

## Senate Must Not Capitulate To Blackmail on Goss Nomination

by Edward Spannaus

Were the Senate to go along with the Administration's provocative nomination of Rep. Porter Goss (R-Fla.) for CIA Director, it would mark a cowardly capitulation to the stonewalling of any investigation of the crimes of Vice President Dick Cheney and his cronies in the Bush Administration. The Administration's obstruction has been aided greatly by the Republican leadership of key Congressional oversight committees, and in this, no one has exceeded the role played by Porter Goss, as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Goss has blocked any investigation of three critical subject-areas clearly falling within his jurisdiction:

- The fabrication of intelligence on Iraq's weapons programs, under pressure from Cheney and other Administration officials, in order to justify the invasion of Iraq;
- The illegal disclosure by White House officials, of the identity of CIA covert operative Valerie Plame, in an effort to discredit her husband, former Ambassador Joe Wilson, who had debunked the fable that Saddam Hussein was trying to buy uranium "yellowcake" ore from Niger; and
- The abuse and torture of prisoners in Afghanistan, Iraq, and in secret detention centers operated by the CIA and the Pentagon, and apparently done at the behest of military and civilian intelligence officials.

### 'Show Me the Dress . . .'

Exemplary of Goss's obstructionism and his disregard for Congress's Constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight of the Executive Branch, is the following incident:

Last Fall, calls were mounting for a Congressional investigation of the leaking of Valerie Plame's identity—which was a matter of deep concern, and anger, from CIA officers

who justifiably believed that the leak, especially under the circumstances when Plame had been operating overseas and undercover on investigations of weapons of mass destruction, put her life, and the lives of her sources and contacts, in danger.

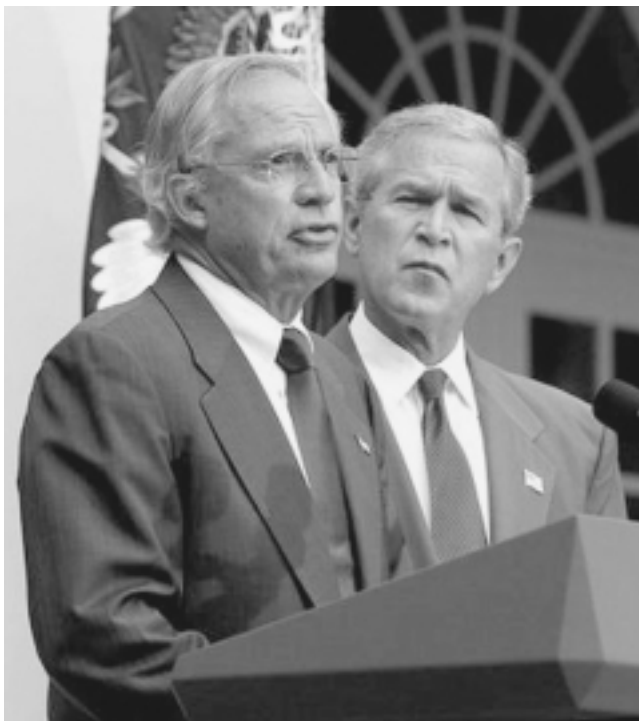
In an Oct. 3, 2003 interview with the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, Goss declared he had no evidence that the uproar over the Plame leak was anything more than a product of "wild and unsubstantiated allegations, which are being obviously piled on by partisan politics during an election year."

Goss said, "I haven't seen any evidence" that there was a "willful" violation of Federal law, but he said he would act if he did have such evidence—and then he laid out his standard of evidence:

"Somebody sends me a blue dress and some DNA, I'll have an investigation," Goss announced, in a clear reference to the contrived Monica Lewinsky scandal which led to the impeachment proceedings against former President Clinton—in which Goss voted for impeachment.

### 'Cheney's Cat's-Paw'

Goss has been in Congress for 12 years, and has chaired the House Intelligence Committee for the past eight. Well before being elected to Congress, he had served in the CIA operations directorate for almost a decade, and was an Army intelligence officer before that, also reportedly working with the CIA. For most of his time in Congress, Goss was considered a CIA loyalist, but this changed dramatically in recent months, when Goss joined in the Administration's efforts to blame the CIA for the "intelligence failure" around the 9/11 attacks. Many observers date Goss's about-face, to the June 3 announcement that the then-Director of Central Intelligence,



*Porter Goss with President Bush at the White House Rose Garden, after the President nominated him to be the director of the CIA, Aug. 10. It's a purely political move, and would have a disastrous impact on the intelligence capabilities of the nation.*

George Tenet, was intending to resign, which accelerated Goss's own, none-too-subtle, campaign to replace Tenet as DCI.

Later in June, after Goss's committee issued a blistering broadside against the CIA and particularly its Directorate of Operations, Tenet took the unusual step of publicly responding to Goss, saying he was "deeply disappointed" at the committee attacks, and warning against political pressure, which can "create a chilling environment in which analysts are hesitant to make tough calls."

Many sources, inside and outside of the intelligence community, say that Goss has become particularly close to Vice President Cheney. They say that it was at Cheney's behest, that Goss initially opposed the creation of an independent commission to investigate 9/11, and then, when the Administration was forced to give in, Goss insisted on strict limitations on its investigative powers.

In the July 16 *EIR*, we reprinted a column by 27-year CIA veteran Ray McGovern, who wrote already at that time: "There is, thankfully, a remnant of CIA professionals who still put objective analysis above political correctness and career advancement. Just when they thought there were no indignities left for them to suffer, they are shuddering again at press reports that Rep. Porter Goss (R-Fla.) may soon be their new boss."

McGovern said that Goss's appointment as CIA director

"would be the ultimate in politicization," explaining that Goss "has long shown himself to be under the spell of Vice President Dick Cheney."

In recent days, it has been widely reported that Goss had been planning to retire in 2002, but that he was encouraged to stay on by Dick Cheney. And a *New York Times* report cited unnamed Congressional Democrats as saying that "their impression was that Mr. Goss was unwilling to pursue matters that could cause him problems with the vice-president's office."

### **Other CIA Veterans React**

The reaction to Goss's nomination has been especially strong among a number of retired CIA officials. Retired Adm. Stansfield Turner, who was DCI in the late 1970s, called the nomination "a bad day for the CIA," and charged that Goss was chosen simply "to help George Bush win votes in Florida." "This is the worst appointment that's ever been made to the office of Director of Central Intelligence, because that's an office that needs to be kept above partisan politics," Turner said.

Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson was quoted as saying, in an interview with UPI's Richard Sale: "There's one thing Goss really didn't do for the past several years—he didn't chair the House Intelligence Committee, in spite of what his resumé claims. Instead, he did the dead man's float."

Former CIA counter-terrorism chief Vincent Cannistraro agreed: "Goss has never been very distinguished, but he's protected. He's a Bush loyalist and has been in the forefront of those who have tried to place the major blame for the 9/11 attacks on the Agency."

Sources still serving in the intelligence community told UPI's Sale, that Goss and other Bush loyalists are ignoring the degree of internal opposition within the CIA to using bogus claims about Iraqi WMD, such as the Niger yellowcake claim. "Goss took no stand at all, provided no support" for those in the Agency opposing these fraudulent intelligence claims, says one former CIA operative.

"This whole appointment is a cheap political trick," said Judith Yaphe, a former top CIA analyst. "One of the recommendations of the [9/11] Commission is that no political appointee be made Director. But this is so clearly political. If Goss isn't a political appointee, than I don't know what is." "This will do nothing but cause more disarray at Langley," Yaphe predicted.

### **Attacks on Kerry**

After Goss's name had been floated in June as a possible nominee, there were warnings by leading Senate Democrats, and even by some Republicans such as Sen. Pat Roberts (Kan.), the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, that Bush should not nominate someone with such partisan political credentials. Nevertheless, in a deliberate political provocation, clearly intended to boost his flagging election cam-

paign, Bush has gone ahead and done just that.

This is in spite of—or perhaps because of—Goss’s acting as a GOP spokesman in attacking Democratic Presidential nominee John Kerry, including his delivering the official Republican response to a Kerry speech on June 1, and attacking Kerry in a speech on the House floor as recently as June 23.

Goss’s recent attacks on Kerry were not his first. During the revival of the Ollie North/Contra drug-running scandal in 1996, Goss singled out Kerry for criticism, claiming that Kerry “had conducted quite an expensive investigation and came up with absolutely no evidence” of drug trafficking by the Contra networks. In fact, Kerry’s Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Drugs and Law Enforcement found, in its own words, that “there was substantial evidence of drug smuggling through war zones on the part of individual Contras, Contra suppliers, Contra pilots, mercenaries who worked with the Contras, and Contra supporters throughout the region.”

Kerry’s thoroughly documented bombshell report was issued in April 1989, and was met with thundering silence and a media blackout.

## **The Cleland Treatment**

What changed between June, when the White House pulled back on Goss’s nomination, and August? According to a number of accounts, the White House was deeply concerned about polling data showing that Kerry “had closed the gap with Bush on the handling of terrorism and was slightly ahead as fit to be commander in chief.” Something had to be done to reassert Bush’s leadership in the war on terrorism, and the calculation was that by nominating Goss, the White House could put Democrats in a bind: If they opposed the nomination, Bush and Cheney could accuse them of obstructing the war on terrorism.

The *New York Times* noted the obvious: that Democrats fear a replay of what was done to then-Senator Max Cleland of Georgia in 2002, when Republican operatives conducted a vicious smear campaign against the Vietnam veteran, a triple-amputee, by twisting his opposition to the Administration’s version of the Homeland Security bill, to portray him as an ally of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. Cleland was defeated at the polls.

Thus, at present, many Senate Democrats are indicating that Goss may be bloodied up during his confirmation hearings—now scheduled to start in early September—but that ultimately, he will be confirmed.

This would be a serious blunder, signaling the willingness of Senate Democrats to submit to such disgusting blackmail, rather than to fight for truth and the vital interests of the nation. It would represent a capitulation to the Nixon-style cover-up of the crimes of the Cheney gang in its pursuit and conduct of the illegal Iraq War, and an abandonment of Congress’s essential role in our system of Constitutional checks and balances.