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Buffalo News Editorial Cartoonist

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GETTING A GRIP

BY MICHAEL I. NIMAN

**The Manchurian
 Presidency**

Part One:

A chimp could do better



What if we had a real bona fide chimpanzee for a president? You know, a little hairy ape like the ones in the zoo. Would he or she do a better job than George W. Bush?

Sure, the chimp would soil the Oval Office. We all know the primate house isn't a pretty place. But would the chimp have been smart enough to find and soil the US Constitution? Would the chimp have surrounded itself with larger, aggressive primates such as Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld?

No crony chimps

Would it have had the intelligence to poop its mark on the proper documents to order the invasion of Iraq, decimate environmental and workplace protections, hand over the authoring of our energy policy to oil companies, then hand them mega-tax breaks right before they emerged as the most profitable corporations in the history of human greed? Would the chimp have attacked the Social Security system, appointed crony chimps to the Supreme Court and ordered the indefinite detention without charges of Homo sapiens? Could the chimp have maintained a straight maw and not tossed poop or howled while selling "the Saddam done it" and WMD myths following the odd vertical collapse of the first three skyscrapers in history ever to fall due to "fire"?

Chimps are quick learners and take cues from their handlers. It's not likely that a chimp, for instance, would have bucked the advice of every living general and invaded Iraq with a small force of spider monkeys. A chimp wouldn't ever figure out how to drive the deficit up by cutting taxes on the richest 10 percent of the US population, nor would it be able to bankrupt the national treasury by authoring successive

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military appropriation bills or tax breaks and welfare giveaways for corporations—even if they did fund the chimp's Gorillas, Orangutans and Prosimians (GOP) political posse. In short, the chimp, or a gerbil for that matter, would give us a sounder fiscal policy than the Bush administration.

A chimp would never have been able to nominate John Ashcroft or Alberto Gonzales for Attorney General. This is because chimpanzees can't talk or write. Without a pro-crime hack as the nation's top cop, perhaps we'd see some enforcement of anti-trust, environmental, racketeering and civil rights laws. Maybe we'd see more and faster indictments of corrupt politicians and officials who order our sacred rights as Americans violated through illegal snooping on antiwar and environmental sanity activists. Treasonous squealers who jeopardize American security by exposing secret agents spying on nuclear proliferation would also probably be prosecuted under a Gonzales-free chimp regime.

What's a little poop tossing?

It's also unlikely that a chimp president would have been able to slash funding for and derail our government's program to contain all those loose nuclear bombs floating around the former Soviet Union. And a chimp wouldn't tell the world that we have nuclear bombs and we're ready to

use them in a first strike, causing everyone else to rush to develop their own nuclear deterrence capabilities. Chimps pretty much limit themselves to tossing shit—a vulgar attack, but one that's not likely to lead to a nuclear war. Likewise, a chimp never would order the manufacture of landmines or cluster bombs, or the use of radioactive DU weapons, all moves that terrorize civilian populations and transform us, in the eyes of the world, into a pariah nation of Tasmanian devils and warthogs.

And if someone managed to raise the war rattle in the chimp's name, the chimp would never be able to muster the language to suggest selling first US ports and now an American arms manufacturer supplying US forces to a foreign government with a track record of supplying money and resources to terrorists allegedly involved in the unsolved September 11, 2001 attack on America. Of course, a chimp never would have been able to block government probes associated with those attacks, so maybe we'd have some solid answers about the September 11 events and why they were able to occur. A chimp also would have been unable to block the scheduled release of White House documents from the Reagan-Bush days, hence we'd probably know more about the Iran-Contra affair, Bush family ties to both Iran and the bin Ladens, US support of global terrorism in the 1980s and nasty tidbits of history that would allow us to better understand our government and how it operates.

No HAVA Chimps

And if the chimp came to power in a tainted election, it never would have been able to convince Congress to pass a law (HAVA) forcing states with a history of smooth-functioning elections to adopt flawed and corruptible voting technologies—undermining the public trust in elections and perhaps assuring future anomalous elections of lower primates to public office.

With a chimp in the White House, New Orleans would probably still exist as one of the nation's premier African-American cities. That's because a chimp wouldn't have been able to cut repair funding for that city's levee system prior to Hurricane Katrina, diverting the money to fund, as one Army Corps of Engineers official explained, tax cuts and the Iraq War. And a chimp never would have been able to appoint another chimp to run the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

If our chimp heard voices in its head, such as God ordaining it a divine ape, it would lack the language to tell us about them. So we'd never know the chimp was delusional, hence it would never be able to muster up an apocalyptic following of other psychotics. With a chimp in the White House, we'd be able to plan our future with responsible energy policies and fiscal and environmental responsibility instead of assuming we can leave this whole mess behind come an imminent rapture. If the chimp tried to convince us that it was God's apostle, we'd just hear chimp hoots and think it was hungry or horny.

Bush better for the ayatollahs

I can go on and on with thousands of examples of how America would be better off with a chimp in the White House. But the Bush presidency hasn't been all that bad for some folks. Iran's ayatollahs, for example, threatened by a growing democratic upris-

ing in 2000, are now firmly back in control of their country, thanks to Bush's "Axis of Evil" rhetoric, which served to unite that divided nation. And the ayatollahs are quickly becoming a dominant force in Iraq as well, which was unthinkable before a US invasion and failed occupation. Exxon and Mobil, both bastard children of the anti-trust suits that broke up Standard Oil, are also winners, re-merging into, with Bush's support, a pillaging cartel raking in megabillions after Bush's Iraq war and Iran rhetoric drove the price of oil through the stratosphere. No oil-pimped chimp could have pulled off this charade.

Across the Islamic world, fringe fundamentalist factions are rising in power as democracy activists and pro-American regimes lose their credibility in the face of Bush's "crusade" rhetoric. The Chinese are rising as the world's premier economic power, while the US is the world's biggest debtor nation—with diminishing assets and a vanishing manufacturing base. Our failing corporations now look to these so-called "communists" for capital. These rising stars could never have fared this well with a chimpanzee in the American White House. The chimp wouldn't be able to enunciate the word "crusade" or sign international trade pacts.

The Manchurian candidate

Seriously—America would be better off with a lower primate as our president. And, of course, this begs the question: Is what we have here a Manchurian presidency, referring to the old science-fiction tale of an enemy-run, brainwashed drone assassin? The problem is not that the Bushistas are incompetent or stupid. They're not. Just listen to 20-year-old recordings of Connecticut Yankee George W. Bush's voice. It took talent to reinvent him as a drawling Texas populist—a decider among men. Not anyone could have taken the most powerful and respected nation on earth and transformed it into the failed state that we are today. It takes talent and brilliance to reverse two centuries of democratic reform, to wrap oneself in the American flag while launching a full frontal assault on every value that flag stands for.

No, we are not looking at a band of idiots. Sure, Bush's handlers would like to keep us believing so, hence we get the weirdness-of-the-week lines from the White House, such as this week's Bush quotes alleging he doesn't understand how a bill becomes a law. Come on.

Idiots could not have taken America down the way these bastards have. And if a chimp did manage to pull this off, the American people would have risen up and impeached it long ago. Bush is still in office, his judges rule our judiciary and his Republicans rule our Senate and Congress. To call them incompetent gives them the benefit of the doubt.

What we're looking at, perhaps, is a Manchurian presidency. How can anyone still believe these folks have our values and our nation's interests at heart after what they've done to America?

Next time, don't be a chump—elect a chimp.

Dr. Michael I. Niman is vice president of Niagara Independent Media (AM 1270). His columns are archived at www.mediastudy.com. av



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