

SLYME instead of LYME...

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- *From:* "Cytyzens Agaynst Lyme Cryme" <CALC@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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BUSH REGIME ROTTEN TO THE CORE

By Bill Gallagher

DETROIT -- A storm of anti-war protests and sentiment is sweeping across the nation. Finally, reality and truth are trumping President George W. Bush's lies. Even the perpetual propaganda machine of the corporate media can no longer manufacture consent for Bush's monstrously bad policies and decisions.

A storm of anti-war protests and sentiment is sweeping While most Americans work and struggle with lower wages, a sputtering economy and rising gas prices, Bush still basks in the Texas sun in his long summer of content. He prefers isolation and deliberate disconnection from

the grim evidence of his wholesale failures.

Cindy Sheehan has left the vigil outside Bush's ranch to care for her ailing mother. But others are in her place, reminding the world that Bush will never admit his responsibility for the war in Iraq, its failure and the death of Sheehan's son Casey and more than 1,800 other Americans.

The Busheviks consider Sheehan's witness to the tragedy of the senseless war as an irritant, a PR problem that will fade in time. They've used the usual suspects of right-wing indecency -- Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity -- to do their dirty work. Those who question the war must be silenced at best, or at least discredited and vilified.

The war in Iraq is unwinnable and futile. We can never undo Bush's madness in starting the war and his sheer incompetence in not planning for its aftermath. Nor can we stop the insurgency, the spawning of more terrorists and the instability U.S. military presence has created simply by "staying the course." No matter how and when we exit Iraq, more chaos and bloodshed will follow. The country will fragment and Bush's insane experiment in nation-building will prove a catastrophic failure.

The reasonable move now is to cut our losses, save lives and get the hell out of Iraq in a hurry. Polls show nearly 60 percent of the American people now oppose the war and 63 percent want the troops home by next year.

Bush and his war council will never admit error or acknowledge

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miscalculations. They will continue to send Americans and Iraqis to their deaths as they desperately try to cobble together a political cover plan they'll camouflage as a successful military mission.

Since no one named Bush, Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld or Rove will die in Iraq, they figure they can continue the carnage until about this time next summer, when they'll shift the focus to Iran just in time for the mid-term elections.

Bogged down in Iraq? Just create a new war with a new enemy and our "war president" will use the occasion to keep the GOP in control of both houses of Congress.

Iran, a charter member of the "axis of evil," is perfect for the enemy role. Iran is seeking to develop nuclear materials for power plants, which could conceivably be used for weapons. The Europeans are working diligently to forge a diplomatic solution and get Iran to accept international inspections.

But Bush deplors diplomacy, preferring bullying rhetoric and the threat of force. He horrified the Europeans in his recent remarks about Iran, declaring "all options are on the table" and saying that "we've used force in the recent past to secure our country." Bush's reckless rhetoric damages any hope that moderate Iranians will have any influence at all.

But Karl Rove wants a new war to bolster Republican fortunes. The president's "brain" would like to concentrate on the next election, but Rove's spending much of his time trying to avoid federal prison.

If there is any justice left in our nation, Rove and Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, will soon be indicted on felony charges for their roles in leaking the identity of undercover CIA officer Valerie Plame.

These scum should be charged with treason, but my best guess is that they will face counts of obstruction of justice and lying to FBI agents. The trial will expose the pervasive corruption and ruthlessness of the Bush-Cheney gang, and spur talk of impeachment.

Sworn testimony will show the Busheviks would do anything to protect the lies that led to the war in Iraq. We can only hope the grand jury will look deeply at the motives for outing Valerie Plame and the central roles Bush and Cheney played in the scheme. They should be named as unindicted co-conspirators.

Two prominent figures in the scandal merit far more public attention than they have received so far. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former attorney general John Ashcroft played critical roles in the despicable plot, and the grand jury ought to be reviewing all their actions.

Ashcroft took a deep personal interest in the investigation of Rove, his

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friend and one-time campaign consultant when he was a senator from Missouri.

Murray Waas in the Village Voice details how Ashcroft at first refused to recuse himself from the case involving a friend, a clear conflict of interest, and how troubling that was to professionals in the Justice Department. Then Ashcroft ordered the FBI to brief him on an interview the agents had with Rove.

Waas reports investigators told Ashcroft they believed Rove "withheld important information from them during that FBI interview." That's dynamite stuff. A former senior Justice Department official told Waas, "It would have been a nightmare scenario if Ashcroft let something slip to an aide or someone else they had in common with Rove ... and then word got back to Rove or the White House what investigators were saying about him."

Ashcroft waited five months before he finally recused himself from the Rove investigation and the White House has never explained what led to his abrupt departure.

Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, the ranking minority member of the House Judiciary Committee, has long argued there has been the "appearance of impropriety" in Ashcroft's handling of the investigation. Conyers wants a Justice Department investigation.

"The new information that Ashcroft had not only refused to recuse himself over a period of months, but also was insisting on being personally briefed about a matter implicating his friend, Karl Rove, represents a stunning ethical breach that cries out for an immediate investigation by the department's Office of Professional Responsibility and Inspector General," Conyers urged.

While Ashcroft may have been involved in the cover-up, Condoleezza Rice's fingerprints are all over the plot to out Valerie Plame to punish her husband, former ambassador Joseph Wilson, who exposed the hoax that Saddam Hussein was purchasing enriched uranium from Niger.

Roger Morris, a former National Security Council senior staff member, has done a masterful job of exposing Rice's treachery in a report in "Counterpunch" magazine. Morris argues Rice's "pivotal role" in the scandal has been "missed entirely or deliberately" as the media frenzy focuses on Rove and Libby.

Morris provides an intricate timeline, detailing the events and showing Rice's involvement.

"Rice, by both commission and omission, was integral in perpetrating the original fraud of Niger and then inevitably in the vengeful betrayal of Plame's identity. None of that spilling of secrets for crass political retribution could have gone on without her knowledge and approval, and thus complicity," Morris writes.

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"Little of it could have happened without her participation, if not as a leaker herself, at least with her direction and with her scripting," Morris writes.

Rice's glib one-liner, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud," scared the hell out of people and became a major propaganda lie in the march to war. Joe Wilson's expose exposed Rice as a liar.

When the time came to attempt to discredit Wilson for speaking the truth, Rice was ready. "And when that moment comes, she has the unique authority, and is in a position, to do the deed. Motive, means, opportunity — in the classic terms of prosecution, Rice had them all," Morris writes.

Rice's lies were vital in taking our nation to war, resulting in the death of Casey Sheehan and, tragically, countless more to come. A recent "Time" magazine article is entitled "Can Condi Rice Save Iraq?" The quick answer is no, but you wouldn't know that reading the nauseating, puff-piece profile of the secretary of state. We learn about her exercise schedule, hairdos named for her, her refusal to e-mail because it's impersonal, and what a wonderful intellect and perfectionists she is.

We're informed that Rice's most appealing qualities are "her optimism and belief in the power of America ideals." Not a word about the Plame affair and Rice's role.

Rice held an interview last week for reporters and an editor of The New York Times. Again, no mention of her collusion in peddling Plame's identity.

Will Rice continue to dodge scrutiny?

Rice is a professional sycophant and her public service has been disastrous, but she's usually given a free pass or promotion, no matter how badly she screws up. Roger Morris explains why.

"Her manifest failures in the fateful months before 9/11 in meeting the principal responsibilities of the National Security Adviser — the sheer incompetence and shallowness that left so much intelligence uncoordinated, so much neglected or misunderstood — should have been enough to have her run from public office long ago, of course, were it not for her hold on this tragically flawed president, and her deplorable immunity amid the chronic political cowardice of both Democrats and the media," according to Morris.

With a record of failure, incompetence and treachery, what are Condi Rice's future prospects? Why, of course, the Republicans want her to become president.

Bill Gallagher, a Peabody Award winner, is a former Niagara Falls city councilman

who now covers Detroit for Fox2 News.

His e-mail address is gallaghernewsman@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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