

OPINIONS

Just Who Exactly Is Weak on National Security?

By Alon Barlevy, PhD

For over three decades, the Republicans have been trying to create the perception that they are the party of national security, while the Democrats would sell us out to the enemy. The reality, of course, is the exact opposite of the Republicans' illusion. While Democrats want to spend money on our troops, Republicans want to

all over the world. With the situation in Iraq being so bleak, military recruitment is seriously down. In fact, the military was unable to reach its recruitment goals for the month of May, even after they lowered their recruitment quotas by 17%.

The Republicans' deception and hypocrisy reached a pinnacle in June when Karl Rove claimed that, "Conservatives saw the savagery of 9/11 in the attacks and prepared for war; liberals saw the savagery of

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Take, for example, the war in Iraq. Instead of spending money on adequate armor to protect our troops, this administration has given no-bid contracts worth billions of dollars to Halliburton, a company Dick Cheney used to head. In fact, the war in Iraq has been so profitable for Halliburton that the company jumped from the 37th largest defense contractor in 2000, to the sixth largest in 2004. And what has the American Taxpayer received from Halliburton in return? Millions of dollars in services that were not rendered, or even worse, some money has gone unaccounted!!

Halliburton is not the only example of Republicans selling out our national security. San Diego Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham, a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, was caught receiving a \$700K payoff from a defense contractor, MZM Inc. In exchange, Cunningham helped MZM secure \$250 million in no-bid contracts.

The war in Iraq has dealt a severe blow to our national security. At a cost of \$1 billion and 15 dead soldiers per week, our military is stretched so thin it cannot effectively fight the war against al Qaida. Bin Laden is free to plan terrorist attacks

the 9/11 attacks and wanted to prepare indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers." Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. On September 14, 2001, the House of Representatives voted 420 to 1 (with 204 Democrats voting yea) "to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States."

A couple of weeks after making the divisive statement, the world discovered that Karl Rove committed an act of treason by revealing the identity of an undercover CIA agent in order to settle political scores with her husband, Ambassador Joe Wilson. In 1982 Ronald Reagan signed a law making it a felony to divulge the identities of covert government agents, as this would put their lives, as well as the lives of their contacts, at risk. Rather than punish Rove, Republicans are making excuses for him, using nonsense talking points such as, "Rove did not violate the law, because he did not mention the agent by name." How absurd!

It is now time for the Democrats to portray themselves as the party for national security.

Alon Barlevy, PhD., is President, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

Text of Article

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