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## **The CIA's Fight With Obama**

By Jack Kelly

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Has Barack Obama made an enemy who can sabotage his presidency?

The presidency of George W. Bush began to unravel when some in high positions at the Central Intelligence Agency began waging a covert campaign against him.

It began in the summer of 2003 when officials at the CIA asked the Justice department to open a criminal investigation into who had disclosed to columnist Robert Novak that Valerie Plame, wife of controversial former diplomat Joseph Wilson, worked at the CIA.

The officials knew at the time the Intelligence Identities Protection Act did not apply to Ms. Plame, who'd been out of the field for more than five years.

Another blow was struck with the publication in 2004 of the book "Imperial Hubris" by Michael Scheuer, who'd headed the bin Laden desk during the Clinton administration. It was harshly critical of the Bush administration's conduct of the war on terror in general, and the invasion of Iraq in particular.

Never before had a serving officer been allowed to publish such a book.

The CIA typically slow-rolled and censored books even by retired CIA directors.

"Why did the CIA allow such a controversial book to be published in the first place?" asked attorney Mark Zaid, who specializes in national security law. "There is simply no question that the CIA could have prevented the publication of Scheuer's book if it had wanted to do so. And no court would have sided with him."

Why would some at the CIA want to sabotage President Bush? One motive might have been to deflect blame for intelligence failures. The CIA confidently had predicted Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. But none were found. The tactical intelligence the CIA provided to the U.S. military forces invading Iraq proved nearly worthless. And the CIA was caught flat-footed by the insurgency that developed several months after Saddam's fall.

There may have been a simpler motive. The novelist Charles McCarry was a deep cover CIA operative for ten years. "I never met a stupid person in the agency," he said in a 2004 interview. "Or an assassin. Or a Republican."

The CIA's war against President Bush was motivated by ass covering, or by political partisanship. But with President Obama, it's personal.

Many are furious about his disclosure of explicit details of the interrogation methods used on some al Qaida bigwigs, and his waffling on whether or not those who employed them will be subject to prosecution.

Others are incensed by his decision to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, and to let some of those incarcerated there (17 Chinese Uighurs) loose in the United States.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi held two hush hush meetings with CIA Director Leon Panetta and Democratic members of the Intelligence Committee last week.

"Her fear and frustration have apparently given way to panic after word reached her of the CIA's reaction to the damage she, President Obama and other Democrats have done to the spy agency in the last three months, wrote Jed Babbin, a former Deputy Undersecretary of Defense, in Human Events May 1. "Pelosi learned that her actions and those of President Obama have so damaged CIA morale that the agency's ability to function could be in danger."

The upshot of the meetings was an unprecedented letter from House Intelligence Committee Chairman Silvestre Reyes (D-Tex) to Mr. Panetta, making a quasi-apology. Rep. Reyes asked the CIA director to "disseminate it to the CIA workforce as soon as possible."

But the CYA nature of the letter, and Mr. Reyes' pledge of more oversight are unlikely to mollify many at Langley.

Other Western intelligence services regard the Obama administration with contempt and rising concern, an officer of the DGSE, France's military intelligence agency, told my friend Jack Wheeler (the real life Indiana Jones) last week.

"All of us in our little community are worried -- us, our friends in Berlin, London, Tel Aviv," the DGSE officer told Jack. "It is not like the barbarians at the gates. It is every barbarian horde in the world being told there are no gates."