



A compilation of articles and information to help you talk with your neighbors about today's political news and events, and to take an active part in bringing positive change.

A Twice-Monthly Newsletter Issue No 1 – July, 2005

Iraq and terrorism
Which came first? Will we be safer at home if we leave Iraq, or if we stay? How do we best "fight" terrorism? Some thoughts after London from General Wesley Clark.
Page 1-2

A letter from Julie
We need to talk with our friends, relatives, neighbors and co-workers about politics. Take a cue from Julie.
Page 2-4



November special election
Several progressive organizations have decided on their stance on the various initiatives. Find out here which is which.
Page 4

Supreme Court



Let your senators know how you feel. The new members could take us in a new direction.
MoveOn has the information.

In unity is strength
Check out your many opportunities for activities with other progressives and Democrats right here in Orange County. We have the links you need.
www.ocgrassroots.com/

Meetups
We meetup regularly on the second Tuesday in Irvine and the fourth Thursday in Costa Mesa. Please join us!



Bush War Strategy Needs To Adapt

Al-Qaeda Has Changed; Bush Strategy Also Needs To Shift

by Wesley K. Clark in U.S.A. Today July 10, 2005

As the follow-up reports emerge from the strikes on the London transit system, it's not too early to begin drawing the implications for our own security efforts.

In the first place, whatever the merits of the war in Iraq, it should be clear that we still face a threat at home. Already there have been concerns that some terrorists have left Iraq to return to Europe. Moreover, Islamic anger about the U.S. actions in Iraq, as well as the continuing conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, feeds terrorist recruiting worldwide.

But al-Qaeda has evolved since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001.

Relentless pressure by the CIA, Special Forces and many other national intelligence and police efforts has made the old, centralized structure of al-Qaeda unworkable.

And we need to keep up the pressure. But al-Qaeda's new threat is decentralized. Thursday's attacks in London have all the earmarks of such a "franchise" operation, locally planned and resourced with relatively modest means, emulating al-Qaeda without the vulnerabilities of centralized resourcing and direction. Preventing attacks probably can't be accomplished by the administration's preference for taking out "state sponsors." And it's going to be very

difficult to employ military means. National intelligence efforts, special police activities and local community policing efforts, which focus on identifying and targeting terrorist individuals and organizations, are required.

Defeat the ideology

But fighting terrorism at home isn't just a matter of "killing terrorists." Terrorists aren't born that way. They are created by their interaction with their surroundings. To win this war, we must defeat the ideology of terrorism, depriving angry young people of their ability to justify their hateful actions in the name of Allah.

This will require not only strong Islamic condemnation of terrorists and their acts, but also a winning dialogue within Islam to defeat Koranic interpretations seeking to justify the use of force against innocent people.

We need to encourage "moderates" in Islam to debate, to proselytize and to win over potential terrorists. They are the only ones who can do it.

In the meantime, attention and resources must protect not just the airlines but also U.S. mass transit, rail and other infrastructure. Yet almost four years after 9/11, plans are late and resources lacking.

The latest example: directing the Department of Homeland Security to submit a national strategy for the protection of U.S. transportation by April 1, 2005. The strategy still hasn't been delivered.

Look to civilians

And we are long overdue in forming a volunteer civil defense effort that would not only strengthen our security but also give Americans an opportunity to contribute. Volunteers would be recruited to serve part time on an unpaid basis. They would be trained in emergency response, security procedures and assist in a terrorist incident. By extending full-time emergency and response skills into every neighborhood, it would provide an "official" channel for education, warning and communications within each community.

In addition, the London attacks remind us how much more devastating even decentralized terrorist strikes could be were they to have employed biological, chemical or radiological weapons. The most profound threat we face is a nuclear weapon in the hands of terrorists. And yet, despite the president's call to "prevent the worst people from getting the worst weapons," efforts to halt the proliferation of weapons have received short shrift. The latest example has been the administration's failure at the recent review conference to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The United States should also intensify efforts to end the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, and bring increased resourcing to the control of Russian fissile materials. In addition, we should be working to develop and implement a verifiable biological weapons treaty and strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The United States will win the war on terror when we bring to bear all the elements in our powers -- not just our military might, civilian workforce and diplomatic skills, but also the power to persuade our allies in general and those in the Muslim community specifically to engage the culture of hate and terror and change it to reflect the best in all of us.

Both here at home and in the global community, there can be no spectators in winning the war against terror.



Retired General Wesley K. Clark is a former Democratic presidential candidate and Supreme Allied commander of NATO.

Find this article at
http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2005-07-10-london-clark_x.htm

Find this article also at
<http://www.realclearpolitics.com>
 At site, click on title:
Bush War Strategy Needs To Adapt.

A Letter from Julie Colombero

During a recent hearing which aired on my new favorite channel, C-Span, an interesting exchange took place between Senator Robert Byrd and Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. For me, it was a very symbolic moment, symbolizing the people standing up to abusive power. In response to Rumsfeld's arrogant and condescending answers regarding Iraq, Senator Robert Byrd asked out loud, "how do you respond to a sneer?"

During the same hearing, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) told Rumsfeld, "I'm here to tell you, sir in the most patriotic state that I can imagine, people are beginning to question. And I don't think it's a blip on the radar screen."

I am pleased to see that for the moment, the American public is slowly waking up out its political stupor and asking, finally, what is going on in Iraq. This is how we respond to the sneer of our government officials. We pay attention. We ask questions. We demand answers. We stop electing people who send our friends and family to war based on lies.

After listening to Rumsfeld and watching the current administration at work for the past 4 ½ years, I'm reminded of one of the most horrifying villains on television: the Borg as seen on the '90's hit series, Star Trek: The Next Generation. Devoid of individuality and linked to one another with one mind, the Borg's sole purpose is to assimilate others into their collective consciousness and to destroy any who oppose it. Its mantra is "Resistance is futile. You will comply."

Borg-like, the current administration, works relentlessly to undermine any who get in its way. It lies. It attacks.

It ignores. It side steps. Sometimes it even, well, obstructs.

One key way the administration works to achieve its ruthless goals is to keep the public unaware and uninformed.

These Are Our Leaders? --President George W. Bush lied about the reason to invade Iraq. He lied to Congress. He lied to the American people. Worst of all, he lied and continues to lie to military personnel who risk their lives daily in Iraq and elsewhere. Everyone by now has heard about the Downing Street Memo which describes how Bush and team fixed facts to support their policy to invade Iraq. Bob Woodward in his book, **Plan of Attack** also mentions how Bush's goal was regime change and not WMD (2004 paperback edition, page 119). Bush's recent pep talk to the awaking American public strived to blur the lines between the 9/11 attacks and rationale for invading Iraq. He mentioned the attacks of 9/11 numerous times as if it had anything to do with our reason for invading Iraq.

Vice President Dick Cheney recently told the American public that the Iraqi insurgency was "in its last throes." That same week, as described in the Los Angeles Times (and as seen on C-Span) Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and senior U.S. military leaders made clear they believe that US forces face a long road in Iraq." Army Gen. John P. Abizaid, the top American Commander in the Persian Gulf, said the insurgency is about the same as it was six months ago..." (Los Angeles Times, June 24th) Rumsfeld shared that we may be in Iraq up to 12 years.

White House advisor Karl Rove recently said "Conservatives saw the savagery of 9/11 in the attacks and prepared for war. Liberals saw the savagery of the 9/11 attacks and wanted to prepare

indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers." Guess he forgot that Congressional Democrats were 100% behind the president regarding Afghanistan.

You're Banished-- House Democrats, led by Rep. John Conyers, recently held a hearing regarding the Downing Street memos. In clear obstructionist fashion, House Republicans refused to let the hearing take place in the Capitol Building; at the last minute, they changed their mind but forced the hearing to take place in the basement. Key members of Congress and the witnesses testifying are all squashed together in a tiny room.

Put A Lid On It--House Judiciary Committee Chairman, Republican Congressman Sensenbrenner, illegally shut down Patriot Act hearings on Friday, June 10. The hearings were designed to allow witnesses testify to the abuses caused by the Patriot Act. Not liking what he heard, Sensenbrenner staff shut off witness' microphones and the Chairman abruptly ended the session without the customary and required-by-law request to do so.

The News Has Been Cancelled--Also available on C-Span is a riveting hearing about media bias and how the American public is in fact not receiving real news. This hearing was held in response mainly to the sheer silence of the American media when news of Downing Street first leaked. If you think that the press feeds us daily diets of Run-away brides, celebrity scandals and chili-laden fingers because this is what they think we want to hear, think again. There appears to be a focused effort by the mainstream press to limit what we see.
http://www.c-spanstore.org/shop/index.php?main_page=product_video_info&products_id=186879-1

Columbia University's School of Journalism website shows how a few major corporations (Disney, Viacom, Times Warner, Murdoch's News, Bertlesmann of Germany, and General Electric's NBC) control the media, and therefore the message, in the U.S. today.
<http://www.cjr.org/tools/owners/>
In 1983 50 corporations controlled most of the US media; today, there are less than a dozen. See
<http://www.corporations.org/media/>

Goodbye Elmo and Charlie Rose--The GOP recently planned to drastically reduce the budget of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting which funds NPR, and PBS shows like Sesame Street, scores of educational programs and legitimate news. The GOP has been concerned that programming has not been conservative enough and so, under the guise of reducing the deficit, they planned to snuff out up to 46% percent of the budget this year and completely eliminate it within two years. Public outcry was felt so hard in Washington, that they scaled back the cuts to only 25%. Regardless, numerous small town community stations will still lose their funding and will now need to shut down completely. Meanwhile, the CPB, created to be a non-political entity, has now selected an ex-GOP Chairperson as its president.

According to broadcast journalist, and multiple award winner Bill Moyers, "An unconscious people, an indoctrinated people, a people fed only on partisan information and opinion that confirm their own bias, a people made morbidly obese in mind and spirit by the junk food of propaganda, is less inclined to put up a fight, to ask questions and be skeptical. That kind of orthodoxy can kill a democracy — or worse." Moyers has long been under attack by the Republican leadership of the CPB as he continually speaks truth to power.

Letter from Julie, continued.

READ MOYERS' SPEECH.

<http://www.freepress.net/news/8120>

Don't Say A Word--On his first day in office, Bush reinstated the "Global Gag" rule. "Called the "gag" rule because it stifles free speech and public debate on abortion-related issues, the policy forces a cruel choice on foreign non-government organizations: accept U.S. assistance to provide essential health services - but with restrictions that may jeopardize the health of many patients - or reject the policy and lose vital U.S. funds, contraceptive supplies and technical assistance. Family planning advocate research shows the gag rule is eroding family planning and reproductive health services in developing countries. Almost 20 million unsafe abortions occur annually, almost all in developing countries, according to estimates of the World Health Organization." See www.globalgagrule.org.



November 2005 Special Election Guide

Prop 73 - Threatening teen safety: NO.

Parental notification laws like this one threaten teen safety because they delay teens from seeking safe, professional medical care.

Prop 74 - Attacking school teachers: NO

This measure, which requires teachers to wait five years instead of two before they are eligible for tenure, is an attempt to deflect attention from the real problems facing our public school system.

Prop 75 - Paycheck deception: NO

Californians have rejected this initiative in the past, and they should do so again. Plain and simple, it is an attempt to handicap unfairly those organizations

Stifling Scientists--In February of this year, the American Association for the Advancement of Science posted an article stating that "The voice of science is being stifled in the Bush administration, with fewer scientists heard in policy discussions and money for research and advanced training being cut, according to panelists at a national science meeting. Some scientists...feel pressured to change study conclusions that don't support policy positions."

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=20300>

Stifling All of Us--White House policy, as described in the Capitol Hill publication, *The Hill*, is to ban "American citizens from taxpayer-funded public forums on the basis of their political beliefs" (April 7, 2005 page 16); hence the President's carefully planned, artfully choreographed public appearances in which all who attend cheer and

that give working families a voice in the political process that affects them.

Prop 76 - Gutting school funding: NO

Aims to give the Governor new powers to single-handedly slash state funding, while gutting the voter-approved education funding requirements in Proposition 98. Poorly written, it could also deprive cities and counties of hundreds of millions of dollars for police, firefighters, healthcare and social service programs.

Prop 77 - Redistricting power grab: NO

With all of the problems our state is currently facing, this initiative is merely a distraction. Redistricting should only be done in connection with the next Census, and only then should we decide how that process should unfold.

Prop 78 - False prescription drug plan: NO

The big problem with this initiative is that it is strictly voluntary, leaving it up to the giant drug companies to decide whether to offer seniors and the working

all who dissent are removed. Senate Republicans recently came close to eliminating the filibuster, yet another attempt to squash dissent from the opposition. New York Times reporter, Judith Miller was jailed today for refusing to reveal confidential sources of a story she never even published.

Quote from George Washington's Farewell Address: "Promote then as an object of primary importance, Institutions for the general profusion of knowledge. In the proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion be enlightened." Let's stand up to the Borg. It's time.

Thanks for paying attention.

(Julie sends these letters out to a wide circle of friends, relatives and co-workers, and invites you to use any or all of the letter in your own email and correspondence.)

poor cheaper prescription drugs. We doubt that the drug companies will always do the right thing and look out for the interests of their consumers.

Prop 79 - Cheaper prescription drugs: YES

Supported by seniors and consumer groups, this initiative would make it mandatory for drug companies to provide low-income residents with cheaper prescription drugs, or risk being barred from state Medi-Cal contracts.

Prop 80 - Blackout avoidance: YES

A response to the deregulation disaster that brought us the energy crisis of the late 1990s, this measure aims to bring stability and reliability back to California's electricity grid.

It will prevent the kind of Enron-style market manipulation that led to rolling blackouts and skyrocketing electricity bills, and further commits California to increased reliance on renewable energy sources.

<http://www.speakoutca.org/info/props-2005.html>