

# Fahrenheit 9/11

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By Eric S. Margolis

MICHAEL Moore's blockbuster film, 'Fahrenheit 9/11,' is the surprise hit of the summer. Americans are lining up to see this controversial film which is the most deadly attack to date on the Bush administration.

'Fahrenheit' may not be an epochal political film, like 'Battleship Potempkin,' or 'The Battle of Algiers,' but it certainly ranks as the most exciting and searing American political movie since the superb, eerily prophetic 'Wag the Dog,' a brilliant film about how a phony war is concocted and marketed by White House political operatives.

'Wag the Dog' and 'Fahrenheit' make perfect bookends encompassing the fraud, dishonesty, and Orwellian manipulation of George W. Bush's failed presidency. With dazzling speed, élan, and razor-sharp editing, Moore keeps turning over Washington rocks, exposing a squirming, slithering underside of deceit and illicit dealings that will outrage thoughtful, educated viewers.

However, those fundamentalist Christian core supporters of George W (I call them American Taliban) who study world affairs through Chuck Norris movies,

old Ronald Reagan World War II films, and the Bible, are unlikely to rush to see 'Fahrenheit.'

No one will ever accuse the angry Michael Moore of finesse or subtlety. He attacks George W. and his White House cronies with a cinematographic shovel. Moore's Bush comes out looking dim-witted and befuddled.

This column has made no secret of its low opinion of the president's intellect, but it's hard to believe that Bush, who, after all, won the presidency, is as dense as the film unfairly portrays him. Taking film clips and parts of speeches out of context, as Gov. Howard Dean can sadly attest, can make anyone look rabid or stupid.

Nor does this column buy Moore's contention Bush is merely the tool of evil big business, and the Iraq war a money grab by Halliburton and Washington's influence-peddling Carlyle Group.

Political life in Washington is far more complex and diffuse than this simplistic view. Big business certainly takes advantage of every opportunity, and buys legislators, Republicans and Democrats. But the Second Iraq War was not started by Enron or the board of Chevron Petroleum. Moore is rehashing old, anti-capitalist dogma from the Democratic Party's left wing.

By contrast, Moore did a smashing job in capturing the Bush administration's fear-mongering that terrorized unworldly Americans into believing they were in mortal peril from Iraq and Osama bin Laden — and only the president could save them.

Moore clearly smells the first rank whiffs of proto-fascist behaviour coming from the White House. I wish he made the disturbing contrast between 9/11 and the ensuing anti-democratic Patriot Act curtailing American's liberties, and the Reichstag burning of 1933 that led to the Emergency and Enabling Acts ending Germany's civil liberties.

Unfortunately, Moore's sweeping attack on the self-proclaimed 'war president' totally ignores the 900-lb gorilla at the tea party: the neo-conservative conspiracy to push America into the disastrous Iraq war.

The entire phony Iraq crisis — weapons of mass destruction, germ labs, dire threats to America — were all concocted by pro-Israel neo-conservatives as part of their long-term campaign to push America into a Mideast war to destroy all of Israel's enemies. That, and the lust to control oil, were the two driving forces behind the war.

Moore's spotlight should have pointed at the administration

neocon cabal, led by VP Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby, Richard Perle and their media allies who fed false information to the White House and public. And at their mouthpiece Ahmed Chalabi.

This column was also disappointed Moore didn't spend more time pounding the US national media. He took only a few shots at the big networks for parroting administration war propaganda. Yet the neocon conspiracy and its manipulation of national media is the most shocking story of the Iraq War.

Instead, Moore allows the final third of 'Fahrenheit' to drag and get bogged down in maudlin personal stories instead of keep up the first part's furious pace and shocking revelations.

The film is heavy-handed and occasionally unfair. But a powerful counterbalance to all the propaganda shamefully forced to the American public by the national media was overdue and desperately needed.

Until recently, Americans have heard only one side of the story, which, we are discovering, was a tapestry of lies worthy of Nazi propaganda chief, Dr Goebbels. Kudos to Moore for helping bring some bright light into the propaganda darkness.

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