his protests against "legal" injustices – as was South Africa's Nelson Mandela. Manning represented perhaps America's quintessential prisoner of conscience of this decade, someone who was severely punished for exposing wrongdoing.

After serving in Iraq as an Army intelligence analyst and witnessing the often-cavalier attitude toward killing Afghans and Iraqis, Manning decided to release thousands of classified documents, including what WikiLeaks labeled the "Collateral Murder" video of a U.S. helicopter gunship mowing down Iraqis and two Reuters journalists on a Baghdad street. Manning's decision was an act of moral courage at a time when American Officialdom was violating a host of international laws with impunity.

Indeed, what was almost as troubling as the war crimes themselves was that virtually no one from the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama was punished for their criminal actions, especially for committing what the Nuremberg Tribunals deemed the "supreme international crime," the crime of "aggressive war."

Bush was allowed to retire to a quiet life as an artist; many of his senior national security officials have gone on to comfy jobs in the corporate and academic worlds; and Obama has already begun to hit the lucrative lecture circuit. But Manning served seven hard years in prison and has now been further humiliated by Harvard's cowardice.

In the explanation of the hasty late-night decision to withdraw Manning's fellowship, the school's dean Douglas Elmendorf wrote, "I see more clearly now that many people view a visiting fellow title as an honorific, so we should weigh that consideration when offering invitations."

### **Dubious Honorees**

So, it's fine to honor the likes of Michael Morell (or for that matter other luminaries such as former Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, the current MSNBC duo of Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski, and President Trump's laughingstock express secretary Sean Spicer) but not a person who demonstrated true moral courage and suffered greatly to expose grave crimes of state.

By the way, Morell was regarded by many of his ex-CIA compatriots as a classic example of a bureaucratic climber with no moral balance.

Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern wrote in 2011 that "Like many senior CIA officials in recent years, Morell's record is checkered, at best. He held key jobs in intelligence analysis over the past decade as the CIA often served as a handmaiden to the war propagandists.

"As for Michael Morell, as with many other successful CIA careerists, his strongest suit seemed to be pleasing his boss and not antagonizing the White House. ... Forgive me if my thinking about loyalty to the facts seems 'obsolete' or 'quaint' or if it seems unfair to expect CIA analysts to put their careers on the line when politicians and ideologues are misleading the nation to war but those were the principles that analysts of my generation tried to uphold."

And, last year after leaving government, Morell put on a display of tough-guy-ism that presumably was meant to win him his coveted job of CIA director under the expected presidency of Hillary Clinton.

On the Charlie Rose show, Morell continued his disdain for international law by calling for the murder of Iranians and Russians inside Syria.

In an interview on Aug. 8, 2016, Morell said he wanted to "make the Iranians pay a price in Syria. ... make the Russians pay a price in Syria."

Rose: "We make them pay the price by killing Russians?"

Morell: "Yeah."

Rose: "And killing Iranians?"

Morell: "Yes ... You don't tell the world about it. ... But you make sure they know it in Moscow and Tehran."

Morell also advocated U.S. military bombing of Syrian government targets as part of achieving “regime change” in Syria.

The fact that everything that Morell was proposing violated international law didn't seem to faze Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. The idea of killing Russians and Iranians inside Syria could be construed as terrorism but even that doesn't raise eyebrows these days, although if some senior Russian or Iranian went on TV to propose killing Americans in, say, Iraq or Afghanistan, to send Washington a message, that would surely draw righteous condemnation.

The notion that the United States has the right to attack the sovereign nation of Syria with the goal of overthrowing its government has been at the heart of the kinds of war crimes that Chelsea Manning helped expose.

Morell, however, appears to have simply inculcated the lawless attitude that prevailed in both the Bush and Obama administrations, in which the U.S. government was a law unto itself, deciding when and where its forces would bomb and kill.

By “honoring” the likes of Morell and “dishonoring” the likes of Manning, Harvard's Kennedy School has sent a clear message regarding how it sees the role of the U.S. government in the world. The school is signaling that it embraces the moral hypocrisy at the core of this attitude and is demonstrating that it can be trusted to train future U.S. government leaders in how to operate outside the norms of civilized behavior.

[For more on Manning's contributions to civilization, see Consortiumnews.com's [“Did Manning Help Avert War in Iran?”](#)]

**Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)).**

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