

When Robertson Rants, Gen. Boykin Listens

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On Aug. 22, 2005, televangelist Rev. Pat Robertson broadcast a call for the assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez on his *700 Club* TV show. Robertson said: “You know, I don’t know about this doctrine of assassination, but if he [Chavez] thinks we’re trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it. It’s a whole lot cheaper than starting a war, and I don’t think any oil shipments will stop.” Robertson justified his assassination call by charging that Chávez was “going to make Venezuela a launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism all over the continent.”

To make matters worse, two days later, after his remarks had caused an international brouhaha, Robertson went back on TV in another *700 Club* broadcast, to claim that he really didn’t call for Chávez’s assassination. He said there were other ways of “taking him out,” including kidnappings by U.S. Special Forces commandos. This was hardly a back-down, and subsequently, when the transcript of the original statements was made publicly available, Robertson issued a barely credible apology.

While State Department and Pentagon spokesmen pretended to distance the Bush-Cheney Administration from Robertson’s “assassinate Chavez” statements, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld took to the airwaves to declare, “our department doesn’t do that kind of thing,” the incident resonated with many astute Bush-Cheney watchers, who know about Reverend Pat’s “special relationship” with one top Pentagon official whose job it is precisely to hunt down and kill terrorists: Gen. William “Jerry” Boykin.

When Robertson rants, Gen. Boykin listens. And what happens after that has everything to do with the Bush-Cheney Administration’s much-heralded “Global War on Terrorism” (GWOT).

Evangelical Jihad

On Oct. 16, 2003, William Arkin published a story in the *Los Angeles Times*, exposing a series of public statements by Gen. William Boykin, at fundamentalist churches around the United States. Cumulatively, the statements represented a declaration of religious war against Islam. Arkin cited remarks by Gen. Boykin in January 2003 at a church in Daytona, Fla. Referring to the 1993 “Blackhawk down” incident in Mogadishu, Somalia, in which 18 Special Forces soldiers under his command were killed, Boykin told the congregation, “There was a man in Mogadishu named Osman Atto,”

a top lieutenant of warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid. After Boykin’s troops failed to kill or capture Atto, “he went on CNN and he laughed at us, and he said, ‘They’ll never get me because Allah will protect me. Allah will protect me.’ Well you know what? I knew that my God was bigger than his,” Boykin railed. “I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol.” After proudly telling the congregants that Atto was later captured, Gen. Boykin concluded, according to Arkin’s account, by reminding them, “America is still a Christian nation.”

General Boykin’s religious fervor has a big element of spoon-bending kookery to it. (See *EIR*, Aug. 26, 2005, “Cheney’s Spoon-Benders Plot Nuclear Armageddon.”) Arkin recounted another Boykin speech before the First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Okla. in June 2002. Once again, Boykin cited the Mogadishu incident, describing photographs that he had taken of the city from a helicopter, shortly after the murder of his troops. The General described a “strange dark mark over the city,” according to Arkin. He asked a photo interpreter to study the pictures. “This is not a blemish on your photograph, this is real,” Boykin said he was told. At which point, Boykin told the congregation, “Ladies and gentlemen, this is your enemy. It is the principalities of darkness. It is a demonic presence in that city that God revealed to me as the enemy.”

According to a May 20, 2004 story by Sidney Blumenthal in the London *Guardian*, Boykin’s nationwide tour—in uniform—of fundamentalist churches was part of a project called the Faith Force Multiplier, which, Blumenthal said: “advocates applying military principles to evangelism. Its manifesto—Warrior Message—summons ‘warriors in this spiritual war for souls of this nation and the world. . .’”

In June 2003, just days after he delivered another “holy war” tirade at the pulpit of the Good Shepherd Community Church in Sandy, Ore., Gen. Boykin was given a third star and promoted to the post of Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. The newly created Pentagon Office of Intelligence, headed by Boykin’s immediate boss, Undersecretary Stephen Cambone, was tasked by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld to provide the operational intelligence for stalking and eliminating “High Valued Targets” in the GWOT. According to sources familiar with the selection process, Secretary Rumsfeld reached out to Boykin, who was then the commanding general of the U.S. Army’s JFK Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, N.C., precisely because he would bring a religious zeal to the mission of taking out Osama bin Laden et al. One military intelligence officer told Blumenthal that Gen. Boykin was chosen for the assignment because he combined “ignorance and recklessness.”

Indeed, ignorance and recklessness were Boykin’s calling when, early in his tenure as part of his GWOT mission, he flew to Guantanamo Bay to anoint its military commander, Gen. Geoffrey Miller, as the new chief of Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, ordering Miller to “Gitmo-ize” the prisoner interrogation program in Iraq.



Kent Harville

When Robertson speaks, spoon-bending fundamentalists like Gen. William Boykin (shown here) listen. Boykin, an anti-Muslim crusader, is trained in special warfare, and held a key position in the military intelligence chain of command that ordered torture at Abu Ghraib.

Reverend Pat to the Rescue

After the publication of the Arkin exposé of Gen. Boykin's rabid crusader diatribes, Pat Robertson led a nationwide campaign, through his Christian Coalition and his *700 Club*/Christian Broadcasting Network, to defend Boykin. Robertson launched an on-line petition to support Boykin's comments, and he dispatched a former Army Ranger, Chuck Holton, to attend and video-tape a church service where Boykin spoke, in order to air it on the Christian Broadcasting Network. Holton had served under Boykin in Somalia.

Boykin, for his part, has publicly stated, according to the *New York Times*, that he takes his orders directly from "God," prompting some astute observers to worry aloud that Rev. Pat Robertson's calls for the assassination of Hugo Chávez may take on special meaning for the Bush Administration's top anti-terrorist warrior. General Boykin has also been famously quoted that it was God, not the American people, who "appointed" George W. Bush as President of the United States.

Moonstruck

Adding to the growing concerns about the Robertson-Boykin relationship and its possible implications for a growing left-right destabilization of South America is another element: Robertson's long-standing and growing ties to Rev. Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church. Unlike the case of Robertson's fellow Christian fundy Jerry Falwell, there is no direct evidence that Reverend Pat has been taking money from the Moonies (Falwell was bailed out in the mid-1990s by Reverend Moon to the tune of \$73 million, when his Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., nearly went bankrupt).

Indeed, Robertson's financial angels appear to be centered in London and Scotland—and in "former" colonial Africa. In 1990, when Robertson fell on financial hard times, he sold his Family Entertainment Network to Australian media billion-

aire Rupert Murdoch for a reported \$1.7 billion. In 1999, the London *Observer* revealed that the Royal Bank of Scotland had struck a deal with Robertson, to create a phone-based U.S. consumer bank, in which the Christian Coalition founder would hold a 25% stake. When the deal was cancelled after howls of protest from Royal Bank of Scotland investors and depositors, it was revealed by investigative journalist Greg Palast that the bank had maintained business ties to Robertson's private investment fund for at least the previous six years, and had also bankrolled a Robertson company that marketed vitamins and other health-food products through his vast right-wing Christian mailing list.

Another Robertson financial windfall came in 1989, when "Baptist" warlord Charles Taylor carried out a coup in the African state of Liberia. Robertson negotiated an \$8 million gold-mining deal with the dictator, who has been a target of international human rights groups, for his role in stoking a murderous war in neighboring Sierra Leone, and profiteering from "blood diamonds."

Robertson got in trouble in 1994, when his charity, Operation Blessing, got caught diverting charitable airlifts of emergency aid to victims of the Rwanda war to his gold-mining operations in the Congo. As recently as 2003, Robertson took to the airwaves of his Christian Broadcasting Network to castigate President George W. Bush for calling for Taylor's resignation. Robertson railed that Bush was calling for the ouster of a "good fellow Baptist" and his replacement by Muslim infidels.

The Robertson/Bush "disagreement" over the fate of Charles Taylor was short-lived. Today, Robertson's "charity," Operation Blessing, is prominently listed on the website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a relief organization to be financed to aid in the Hurricane Katrina rescue effort.

Robertson's bonding with the Reverend Moon predates these business shenanigans, and goes all the way back to the early 1980s, when Moonie operatives Joseph Churba and David Ben-Ami brokered some of the first ties between the Jabotinskyite Likud in Israel and the American evangelicals. Robertson, Falwell, and Texas-based evangelical Rev. Mike Evans were the first three American evangelicals to meet with then-Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin—courtesy of the Moonie interlocutors. Robertson and his alter ego, former Christian Coalition chief political operative Ralph Reed, have been fixtures at Moon-sponsored rallies for Israel ever since.

In October 2002, for example, both Robertson and Reed addressed a "Christian Solidarity With Israel" rally, along with Alan Keyes, a long-standing right-wing propagandist on the Moon payroll. There Robertson railed against any Israeli territorial concessions. In December 2003, Robertson was a featured speaker at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center's annual international security conference, an event chaired by Uzi Arad, former top Mossad official and ally of Benjamin Netanyahu.