

Bringing Down a President?

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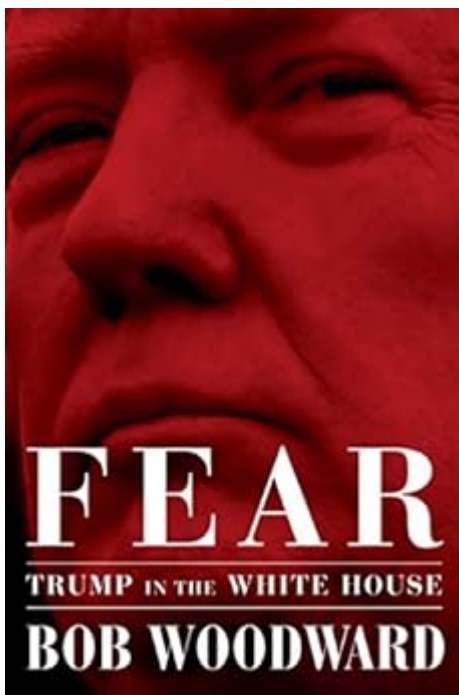
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If anyone doubted that the top level of the intelligence agencies in Washington have dedicated themselves to ousting President Donald Trump, the past two weeks should have demonstrated precisely how such a plan of action is being executed. First came the leaked accounts of chaos in the Trump Administration derived from the Bob Woodward [book](#) Fear: Trump in the White House.

Then a New York Times [op-ed](#) entitled “I am part of the resistance inside the Trump administration” written by one Anonymous who claimed to be a senior official in the White House, exploded on the scene, describing how top officials were deliberately sabotaging Trump’s policies to protect the country.



Finally, another [another op-ed](#) “Why so many former intelligence officers are speaking out” by former CIA Acting Director John McLaughlin appeared, providing a rationale for intelligence officers to speak up against the White House.

There has been considerable chatter in the media regarding the Woodward book and the Anonymous op-ed, but relatively little concerning McLaughlin, who arguably has made the most serious case for pushback against Donald Trump from within the intelligence community. To sum up the op-ed, McLaughlin wrote that many former intelligence officers

are beginning to speak out against the foreign policy of the Trump Administration because America's institutions are being seriously damaged by an "extraordinarily unprecedented context" of threats emerging from both inside and outside the country due to a "president's dangerous behavior."

McLaughlin claims that "failure to warn is the ultimate sin in the intelligence world" and that is precisely why he and his colleagues now speak out. In particular, and perhaps inevitably, he cites the "refus[al] to combat a well-documented covert foreign attack on U.S. elections — in the process weakening efforts by others to do so and encouraging Russia to keep it up."

McLaughlin also addresses the issue of the credibility of the intelligence community after Trump, i.e. will the public and many policymakers henceforth believe that the national security team is in fact politically biased, tainting the judgments that it makes when delivering its intelligence product. He argues somewhat evasively and not altogether clearly that "...we have to hope most people will understand why we reject silence: It's because this is a threat that we cannot combat silently, as we have been able to do with foreign threats — overseas and out of the public's eye."

McLaughlin is praising himself and friends as constituting some kind of loyal opposition consisting of the good guys driven to protect "American values" and "American institutions" from Trump and his "deplorables." His argument is carefully framed but ultimately self-serving. Witness his own career as Deputy Director of CIA under George Tenet, who famously sat in the United Nations sagaciously nodding to validate the argument that Saddam Hussein threatened the world with weapons of mass destruction and terrorist support. It was all a lie, leading to America's greatest foreign policy disaster and McLaughlin was complicit. Did he ever apologize for what he did? No. He was also around when the CIA was "renditioning" people by snatching them off the streets and sending them to foreign lands to be tortured. Did he ever consider how that damaged America's rule of law? And then there were the torture prisons. Again, silence from the suddenly-found-Jesus John McLaughlin.

And since that time, where was McLaughlin's conscience when Barack Obama was sitting down with his intelligence advisor John Brennan and making up lists of American citizens to be killed by drone? Or planning the destruction of Libya? Apparently, the only threats that matter are those presumably generated by Donald Trump, who is particularly reviled because he has spoken of bettering relations with Russia. And when McLaughlin inevitably cites the threat from Moscow, he ignores the fact that the United States has been arming Ukraine while at the same time conducting military exercises right on Russia's border. It has also been sanctioning Russians and Persona Non Grata'ing its diplomats regularly to punish it under Trump, making the bilateral relationship the worst it has been since the end of the Cold War. So where is the coddling of Moscow?

And McLaughlin is also wrong about the timing and substance of the intelligence officers' speaking out. John Brennan, Michael Morell, Michael Hayden, James Woolsey and James Clapper all have been actively trying to discredit Trump since before he was nominated. Several of them have claimed absurdly that the president is a Russian spy, also suggested in [some comments](#) made by McLaughlin himself in July, including that Trump is an "intelligence recruiter's dream." So, it all would appear to be less a response to policies than it is a personal vendetta by a number of politicized senior officers who were lined up behind

Hillary Clinton with hopes of being personally rewarded after her election.

Finally, though McLaughlin is claiming to support former intelligence officers who bravely speak out when the United States is threatened, he completely ignores a whole lot of them who have been [doing just that](#) for many years. They are sometimes labeled whistleblowers or dissidents, but McLaughlin probably considers them to be the lowest of the low. The whistleblowers and their allies have been calling for an end to the warfare surveillance state, which McLaughlin helped create and which he is still sustaining through his fearmongering, Russophobia being the wedge issue that drives both him and his “patriotic” friends. Introspection is apparently not McLaughlin’s strong suit, but he perhaps should pause and think for a second whether he and they are doing the American people any favors by their setting the stage for yet another war in their zeal to bring down Donald Trump.

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