

New Faces, Same Agenda

Those controlling the political process in Washington owe their allegiance to the interests of wealth & power

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The political firmament shook briefly post-November 7 raising hopes change would follow the Republican's drubbing at the polls and the Democrats regaining control of both houses of Congress for the first time since the GOP sweep in 1994. Presumed new House speaker Nancy Pelosi stopped the tremors making it clear no substantive change will be on the table when when the 110th Congress convenes on January 3. Instead, she announced to those paying attention it'll be business as usual (as it always is) as she intends to work with the president in a spirit of bipartisanship and not be "obstructionist" even though Republicans for past 12 years never returned that courtesy or even made a pretense of doing it.

Pelosi made it clear the Democrat victory will be just another betrayal of the electorate that sent her and the Democrats a strong message it voted for a mandated populist anti-Bush, anti-war agenda it won't get. It's always for the same reason - because those controlling the political process in Washington owe their allegiance to the interests of wealth and power that select and fund them and of which these officials are a part. The Democrat (anti-populist) Leadership Council (DLC) made that position clear when it participated in a November 10 post-election made-for-television spectacle in the Oval Office so the whole world could watch their new congressional leadership line up in a shameless public display of partnering with a criminal enterprise in the White House posing as a legitimate government they've been complicit with all along. Should anyone understanding how things work in Washington have expected anything else?

Politics 101, Washington-style teaches that nothing can be taken on its face, campaign promises are empty and disingenuous, and in the nation's Capitol the criminal class is bipartisan. Pelosi, whose background is one of privilege and not populism, and her leadership collaborators plan on business as usual come January. They intend taking full advantage of their newly empowered status to grab a bigger piece of the political pie without sharing any of it with their constituents beyond a few crumbs that exclude the most important things people voted for - ending the Iraq and Afghan wars of aggression and bringing US forces home, impeaching Bush and Cheney, addressing critically needed social services like health care and public education Republican and DLC Democrat rule have ignored and allowed to deteriorate, restoring our civil liberties, finding and prosecuting everyone involved in the cesspool of rampant endemic corporate and government corruption both parties allowed to go on and that only a few have had to answer for - and that's just for starters.

What about restoring constitutional democracy and the rule of law complete with checks and balances, the separation of powers and our elected officials held accountable to the

public for all their actions and made to face the music when they betray the public trust. What about ending the privatization of the most fundamental element of a democratic process and returning control of it to the people – the electoral process (now corporate run and corrupted) that can only be fair under a system of verifiable paper ballots counted by hand by civil servants unconnected to either party or the corporatocracy that funds and owns them. What about allowing real alternative party candidates the right to run under a system of proportional representation and break the monopoly of a corrupted two-party, winner take all system. What about that and a lot more that a real democracy demands, and the sham one we now have won't allow.

Post-election, we're light years from any of that which was confirmed when the other newly empowered Democrats were also quick to show their shameless deference publicly. They, too, had their Oval Office moment, genuflected obediently for the cameras while there, and pledged their fealty to an unindicted war criminal who's done more harm to the core principles of the country and the welfare of everyone around the world (other than the elitists like themselves) than any former president since Richard Nixon who was forced from office in disgrace. Expect little chance of that for George Bush if the Democrats' disgraceful display of servility indicates what's ahead, which it does unless people wake up and demand the accountability everyone deserves.

New Senate majority whip Richard Durbin showed the public what it's up against. He expressed the victor's spirit of conciliation and complicity saying both sides spoke of "moving forward on an agenda, finding things that we can agree on to start off on the right foot." Incoming Senate majority leader Harry Reid was even clearer than the Illinois senator saying "The only way to move forward is with bipartisanship and openness, and to get some results....and that's what we're going to do." And the man the Wall Street Journal calls "the architect of the Democrats' Senate win," New York Senator and Senator to Tel Aviv Charles Schumer, said in a November 11 Journal interview "If we are seen as just blocking the president, it will not serve us well in 2008."

With acts of this kind of obeisance, any hope the 110th congress will address the key issues people voted for and demand faded like a late autumn sunset. For one thing, Nancy Pelosi said any notion of following through on what a growing majority of the public wants is off the table – impeaching George Bush (87% of participants in an MSNBC online poll still in progress said "yes" to impeachment). Pre-election, incoming House Judiciary Committee chairman John Conyers said that would be a priority for him, but on November 10 he reneged saying "The incoming speaker has said that impeachment is off the table. I am in total agreement with her on this issue: Impeachment is off the table."

The public needs to remind Mr. Conyers how he laid out the grounds for impeachment last December in a detailed 350 page report titled "The Constitution in Crisis: The Downing Street Minutes and Deception, Manipulation, Torture, Retribution and Cover-Ups in the Iraq War" and later updated it to include "illegal domestic surveillance." Now the Michigan Democrat, just reelected to a 22nd term by his constituents, can do no better than say "To be sure, I have substantial concerns about the way this administration has abused its authority, but impeachment would not be good for the American people." Is he saying war crimes, crimes against humanity and the destruction of a democratic republic gone unpunished are good for the people?

In the past, Conyers had a record of being one of the few in Washington remembering who

elected him and supporting their interests. What is this man now thinking in backing off on a crucially important issue with mass public support, and why after over 40 years in the Congress is he willing to renege on his word on a fundamental matter needing resolution before the country can move on? Mr. Conyers has the power to end our “long national nightmare” that will go on unless he does the job the public demands of him - and if he won't, he needs to step aside and let someone else do it.

Just last May in a Washington Post op-ed piece, the Michigan congressman had a different view than now saying a new Congress needs to get answers about whether the “intelligence was mistaken or manipulated in the run-up to the Iraq war (and if) high-ranking (administration) officials approved the use of torture and other cruel and inhumane treatment inflicted upon detainees.” If evidence was found, he indicated these would be potentially impeachable offenses and left no doubt he believes the constitutional law of the land is sacred, and if the president of the United States violated it he must be forced to answer for it like anyone else.

He did violate it, and there's plenty of evidence found to prove it. So why did John Conyers decide not to follow through on the evidence he found as he promised to do. The public needs to remind the congressman of the oath he took and the word he gave and demand he reverse his statement and chalk it up to a case of temporary bad judgment. He'll be forgiven if he does, but damned if not. It now remains to be seen if he's man enough to see his error, say he's ready to do the job he said he would, and be willing to fulfill the public trust with the power entrusted in him.

Conyers has all the evidence he needs in The Downing Street (Memo) Minutes mentioned above and in the title of his report. It refers to the secret 2002 Washington meeting of high level US and British officials when the intelligence claiming justification for the 2003 Iraq war was cooked to fit the policy already decided on by the Bush administration and is clearly stated in so many words. It was smoking gun evidence the president and his close advisors lied to the public to make their fraudulent case for the Iraq war. It had nothing to do with the falsified justification given for it, and that alone is grounds enough for initiating impeachment proceedings.

One of the war-planning co-conspirators practically admitted his guilt when Paul Wolfowitz, then Deputy Secretary of Defense under Donald Rumsfeld and now World Bank president, later gave an interview in Singapore and was asked publicly how it was he and others in Washington decided on WMDs as the reason to go to war. He answered “it was the only thing we all could agree on.”

The new Democrat leadership apparently didn't hear him or bother to read the Downing Street Memo. It also fails to grasp that if Bill Clinton could be nonsensically impeached for lying in a sworn deposition about his sexual proclivities, the present incumbent deserves at least as much for going to war based on lies and murdering 655,000 or more Iraqis and counting plus the many thousands of Americans killed, wounded and to be affected by the war for the rest of their lives along with their families. He and his spurned Republican allies also need to be held to account for six years of wanton abuses of the public trust in all aspects of their agenda from hell still ongoing and unaddressed.

The list is endless and includes waging two illegal wars of naked aggression to supporting and funding the two illegal ones Israel waged over the summer with one still raging below the radar that's murdering defenseless Palestinians daily and that no one is acting to stop. It

includes waging war on the public at home, dismantling or ending essentially needed social services, endangering the economy by a policy of reckless spending, destroying our civil liberties and seizing absolute state control through a power-grab coup d'état the Democrats supported by their votes in the Congress or silence when they could have acted to thwart it with strong public support backing them.

On November 7, the public expressed a powerful sentiment of anger and disgust against a rogue criminal administration, demanding accountability from those they voted for and big change going forward. They won out in spite of already uncovered massive Republican-manipulated voter fraud (again) that was unable to contain the torrent of resentment too great to overcome. In drubbing the Republican congress that Tuesday, voters sent a message they want a new direction that reverses all the harm done by the current one. So far, it hasn't gotten through and unless repeated on the streets, through the mail, in town meetings, on the phone, in emails and all the other ways voters reach their officials, it'll again be ignored by the Democrat leadership, who, like their counterparts, never get it until they awaken the day after and realize they just lost their jobs.

The DLC is already actively collaborating behind the scenes to continue the conflict in Iraq by signing on to whatever altered tactical plan the Baker Commission proposes and is soon to release. Should we have expected anything else from a party that marched shamelessly in lockstep with a Republican administration beginning with Al Gore's pathetic refusal to fight for the office he won in 2000, choosing instead to surrender it meekly to George Bush's Supreme Court appointment as did John Kerry four years later in his show of insouciance in an election even more fraud-laden than the one in 2000. It hardly matters under a system author and political critic Gore Vidal calls our one party state ruled by the Property Party with two wings in a plutocracy, with scarcely a dime's worth of difference between them.

The public is slow reacting and is still hypnotized and basking in the deceptive afterglow of post-election hoopla to realize they've been had again. Instead of celebrating victory unconsummated, what's needed is follow-through to press the demands that will remain unaddressed waiting around for a new bunch of politicians to act on them. Nothing will change in Washington until people understand that bringing in a new set of bums replacing the old ones only guarantees more of the same unless they press their advantage in a very visible and vocal way beyond the voting booth.

Otherwise, the only change guaranteed ahead is none at all, and all they'll have to look forward to is the next electoral round in 2008 when the same charade of a democratic process is repeated on the false pretense it will matter more than it does now. You'd have thought after 12 years in the political wilderness, enough newly inspired Democrats and some of its leaders would have been as aroused as were the revolutionary Republicans with their Contract with America in 1994 that helped them sweep the mid-term elections that year with a promise to "bring to the floor the (ten) bills, each to be given a full and open debate....and fair vote....and be available for public inspection." They delivered as promised, but it was a scam calling for government reform Clinton DLC Democrats went along with and voters fell for not realizing the GOP agenda meant tax cuts for the rich and corporate giants, a dismantling of tort and welfare protection, and cuts in social programs and bedrock social security protection mostly affecting those most in need of them.

So where do we stand now that the celebratory dust has settled and the cold light of another day has dawned. Washington is still enveloped in a Kafkaesque shroud of hellish strangulation combining illegal foreign wars with domestic repression and neglect along with

a guarantee nothing substantive will change beyond a few feel-good bits of tinkering around the edges to fool the public again a new agenda arrived and all is well in the world. The reality is all is hell in the world, and the DLC Democrats intend to continue conspiring with a criminal administration to keep it that way – at least as long as people allow them to get away with it.

Hope springs eternal and eventually there may be a public awakening that the same criminal element is in charge, little has changed nor will it without action outside the voting booth, the illegal Iraq and Afghanistan killing machines go on without end as do the appropriations for them about to get another obscene supplemental off-the-books \$160 billion wasted-on-war tranche of funding diverting desperately needed revenue away from critically neglected social programs Democrats allowed Republicans to slash and burn and now aren't even considering for restoration.

The specter of Patriot Act I and the covertly proposed and stealth piecemeal enacted Patriot II (total police state takeover) Act remain in force as do the just passed Military Commissions Act and revision of the Insurrection Act that makes everyone including US citizens an “enemy combatant” unprotected by habeas or due process and allows the president the right to send “jackboots” to the streets to enforce whatever he says is the law and against anyone he claims without evidence is a threat to national security – aka a terrorist.

That combined with a president claiming the dictatorial right of a “unitary executive” allowing himself, on his self-authorization, to go around the Constitution, Congress and courts in the “interest” of “national security” has transformed a country Lincoln said “was conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal (in a) “government of the people, by the people, (and) for the people into a fascist dictatorship the Democrat leadership is very comfortable with and has no intention of challenging – as long as they're cut in on the spoils which they'll now get a bigger piece of.

These are the same “Democrats” who pledge allegiance to Thomas Jefferson who abhorred war calling it the “greatest scourge of mankind....(swore) eternal hostility against every form of tyranny....(explained) All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent....(and said) Every generation needs a new revolution (to reinvent itself and expunge the sins of the past one).”

If Jefferson were with us now, he'd tell us the sins of the past generation are so enormous and out-of-control and so endanger the republic, at best on life support and fading fast, that never before in the country's history than now is the mother of all revolutions he spoke of needed. The political class in Washington won't respond to his call or even want us to know about it, and it's up to the public to deliver the message in a way those in power can't ignore.

Jefferson would approve explaining how important it is to keep “the spirit of resistance....alive....(that) timid men prefer the calm of despotism....(and that everyone has) certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Jefferson also knew what Ben Franklin meant when he said at the Constitution's birth that we have a Republic if we can keep it. He also knew that if lost, it's for the public to reclaim it from those who took it. It's high time to try. Jefferson and Franklin would approve.

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