

# THE OP-ED KAGRO X AND I MEANT TO WRITE

I don't usually simply link to stories without, well, bloviating on them. But I'm a bit busy right now, what with a book due in a few weeks and the in-laws in from the home country. And when I read this column over at lukery's place, I could have sworn I wrote it. Or Kagro X. Or Meteor Blades. So all I can add is, I recommend you read it too.

The Democrats, now with majorities in both congressional chambers, gleefully convened multiple inquiries. From May to August 1987, televised congressional hearings offered a rare glimpse into the cabalistic world of spooks, bagmen and mercenaries. Fawn Hall, North's secret shredder, told of smuggling evidence out of the Old Executive Office Building in her boots, and she lectured Rep. Thomas Foley that "sometimes you have to go above the written law."

One year after the hearings, though, Iran-Contra was a dead issue. Reagan's poll numbers rebounded, and his vice president, George H. W. Bush, won the White House despite being implicated in the scandal.

[snip]

Cheney and Addington are not the only veterans of the scandal who have resurfaced to help President Bush fight the war on terror. So have Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Otto Reich, John Negroponte, John Poindexter, neoconservative Michael Ledeen and even Manucher Ghorbanifar, the Iranian arms dealer who brokered one of the first missile sales to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's regime.

Iran-Contra, then, wasn't just a Watergate-style crime and a coverup. It was, rather, another battle in the neoconservative campaign against Congress and in defense of the imperial presidency. Though Iran-Contra might have been a draw — the 11 convicted conspirators won on appeal or were pardoned by George H.W. Bush — the backlash has become the establishment.

Already there are reports that if the Democrats take over Congress in November, their agenda will have a 1986-ish look: hearings and calls for more congressional oversight of foreign policy.

But if they want to avoid again snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, they must do what their counterparts 20 years ago failed to do. They must challenge the crusading ideology that justified the invasion of Iraq and has made war the option of first resort for this administration.

And share it with your Congressperson.