

November 7, 2008

Forget the Honeymoon Getting down to bizness with Obama

When I hear talk of a "[honeymoon](#)" for the President-elect – to last as long as [six months](#), by some accounts – I think: "Fine. You lay off, and I'll do the same." But oh no, it doesn't work that way. Obama has already started in on us, and he hasn't even taken the oath of office yet. I'm talking about his appointments, starting with [Rahm Emanuel](#) as his chief of staff.

Hey, I thought we were gong to be treated to a bipartisan approach by the Obama administration, that he was going to "reach across the aisle" – what happened to *that*? Señor Emanuel is known as a street-fightin' Democrat, and that's understating it. A [Rolling Stone](#) [profile](#) of Emanuel had this to say:

"There's the story of how, the night after Clinton was elected, Emanuel was so angry at the president's enemies that he stood up at a celebratory dinner with colleagues from the campaign, grabbed a steak knife and began rattling off a list of betrayers, shouting 'Dead! . . . Dead! . . . Dead!' and plunging the knife into the table after every name. 'When he was done, the table looked like a lunar landscape,' one campaign veteran recalls. 'It was like something out of The Godfather.'"

He's mean, he's ultra-partisan, and he's a fully-paid up member in good standing of the War Party: during the Democratic primaries in 2006, when Emanuel headed up the Dems' congressional operation, he [backed](#) pro-war candidates over antiwar Democrats every time. As Bill Safire [put it](#) on "Meet the Press" just before Tim Russert died:

"What about Rahm Emanuel [for Vice President], the most powerful voice in the House of Representatives that agrees with Hillary Clinton on foreign affairs? He's a hawk. And although he's a rootin' tootin' liberal on domestic affairs, he is a hawk on foreign affairs. I was at the – a roast for him for Epilepsy Association, and Hillary Clinton was there, and I said, quite frankly, here you have the hawkish side of the Democratic Party. If they get together, the bumper sticker will read 'Invade and bomb with Hillary and Rahm.'"

When the House Democratic majority passed a military appropriations bill slated for Iraq, a clause that would have prohibited an attack on Iran without a vote in Congress was [deleted](#) at the [instigation](#) of Emanuel and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. When Rep. John Murtha presaged the popular rebellion against the Iraq war by coming out against it in no uncertain terms, Emanuel [urged](#) Pelosi to refrain from endorsing his call for withdrawal, arguing that it would hurt the Democrats politically.

With the smiling face of Don Obama serving as a front for the knife-wielding Emanuel and his "legendary intensity" – as *Rolling Stone* writer Joshua Green puts it – one has to

wonder: what (or who) else does the Prez-elect have in store for us?

The answer is: Jane Harman – as [head of the CIA](#)! (If she doesn't get it, [not to worry](#): she's also up for head of [Homeland Security](#) – and if she doesn't get that, she's on the short list for National Intelligence czarina).

Will somebody go see if Glenn Greenwald is okay? I fear he may have done something drastic, especially after all that [gushing](#) he's done over the Dear Leader.

Harman has always taken the side of the Bushies when it comes to [eavesdropping](#): during Gen Michael Hayden's confirmation hearings for CIA director, she was [against](#) making government eavesdropping an issue. When the *New York Times* [revealed](#) the illegal eavesdropping program authorized by Bush, she was [outraged](#) – at the *Times*, which she strongly hinted ought to be prosecuted. She was pro-war, and did [her part](#) in [spreading](#) the "bad intel" she now [claims](#) to have been fooled by – declaring not only that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, but also [purveying](#) the rather [far-out](#) notion that al-Qaeda had taken up residence there prior to the US invasion.

Harman's ambition is matched only by her recklessness: she came up against [the FBI](#), in 2006, when she was investigated for going a little too far in her aggressive campaign to retain her seat as head of the House Intelligence Committee. Apparently she had AIPAC officials and major Democratic donors personally lobby Pelosi, in return for the promise that she, Harman, would [intercede](#) on behalf of [Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman](#), two top AIPAC officials currently being prosecuted for stealing US top secret intelligence and passing it on to Israeli officials. Law enforcement officials aver hard evidence for this quid pro quo was never [uncovered](#). I'm hoping, however, that some Republican back-bencher has the balls to bring it up at her confirmation hearing. Perhaps they could call Pelosi as a witness.

Combined with the foreign policy views of [Dennis Ross](#), Obama's senior advisor for Middle East affairs – who is [reportedly](#) up for the National Security Advisor slot – what seems to be shaping up is a perfect trifecta of trouble on the horizon. The old adage that presidents rarely govern in synch with the way they campaign applies here, and in spades. [Change](#)? Not in the foreign policy realm, buster. Indeed, if any change is involved, it may well be for the worse.

By the time Obama is through making his appointments, all those Hollywood liberals over at [the HuffPuffPost](#) will be huffing and puffing with outrage: and, in true Hollywood style, they'll be screaming: "Forget the honeymoon – I want a divorce!"

But it will be too late for that. The Big O marches on, with all sorts of plans for our future, including perhaps "[national service](#)," and – [for sure](#) – a significant [ratcheting-up](#) of [the war in Afghanistan](#). In the meantime, Iran continues to loom large as an issue.

Just as Obama was claiming his victory, the Iranians were [warning](#) us to stay away from their airspace – there have apparently been a number of close calls recently. Also, the Russians [announced](#) they were putting missiles near their border with Poland, to

counter the sophisticated anti-missile "[defense](#)" systems put in place by the US and its Eastern European ally. Adding insult to injury, the [official explanation](#) for the US deployment is that the anti-missile system is there to guard against an *Iranian* attack. Whether the Obama-ites buy into this sort of malarkey or not [isn't clear](#). What is [all too obvious](#), however, is that President Obama will continue the West's war of words – and "soft power" – against the Russians, a prospect that bodes ill for the cause of peace.

So, you thought you were turning over a whole new leaf for the country when you marked your ballot for the Dear Leader – didn't you? Well, [surprise – surprise!](#)

~ Justin Raimondo