

Remember 'Plamegate'?

In his July 4 column on the commutation of I. Lewis Libby's sentence ("Plamegate farce reaches just end"), David Brooks demonstrated the willingness of those of his stripe to excuse any outrage, including perjury and obstruction of justice, committed by those in the Bush administration.

Brooks employed distortion and omission to dismiss this case as one big nothing: "The farce is over. It has no significance. Nobody but Libby's family will remember it in a few weeks time."

Brooks wrote that "by the start of Act Three" (the perjury act) in this farce, "nobody cared about the outing of a CIA agent." Nonsense. Apparently, certain Republicans cared. Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald and nearly every judge associated with the case were Republicans, some even appointed by George W. Bush.

I imagine anyone who is concerned about the future safety and security of our nation cares, too. This nation will not long survive if we continue to have our intelligence and military forces used as political pawns by politicians with hidden agendas.

Brooks' particularly egregious omission was the part where the Bush administration was willing to sabotage -- while the United States is at war, no less -- the entire intelligence-gathering operation known as Brewster-Jennings to further its political agenda. But the administration, with the help of media mouthpieces like Brooks, successfully diluted this issue by arguing that this was only about one disgruntled former government employee, Valerie Plame, who wasn't very important anyway.

Apparently in Brooks' mind, sabotaging our intelligence-gathering ability at a time when this country needs the best intelligence it can gather is no big deal. It also doesn't seem to bother him that all over the world, the lives of our own CIA personnel who had any association with Brewster-Jennings are imperiled.

Unlike Brooks, I believe all those who put their lives on the line for us will long remember Libby, columnist Robert Novak and all the rest involved in "Plamegate" who caused so much damage to our intelligence community.

This sudden "let bygones be bygones" attitude is strange, because treason used to be a big deal in this country. Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen are serving long prison sentences for essentially the same thing that certain people in the Bush administration were involved in. Ames and Hanssen at least had more easily understandable motives: greed.

If we carry Brooks' reasoning to its logical conclusion, they should also be set free. After all, nobody cares, right?

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