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February 18, 2005

Scum Also Rises

The Bloody Career of John Negroponte

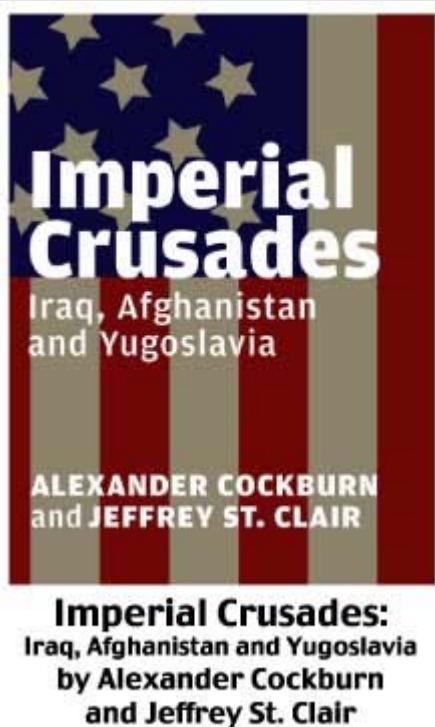
By DAVE LINDORFF

The nomination by President George Bush of John Negroponte for the new post of director of national intelligence, in charge of overseeing all the burgeoning intelligence operations of the United States, is both obscene and predictable.

Negroponte, currently the U.S. ambassador to Iraq and, unofficially, the head of the U.S. occupation of that country, is a career foreign service officer on paper, but in fact a veteran CIA operative responsible for some of the blackest crimes of murder and torture in Central America during that region's dark days of civil war, revolution and counter-revolution in the late 20th Century.

As U.S. ambassador to Honduras from 1981-85, Negroponte played a key role in organizing the military repression in that poorest of Latin American countries, and in creating and running the so-called Contra's, the U.S.-organized military operation to undermine and overthrow the elected Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

What makes Negroponte the perfect candidate to be America's KGB chief is his refined cover. He has the Republicans on the Republican-dominated Intelligence Committee in his pocket



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anyhow, and as a career diplomat, urbane and fluent in five languages, he also appeals to the mushy national security state Democrats like John Rockefeller (D-W. VA), Evan Bayh (D-Indiana), Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), who will be asked to join in rubber-stamping his nomination.

If his appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, during hearings on his nomination for the post of ambassador to Iraq is any indication, he will breeze through this next "test." Democratic Senators Chris Dodd (D-Connecticut) and Joseph Biden (D-Del.) gushed over him at those earlier hearings, and didn't ask anything about his role in promoting death squad activities or in covering up human rights abuses in Central America, which included the murders of several dozen priests and nuns.

Americans concerned about our vanishing civil liberties, and about the expanded use of official state terrorism against American citizens and resident aliens should be concerned about this appointment, however. The new intelligence chief will be responsible for overseeing the nation's vast \$100-billion spying operation and its ballooning, largely secret budget.

This man's record is not encouraging.

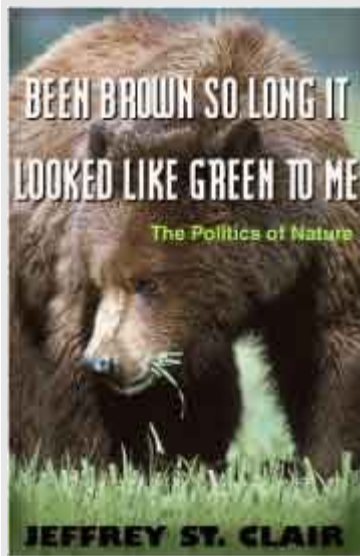
Negroponete deliberately falsified State Department human rights reports every year of his ambassadorship in Honduras. According to the Maryknoll Order, many U.S. missionaries and other religious activists were murdered in that country in the 1970s and especially the early 1980s by CIA-trained Honduran soldiers of the so-called Battalion 3-16, whose operations they claim Negroponete oversaw, or "at best overlooked."

Even The New York Times credits Negroponete with "carrying out the covert strategy of the Reagan administration to crush the Sandinista government in Nicaragua"-an effort which the paper fails to note was illegal, and which ultimately included the trading of guns for drugs on CIA-financed aircraft. Negroponete helped with this massively corrupt and illegal war effort of the Reagan administration even after it had been expressly banned by the U.S. Congress.

One would think that kind of insult to the Congress would elicit at least some opposition to Negroponete's appointment, but not a word about it came up during his ambassadorship hearings (Sen. Dodd actually said, "I happen to feel he's a very fine Foreign Service officer and has done a tremendous job in many places."), and it seems unlikely he'll be asked about it this time around.

Dave Lindorff is the author of [Killing Time: an Investigation into the Death Row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal](#). His new book of CounterPunch columns titled "[This Can't be Happening!](#)" is





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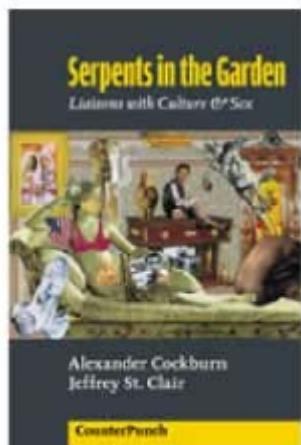
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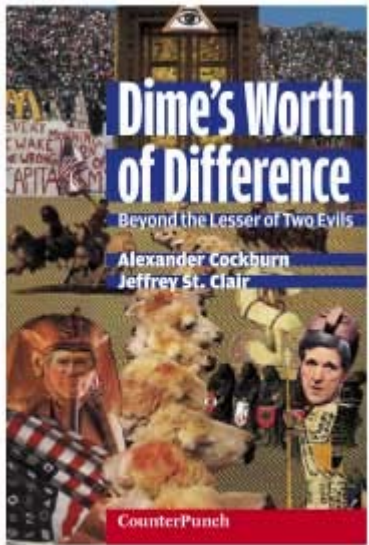
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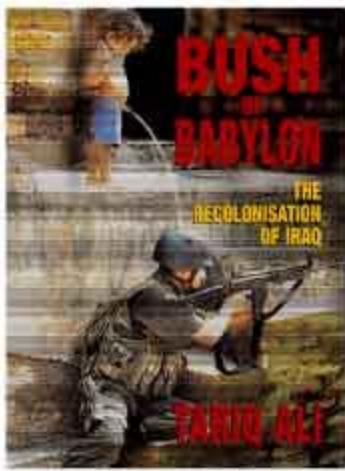
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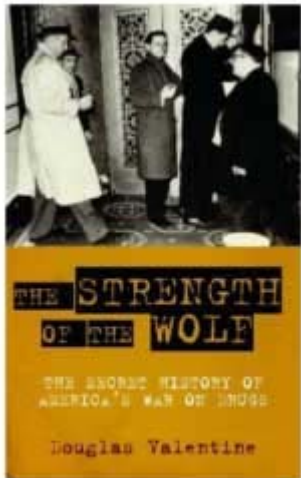
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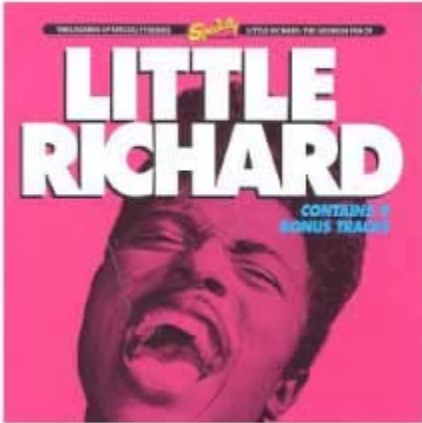
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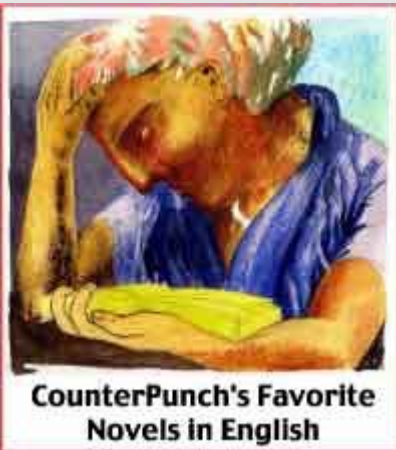
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