ELLIOTT ABRAMS: A CONVICTED LIAR DEFENDS A CONVICTED LIAR'S BOSS BY LYING

Elliott Abrams makes a good point: the "reviews," thus far, of Cheney's book have focused on particular incidents rather than on the scope of the narrative. Once I get done with it, I plan to do a full review, which I think would have been better titled, "Portrait of the Evil Bureaucrat as a Young Man."

Yet the sole defense of the full memoir Abrams offers is an assertion that Cheney's principles as Vice President remained the same as those that guided him when he protected the illegal acts of the Iran-Contra conspirators.

> I first knew Cheney when he was chairman of the Republican Policy Committee in the House of Representatives (from 1981 to 1987), and our discussions centered then on the wars in Central America. Neither controversy nor scandal shook his view that preventing communist takeovers in that region was an important goal for the United States. Later, when I served at Bush's National Security Council, I sometimes worked with Cheney, then vice president. Despite those who claim he changed over time, I did not find that so. The central qualities remained: total devotion to principle and to country, and complete and unswerving commitment to any policy he believed served American interests.

Curiously, Abrams neglects to admit that Cheney's embrace of illegal means amounted to an embrace of Abrams' own illegal means. No wonder Abrams is so fawning!

But the rest of Abrams' piece on Cheney does precisely what he criticizes others for: relitigating individual events, notably Cheney's

policy differences with Condi Rice and Colin Powell.

Which is how he sets up his rather bizarre claim that Cheney never leaked.

> Many use leaks to protect their personal interests. Cheney did none of these things. When he differed from a policy he told the president so, privately, and told the press and those outside the White House nothing — a practice that earned him unending attacks in the media from gossip-hungry journalists.
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> As to Powell, the criticism is more personal, for Cheney accuses him of criticizing the president and his policies to people outside the administration and of constant leaking.
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> Powell himself has admitted that he could not continue after 2004 because his views could not be reconciled with those of Bush. He has not admitted to the leaking, but the leaks by Powell and his deputy, Richard Armitage, were too widely known in Washington to require any additional proof. And as to Cheney's indictment of Powell and Armitage for standing by while Scooter Libby, Cheney's chief of staff, was unjustly prosecuted for the leak of Valerie Plame's name, the facts are in; the complaint is justified.

Just as a reminder, Abrams was, himself, one of those initially listed among the leakers of Valerie Plame's identity and we never learned Judy Miller's sources for Plame's identity besides Scooter Libby, so perhaps here again he is lauding Cheney for protecting him.

But even aside from Abrams' factually incorrect statement of the facts revealed at the Libby trial—notably, that Libby lied to hide the fact that Cheney had ordered him to leak information, possibly including Plame's identity, to Judy Miller—he ignores the leak Cheney's office used

as cover for their conversations with Bob Novak on July 7, the day before Novak asked Armitage questions that elicited Plame's identity. On July 7, Cheney's office spoke to Novak, purportedly in an attempt to scotch Frances Fragos Townsend's appointment as Bush's Homeland Security Advisor (precisely the kind of leak, Abrams says, Cheney didn't do). And just as a reminder, Cheney was the only person known to have refused to release journalists he spoke to about Joe Wilson and Plame from their confidentiality agreements.

Elliott Abrams' post amounts to a celebration that Dick Cheney would use any means—even illegal means—to achieve the ends he believed important, something Abrams himself has done too. And in support of that celebration, this convicted liar lies about Cheney and leaks; he lies about the substance of another convicted liar's lies.

So I guess Abrams did pay tribute to Cheney's entire life memoir after all.