



Obama Avoids the Crocodile

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By reversing himself and refusing to release graphic photos of abused prisoners of war, Barack Obama has stunned liberals.

They feel betrayed and abandoned by a president they put into office. On war and torture, at least, they thought Barack was one of them. He is not. Barack is not into ideology. He is into Barack.

As he showed in 2008, when he threw his white grandmother under the bus and spared his beloved black pastor, the Rev. Wright, then threw Wright under the bus when his toxicity level rose too high, Barack has all the sentimentality of Michael Corleone when it comes to the family business.

And what Obama is saying with his refusal to release the photos is what he has been signaling for weeks now: I am not going to fight the liberals' war -- on Dick Cheney's turf. The rewards are nonexistent, and the risks too great.

Thus, when Gens. Petraeus, Odierno and McKiernan grumbled, Obama tossed a blanket over the photos. Barack Obama is not taking on CENTCOM or West Point for a bunch of congressional progressives.

Thus, after he had opened the door to prosecution of the Bush lawyers who wrote the "torture memos," and resistance formed up, Obama backed down.

He said he did not want a special prosecutor. He did not want a 9-11 commission to delve into the criminality of what was done. He wants to put all that behind us and move forward.

Liberal moral outrage notwithstanding, Barack Obama is not going to fight the liberals' war on the liberals' turf. And history confirms the wisdom of his instincts. For it was by pursuing liberal theology that Democrats lost the nation they once owned.

It was ideology that led FDR and New Deal liberals to trust in "Uncle Joe" Stalin, to claim Mao's men were "agrarian reformers," and to defend Alger Hiss and deny the government was shot through with security risks and Soviet spies that dealt all those cards to Tailgunner Joe and turned the nation over to Ike and Dick in 1952.

It was the liberals who belatedly discovered that the war JFK and LBJ had marched us into in Southeast Asia was a "dirty and immoral" war and we were defending a "corrupt and dictatorial regime," which gave Richard Nixon his New Majority and 49-state landslide in 1972.

It was the Church Committee and Pike Commission ripping up the FBI and CIA, and Jimmy Carter's braying, "We have gotten over our inordinate fear of communism," and kissing Leonid Brezhnev -- followed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan -- that convinced Americans they had to roll the dice with the cowboy.

And while Ronald Reagan was liberating Grenada and helping the Contras overthrow the communist Sandinistas, liberal Democrats were penning "Dear Commandante" mash notes to Daniel Ortega.

In short, liberals are incorrigible and their disease incurable.

Obama senses this, and is not about to let them conscript his presidency into an ideological crusade, all of which invariably end, like the Children's Crusade of Peter the Hermit, with everybody dead or in captivity.

Which brings us to The Crocodile.

Whatever one may think of Dick Cheney, about him it must be said: He is not ashamed of his record. He does not apologize for it. He is willing to go out and defend it in the arena.

He believes, that, after 9-11, he, as a custodian of the national security, had a duty to go the limit to get information from terrorists to prevent another or worse atrocity.

He admits to having approved the authorization of "enhanced interrogation techniques," including waterboarding. He believes they yielded indispensable information about our enemies that helped to prevent another attack for seven and a half years. He does not believe that they were illegal, or constituted torture.

He is a true believer, full of conviction and certitude, whose unstated retort to those demanding he be prosecuted for war crimes is the one he gave the distinguished senator from Vermont, Mr. Leahy.

And Cheney is winning.

Why? Because other than the hard left, which demands commissions, prosecutions, indictments, convictions and imprisonments, on the other side it is all loud noise and moral mush.

He is winning because he has the courage of his convictions, while his enemies come up short in both departments.

There is another reason Obama does not want this fight.

There is a high probability, if not a near certainty, that, one day, al-Qaida is going to conduct some spectacular attack on this country or its allies, and Americans will say, "This didn't happen when people like Cheney were running the show."

Obama has been dealt a tough hand, and he knows it.

Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan could all go horribly wrong. And, should that happen, the boy from Hyde Park and Harvard Law wants to be standing beside the CIA, not the ACLU.

That, too, is why Obama wants no part of this fight with Cheney.

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of [Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World](#), ["The Death of the West,"](#), ["The Great Betrayal,"](#) ["A Republic, Not an Empire"](#) and ["Where the Right Went Wrong."](#)

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