

Former CIA Analyst Hits Back Against Neo-Con Witchhunt

Former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analyst and dedicated public servant Larry Johnson has written a response to the *Wall Street Journal* editorial of Sept. 29 called “The CIA Insurgency.” His reply, which is expected to be widely published through the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), states:

“The *Wall Street Journal*’s editorial page today basically equates CIA officer Paul Pillar with Iraqi terrorists who are beheading and blowing up American soldiers. Is there a sewer they will not mine in order to smear decent people? This outrageous and insulting attack on Pillar calls into question how anyone with a desire to be a journalist can affiliate themselves with such a shoddy outfit. It is breathtaking that the *Journal* can combine cravenness with stupidity. I suppose those are the prerequisites to work on the editorial page.

“Not since the Iran Contra affair have we seen such an assault on the intelligence community. In fact the offensive by the Bush Administration against the likes of Valerie Plame and Paul Pillar is unprecedented in the history of the CIA. There were times in the past when analysts faced pressures because the President and his loyal partisans did not want to hear bad news. CIA analyst George Allen, for example, received phone calls during the Vietnam War from Lyndon Johnson and McGeorge Bundy, ordering him to be a team player.

“During the Contra War in Nicaragua, I had the experience of being called a communist sympathizer because my analysis did not back up the Reagan Administration’s rosy scenario that the Central American governments would back us unconditionally against the Sandinistas. Politicians unhappy with intel[ligence] analysis is a natural phenomena. There is an inherent conflict between politicians who believe they can manipulate outcomes, and analysts who are reporting facts and likely scenarios. It happens with Republicans and Democrats.

“However, the attacks on Pillar, in particular, and the community in general go beyond the pale. The message the Administration is sending is unambiguous and frightening: Either provide the President with analysis and conclusions that support his political position or you are the same as the terrorist cowards in Baghdad who are beheading unarmed men. Unfortunately, many journalists appear content to sit idly by while this assault is unfurled. Some factual reporting

would be helpful, for starters. For example, Paul Pillar did not decide unilaterally to write a National Intelligence Estimate. Moreover, Paul has not been skulking around the sewers leaking the conclusions.

“If this President succeeds in cowering the intelligence community into parroting the policy line of the White House, it will set the dangerous precedent for future Presidents. If you don’t have an intelligence community willing to tell a President hard truths and uncomfortable facts, you put the country at risk. This is a security threat we can’t afford.”

The Wall Street Journal’s ‘Security Threat’

The *Wall Street Journal*’s editorial launched exactly this security threat by implying that the U.S. enemy is anyone in the CIA who bucked the Iraq war plans! The *Journal* editorial states: “Congratulations to Porter Goss for being confirmed last week as the new Director of Central Intelligence. We hope he appreciates that he now has two insurgencies to defeat: the one that the CIA is struggling to help put down in Iraq, and the other inside Langley [CIA headquarters] against the Bush Administration.”

The Washington neo-cons ecstatically embraced the *Journal* editorial. Laurie Mylorie, for one, a former advisor to Vice President Cheney when he was Secretary of Defense (and now a cheerleader for Ahmed Chalabi), sent the editorial to her entire “Iraq News” mailing list, which comes out of the neo-con American Enterprise Institute. Mylorie wrote: “The *Wall Street Journal* also makes clear an important point regarding what went wrong in Iraq”—that the CIA pushed using Iraqis inside Iraq to stabilize the country after a U.S. invasion. Therefore, she said, the CIA (not the Office of the Secretary of Defense) is responsible for the “consequences we see today.”

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