

The **LOWDOWN**



Edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer ■ Vol 8 No. 08 ■ August 2006



# Living under the imperial presidency Where Bush's arrogance has taken us

**D**URING HIS GUBERNATORIAL DAYS IN TEXAS, George W let slip a one-sentence thought that unintentionally gave us a peek into his political soul. In hindsight, it should've been loudly broadcast all across our land so people could've absorbed it, contemplated its portent...and roundly rejected the guy's bid for the presidency. On May 21, 1999, reacting to some satirical criticism of him, Bush snapped: "There ought to be limits to freedom."

Gosh, so many freedoms to limit, so little time! But in five short years, the BushCheneyRummy regime has made remarkable strides toward dismembering the genius of the Founders, going at our Constitution and Bill of Rights like famished alligators chasing a couple of poodles.

Forget about such niceties as separation of powers, checks and balances (crucial to the practice of democracy), the First Amendment, the Fourth Amendment, and open government—these guys are on an autocratic tear. Whenever they've been challenged (all too rarely), they simply shout "war on terror," "commander-in-chief," "support our troops," "executive privilege," "I'm the decider," or some other slam-the-door political phrase designed to silence any opposition.

Indeed, opponents are branded "enemies" who must be demonized, personally

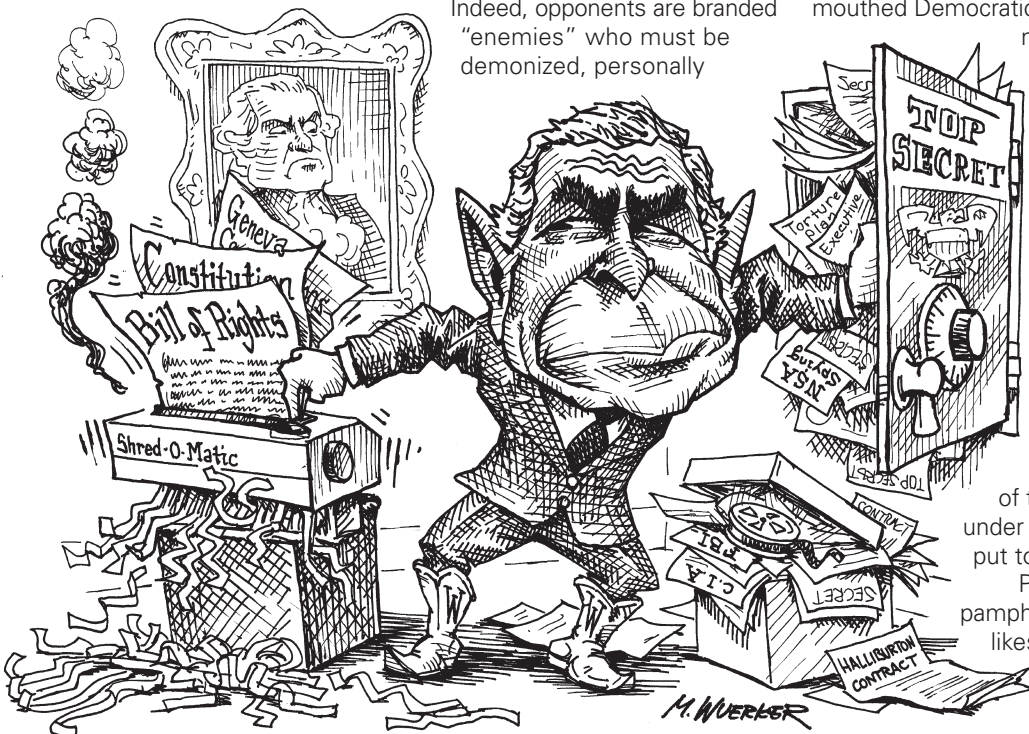
attacked, and, if possible, destroyed. Bush's find-the-loopholes lawyers assert that a president has the right to lie (even about going to war), to imprison people indefinitely (without charges, lawyers, hearings, courts, or hope), to torture people, to spy on Americans without court or congressional review, to prosecute reporters who dare to report, to rewrite laws on executive whim...and on and on.

While terrorists can do some physical harm to America, they cannot impose a supraconstitutional executive on us, they cannot draw a dark curtain of secrecy around executive actions, they cannot enthrone executive power—they cannot alter the very nature of America's historic democratic experiment. But our own leaders (not only the White House, but also a compliant Congress, a mealy mouthed Democratic opposition, jittery judges, and a lethargic media) can do all of this...and they are.

Ultimately, though, this is about us, about each of us doing what we can, where we can, to spread the word, to foment opposition, to embolden Congress and the media, to organize everyone within our reach to rebel against the extraordinary Bushite power grab.

We must remind ourselves and all of those around us that democracy is not a given in our "Land of the Free"—it is always fragile, always under assault by governmental and corporate elites trying to seize more power and wealth for their own interests. The media establishment will occasionally produce a piece here and a piece there about this assault, but to give you *Lowdowners* a sense of the enormity of what Bush & Company are doing under the cloak of war and executive privilege, we've put together a fold-out poster for you in this issue.

Please use this issue like the broadsheets and pamphlets that were printed and spread around by the likes of Thomas Paine in the formative days of America's democratic rebellion. Post it up, email it, blog it...use it!



**WHY DEMOCRATS LOSE**

Friends, it's time to take up a collection so we can seek a cure for a tragic disease. The disease is PTS—Political Timidity Syndrome—and it seems to be epidemic among Democrats in Congress.

The latest to show the tell-tale symptoms of this heart-breaking scourge is Hillary Clinton. The New York senator and Democratic contender for the presidency has announced that she's going to take on the issue that affects a majority of America's families, small businesses, corporate competitiveness, and our nation's very notion of the common good: health care. Good for her! This huge issue calls for America's boldest thinking and most principled politics.

But—uh-oh—suddenly boldness shriveled to meekness. Rather than a straightforward plan of universal care that would rally the public, a plan that would work and even be less costly than the corporatized system of profiteering we now have, Hillary succumbed to PTS. She is suggesting a cautious, convoluted scheme that would subsidize insurance policies only for low-income children who are not now covered.

It's an approach that still will leave some 40 million Americans without health care, that will do nothing about the low quality and high cost of America's system, and that will dump additional billions of our tax dollars into the pockets of the insurance giants. Explaining her business-as-usual timidity, Clinton says she can only "do what the political reality permits me to do... what the body politic will bear."

# Do Something!

**Learn more about these issues.** Check out these great groups and websites!

If you don't have access to the internet, check your local library - most have a connection you can use.

- **American Civil Liberties Union:** [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)
- **Coalition of Journalists for Open Government:** [www.cjog.org](http://www.cjog.org)
- **Code Pink:** [codepink4peace.org](http://codepink4peace.org)
- **Corp Watch:** [www.corpwatch.org](http://www.corpwatch.org)
- **Electronic Frontier Foundation:** [www.eff.org](http://www.eff.org)
- **Electronic Privacy and Information Center:** [www.epic.org](http://www.epic.org)
- **Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy:** [www.fas.org/sqp/index.htm](http://www.fas.org/sqp/index.htm)
- **Halliburton Watch:** [www.halliburtonwatch.org](http://www.halliburtonwatch.org)
- **Military Families Speak Out:** [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)
- **People for the American Way:** [www.pfaw.org](http://www.pfaw.org)
- **Public Citizen:** [www.bushsecrecy.org](http://www.bushsecrecy.org)
- **Veterans for Peace:** [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)
- **www.openthegovernment.org**
- **www.antiwar.com**
- **www.iraqbodycount.net**

Hey, the political reality is that two-thirds of Americans believe it is the government's responsibility to assure health care for everyone! What the body politic will not bear are PTS Democrats!

**THE CRAZY WAR ON MARIJUANA**

Excuse me for a moment while I vent about the mind-boggling stupidity of the autocratic, bureaucratic, right-wing, Neanderthal numbskulls who keep pushing an insane, inane, and inhumane holy war against marijuana—which is, after all, only a weed.

The most embarrassing thing for these holy warriors is that the weed is winning! They've been at this war since 1937, spending billions and billions of our tax dollars, militarizing our borders, and stomping on our Bill of Rights. They've used phone taps, garbage searches, jackbooted raids, and draconian prison terms to... well, to do what? To nab peaceful, mellow tokers who aren't bothering anyone, that's what.

Despite 60 years of spending our money, they've failed: 85% of Americans say marijuana is easy to obtain today, a third of our population says they've tried it, nearly 15 million people partake of it at least monthly.

Meanwhile, the holy warriors have become more fanatical and tuggish than ever. A marijuana arrest is made every 41 seconds in America—nine out of ten are for mere possession. In 2004, 772,000 Americans were arrested on marijuana charges—more than for all violent crimes combined. And 40,000 Americans are in prison today for this victimless crime—more than the total combined prison population of eight European countries.

Even sicker, the sanctimonious weed warriors have made it a crime for thousands of seriously sick people to get the medical benefits of using small amounts of doctor-prescribed marijuana. Weirdly, our doctors can prescribe cocaine for patients, but not pot. Worse, drug thugs from the DEA and FBI bust down the doors of these

patients, seize their dosages... and haul them to jail.

For information and action to stop this absurd war, call the Marijuana Policy Project: 202-462-5747.

**RAISING THE BAR ON EXCLUSIVITY**

It's time for another peek into "Lifestyles of the Rich... and Cranky."

The cruel irony of being rich these days is that, well, it's become so common. For example, thanks to bloated executive paychecks and Bush's pro-plutocrat policies, there are now a millionaires in America alone. It's hard to wallow in the exquisite eliteness of wealth when everyday millionaires are booking tables at your favorite four-star restaurant in the south of France or crowding the sugar-sand beaches of secluded Caribbean islands.

Luckily, though, the truly rich need no longer despair, thanks to the ruling royals of the United Arab Emirates. These guys understand the ultrawealthy, so they built the Burj-al Arab hotel in Dubai. Actually, they built it on an artificial island they created out in the Persian Gulf, reachable only by a guarded private bridge.

Taller than the Eiffel Tower and shaped like a massive, billowing sail, the "Tower of the Arabs" is a 7-star testament to excess, with gold-plated decor and rooms rising to \$28,000 per night. Guests arrive via chauffeured limousines, are served by a brigade of personal butlers, and can be pampered with such luxuries as \$300 massages "for men only." The hotel has an underwater restaurant accessible by a simulated submarine

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—continued on p. 6

voyage. The soaring building is topped by a helipad—indeed, to help launch the Burj, Tiger Woods was helicoptered in to launch a few golf balls from the helipad into the waters below.

And if you really want exclusivity, do what supermodel Naomi Campbell did in May. She got her new boyfriend, a super-rich Dubai prince, to rent every room in the Burj for three days so that she and her glitterati friends could celebrate her 36th birthday. The cost: 1.8 million bucks.

### WHERE'S OSAMA?

Remember Osama bin Laden? Wasn't he the guy behind the horrific 9/11 attack on America? Isn't he the poster boy of terrorism, which Bush pledged he'd "do whatever it takes" to eradicate? Wasn't he the fellow that George snarled he'd get "dead or alive?"

Well, yes, but Bush & Gang made a little detour to Iraq right after 9/11 and haven't found their way back to Osama. In fact, in 2002, George

himself rather sheepishly said, "I don't know where he is. I—I'll repeat what I said. I truly am not that concerned about him."

Osama bin Forgotten. While our troops, treasury, and global prestige are mired in the bloody hell of Iraq, Osama continues to issue murderous edicts from caves somewhere in...well, we don't know where.

And now, the Bushites have officially closed down the only American unit whose sole mission was to hunt for bin Laden. Code-named "Alec Station," this group of CIA professionals started tracking Osama's movements in 1995, well before he became the global face of terrorism. Last December, though, Alec Station was quietly disbanded, squandering a decade's worth of expertise and further diminishing the hunt for the terrorist leader. The closing of the Osama unit has only now become public, but apparently it has long been a victim of bureaucratic turf wars within the CIA. In recent years, Alec Station was reduced from 25 agents to eight and became a repository for inexperienced CIA officers, who were rotated into it for 90-day shifts.

Of course, the Bushites never admit any errors, so a CIA spokeswoman was trotted out to put a smiley face on the closing. "This is an agile agency," she said spritely, "and the decision was made to ensure greater reach and focus."

Huh? More "focus" by disbanding the one unit focused on Osama? What we have here is another administrative screwup caused by Bush's disastrous obsession with Iraq.

### Two ringy-dingies

Many readers of last month's issue requested phone-number contacts for two groups we featured, so here they are:

- **AIR AMERICA RADIO**, now carrying Hightower's radio commentaries twice a day and also beaming out a full schedule of progressive talk shows can be reached at: 212-871-8100.
- **BRAVE NEW FILMS**, producer of the excellent Tom DeLay DVD that includes interview, with Hightower and Molly Ivins, can be reached at 1-800-525-8212.

### Oops!

In the process of producing the economic poster for our July issue, a key line got dropped, making the item on "Deficits" appear to be wrong. The numbers are correct, but they were supposed to be 10-year projections. Here is how the two lines about the 2001-2011 surplus and the 2006-2016 deficits should read (and we've even printed them here so you can clip the item and paste it over the July poster):

Budget surplus Bush inherited in 2001 projected out to 2011	<b>\$5.6 trillion</b>
Budget deficits Bush will amass projected from now through 2016	<b>\$8.5 trillion</b>

### Sources

Since last month's issue and this month's are so laden with facts, we have posted all our sources on our brand new, zippy website [www.hightowerlowdown.org](http://www.hightowerlowdown.org)

## Public opinion

**"Let me put it to you this way. I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it. It is my style."**

—GEORGE W, NOVEMBER 2004

Bush quickly squandered his "capital," and his current numbers are in the ditch:

- **Two-thirds** of the public say that America is "off on the wrong track." — *Time* poll, June 29
- **63% disapprove** of Bush's handling of his job. — AP-Ipsos poll, July 12
- **61% disapprove** of the way Bush is handling the Iraq war; 56% say going to war there was the wrong thing to do; and 57% want either to bring all the troops home now (29%) or to decrease our troop commitment in Iraq (28%). — Quinnipiac University poll, June 1
- **In June**, Quinnipiac asked Americans to choose the worst president since World War II. Bush was the runaway winner! He was named "worst" by 34% — doubling the 17% vote for the runner-up, Dick Nixon.
- **The Pew Research Center** periodically asks people to choose among 18 one-word characterizations to best describe their impression of the president.

- top response in February 2005: "Honest"

- top response in March 2006: "Incompetent" (followed closely by "Idiot" and "Liar")

Bush's numbers are bad for him, but far worse, his performance as president (especially in Iraq) is drastically tarnishing America's image around the world. The Pew Global Attitudes Survey in June shows that the reputation of the U.S. has plummeted in 11 of the 14 nations polled.

- **In Germany**, favorable opinions of the U.S. fell from 78% in 2000 to only 37% today, and in Spain we're down from 50% to 23%.
- **The story** is even more alarming in the Muslim world. Only 30% of Indonesians have favorable opinions of our nation, down from 75% before Bush. In Pakistan, U.S. approval is only 27%, in Jordan it's 15%, and in Turkey it's 12%.

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8:08 August 2006

### WHERE BUSH'S ARROGANCE HAS TAKEN US

- 5 Why Democrats lose  
The crazy war on marijuana  
Raising the bar on exclusivity
- 6 Where's Osama?  
Two ringy-dingies  
Oops!  
Sources  
Public opinion

**“I’m the commander—see, I don’t need to explain—I do not need to explain why I say things. That’s the interesting thing about being the president. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something, but I don’t feel like owe anybody an explanation.”**

—GEORGE W., AUGUST 2002



## The war president

Number of Americans killed in Bush’s Iraq war as of August 2006: **2577**  
 What Bush press flack Tony Snow said the day the total number of American dead reached 2,500: **“It’s a number”**

Number of Americans killed since Bush declared “Mission Accomplished” on May 1, 2003: **2,438**

Number of Americans wounded (a vague term that includes such horrors as brain damage, limbs blasted off, eyes blown out, psyche shattered, etc.) in Bush’s war: **Official count - 18,777**  
**Independent count - up to 48,000**

Estimated number of Iraqi civilians (men, women, and children) killed in Bush’s war since Saddam Hussein was ousted: **38,960**

For Iraqis, the bloodiest month of the war so far: **June 2006**  
*more than 100 civilians killed per day*

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmit’s advice to Iraqis who see TV reports of innocent civilians being killed by occupying troops: **“Change the channel.”**

Percent of Iraqis who want American troops to leave: **82**

Stockpiles of Weapons of Mass Destruction found in Iraq since Bush committed Americans to war in 2003 on the basis that Saddam had and was about to use WMDs: **0**

Number of nations in the world: **192**

Number that joined Bush’s “Coalition of the Willing” (COW) to invade Iraq: **48**  
*(The list includes such military powers as Angola, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Romania, Solomon Islands, and Uganda.)*

Number of COW nations that actually sent any troops to Iraq: **39**  
*(Of these, 32 sent fewer than 1,000 troops. Many sent no fighting units, deploying only engineers, trainers, humanitarian units, and other noncombat personnel.)*

Number of the 39 COW nations contributing troops that have since withdrawn them: **17**  
*(An additional 7 have announced plans to withdraw all or part of their contingents this year.)*

Number of COW troops in Iraq: **150,000**

Number of these that are U.S. troops: **139,000**

Number of White House officials and cabinet members who have any of their immediate family in Bush’s war: **0**

**“We’re dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon.”** — **“HOWLING PAUL” WOLFOWITZ**, deputy defense secretary, testimony to Congress

MARCH 2003

## Bonus stat!

Annual salary of Stuart Baker, hired by the Bushites to be the White House “Director for Lessons Learned”: **\$106,641**  
 Number of lessons that Bush appears to have learned: **0**

## Halliburton

**“Halliburton is a unique kind of company.”**

— **DICK CHENEY**, SEPTEMBER 2003

Total value of contracts given to Halliburton for work in the Bush-Cheney “War on Terror” since 2001: **More than \$15 billion**

Amount that Halliburton pays to the Third World laborers it imports into Iraq to do the work in its dining facilities, laundries, etc.: **\$6 per 12-hour day**  
*(50 cents an hour)*

Amount that Halliburton bills us taxpayers for each of these workers: **\$50 a day**

Amount that Halliburton bills U.S. taxpayers for:  
 ■ A case of sodas: **\$45**  
 ■ Washing a bag of laundry: **\$100**

Halliburton’s campaign contributions in Bush-Cheney election years:  
 ■ In 2000: **\$285,252** (96% to Republicans)  
 ■ In 2004: **\$145,500** (89% to Republicans)  
 Plus \$365,065 from members of its board of directors (99% to Republicans)

Increase in Halliburton’s profits since Bush-Cheney took office in 2000: **379%**

Halliburton’s 2005 profit: **\$1.1 billion**  
*(highest in the corporation’s 86-year history)*

**“Since I left Halliburton to become George Bush’s vice-president, I’ve severed all of my ties with the company, gotten rid of all my financial interest. I have no financial interest in Halliburton of any kind.”**

— **FORMER CEO DICK CHENEY**, *Meet the Press*, SEPTEMBER 2003

Annual payments that Cheney has received from Halliburton since he’s been vice-president:

■ 2001: **\$205,298**     ■ 2004: **\$194,852**  
 ■ 2002: **\$162,392**     ■ 2005: **\$211,465**  
 ■ 2003: **\$178,437**

### Follow the money:

- The official White House claim before the invasion of what the war and occupation would cost U.S. taxpayers: **\$50 billion**
- As of July 2006, the total amount appropriated by Congress for Bush’s ongoing war and occupation: **\$295,634,921,248**
- Current Pentagon spending per month in Iraq: **\$8 billion**  
*(or \$185,185.19 per minute)*
- Assuming all troops return home by 2010, the projected “real costs” for the war: **More than \$1 trillion**  
*(includes veterans pay and medical costs, interest on the billions Bush has borrowed to pay for his war, etc.)*

## The imperial presidency

**“Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we.”**

— **GEORGE W.**, AUGUST 2004

### Signing statements:

When signing a particular congressional act into law, a few presidents have occasionally issued a “signing statement” to clarify their understanding of what Congress intended. These have not had the force of law and have been used discreetly in the past.

Very quietly, however, Bush has radically increased both the number and reach of these statements, essentially asserting that the president can arbitrarily decide which laws he will obey.

Number of signing statements issued by Bush as of July 2006: **more than 800** (This is more than the combined total of all 42 previous presidents.)

A few examples of congressionally passed laws he has effectively annulled through these extralegal signing statements:

- a ban against torture of prisoners by the U.S. military
- a requirement that the FBI periodically report to Congress on how it is using the Patriot Act to search our homes and secretly seize people’s private papers
- a ban against storage in military databases of intelligence about Americans that was obtained illegally
- a directive for the executive branch to transmit scientific information to Congress “uncensored and without delay” when requested

Provision of the Constitution clearly stating that Congress alone has the power “to make all laws”: **Article 1, Section 8**

Provision of the Constitution clearly stating that the president “shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed”: **Article 2, Section 3**

Name of the young lawyer in the Reagan administration who wrote a 1986 strategy memo on how to pervert the use of signing statements in order to concentrate more power in the executive branch, as Bush is now doing: **Samuel Alito, named to the U.S. Supreme Court by Bush this year**

### National security letters:

These are secret executive writs that the infamous 2001 Patriot Act authorizes the FBI to issue to public libraries, internet firms, banks, and others. Upon receiving an NSL, the institution or firm is required to turn over any private records it holds on you, me, or whomever the agents have chosen to search.

Who authorizes the FBI to issue these secret writs? The FBI itself.

- Surely the agents have to get a search warrant, a grand jury subpoena, or a court’s approval? **No**
- But to issue an NSL, an agent must show probable cause that the person being searched has committed some crime, right? **No**
- Well, don’t officials have to inform citizens that their records are being seized so they can defend themselves or protest? **No**
- Number of NSLs issued by various FBI offices last year alone: **9,254**

## Interesting fact:

The *New York Times* reported this June that Bush was running another spy program. This one was snooping through international banking records, including millions of bank transactions done by innocent Americans. George reacted angrily to the exposure, branding the *Times* report “disgraceful” and declaring that revelation of his spy program “does great harm to the

Cash bonus paid to Cheney by Halliburton just before he took office:	<b>\$1.4 million</b>
Retirement package he was given in 2000 after only 5 years as CEO:	<b>\$20 million</b>
Number of times in the past two years that Republicans have killed Sen. Byron Dorgan's amendment to set up a Truman-style committee on war profiteering to investigate Halliburton:	<b>3</b>
Naughty word Cheney used during a Senate photo session in 2004 to assail Sen. Patrick Leahy, who had criticized Cheney's ongoing ties to Halliburton:	<b>"Go #@!% yourself."</b>

# Regime of secrecy

"Democracies die behind closed doors."

## — APPEALS COURT JUDGE DAMON KEITH,

Ruling in a 2002 case that the Bushites cannot hold deportation hearings in secret

■ Increase in the number of government documents marked "secret" between 2001 and 2004:	<b>81%</b>
■ Number of government documents stamped "secret" in 2001:	<b>8.6 million</b>
■ Number of government documents stamped "secret" in 2004:	<b>15.6 million</b> <i>(a new record)</i>
■ Cost to taxpayers of classifying and securing documents in 2004:	<b>\$7.2 billion</b> <i>(\$460 per document)</i>
■ Number of previously declassified documents that the CIA tried to reclassify as "secret" under a 2001 secret agreement with the National Archives, even though many had already been published and some date back to the Korean War:	<b>25,315</b>
■ Number of different "official designations" the government now has to classify nonsecret information so it still is kept out of the public's reach:	<b>Between 50 and 60</b> <i>(They include such stamps as CBU - Controlled But Unclassified, SBU - Sensitive But Unclassified, and LOU—Limited Official Use Only.)</i>
■ The only vice-president in history who has claimed that he, like the president, has the inherent authority to mark "secret" on any document he chooses:	<b>"Buckshot" Cheney</b>
■ Number of documents Cheney has classified:	<b>That's a secret.</b> <i>(He claims he does not have to report this to anyone—not even the president.)</i>
■ Of the 7,045 advisory committee meetings held by the Bushites in 2004, percentage that were completely closed to the public, contrary to the clear intent of the Federal Advisory Committee Act:	<b>64%</b> <i>(a new record)</i>
■ Number of times from 1953 to 1975 (the peak of the Cold War) that presidents invoked the "state secrets" privilege, which grants them unilateral power in extraordinary instances literally to shut down court cases on the grounds they could reveal secrets that the president doesn't want disclosed:	<b>4</b>
■ Number of times the same privilege was invoked between 2001 and 2006:	<b>At least 24</b>
■ Under Clinton, Attorney General Janet Reno issued an official memo instructing agencies to release as much information as possible to the public. In October 2001, AG John Ashcroft issued a memo canceling Reno's approach, expressly instructing agencies to look for reasons to deny the public access to information and pledging to support the denials if the agencies were sued.	
■ 2005 FOIA requests still awaiting a response at year's end:	<b>31%</b> <i>(a one-third increase over the 2004 backlog)</i>
■ Median waiting time to get an answer on FOIA request from Bush's justice department:	<b>863 days</b>

## NSA eavesdropping:

In 2001, Bush issued a secret order for the National Security Agency to begin vacuuming up massive numbers of telephone and internet exchanges by U.S. citizens, illegally seizing this material without any judicial approval or informing Congress, as required by law.

**Number of Americans** who have had their phone and internet communications taken by NSA: **Just about everyone!**  
*(NSA is tapping into the entire database of long-distance calls and internet messages run through AT&T and probably other companies as well.)*

**In May of this year**, the Justice Department abruptly halted an internal investigation that was trying to uncover the name of the top officials who had authorized NSA's warrantless, unconstitutional program. Who killed this probe, which was requested by Congress?  
**George W himself!** *(He directed NSA simply to refuse security clearances for the department's legal investigators.)*

**What happened to NSA Director** Michael Hayden, who was the key architect of Bush's illegal eavesdropping program and the one who would've formally denied clearances to Justice Department investigators? **In May, Bush promoted him to head the CIA.**

**This past May**, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales warned that journalists who report on NSA's spy program could be prosecuted under the antiquated Espionage Act of 1917.

**Times in U.S. history** this act has been used to go after the press: **0**

**Margin by which** the U.S. House in 1917 voted down an amendment to make the Espionage Act apply to journalists: **184-144**

## Name that guy!

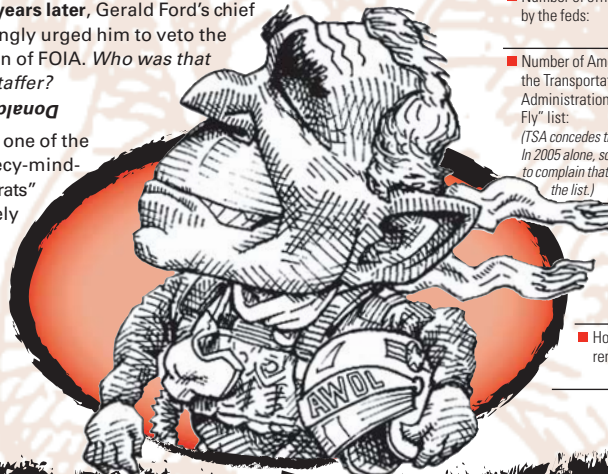
In 1966, a young Republican congressman stood against his party's elders to cosponsor the original **Freedom of Information Act**, valiantly declaring that public records "are public property." He said that FOIA "will make it considerably **more difficult** for secrecy-minded bureaucrats to decide arbitrarily that the people should be denied access to information on the conduct of government."  
*Who was that virtuous law maker?*

**Donald Rumsfeld!**

Only **eight years later**, Gerald Ford's chief of staff strongly urged him to veto the continuation of FOIA. *Who was that dastardly staffer?*

**Donald Rumsfeld!**

**Who is now one of the chief "secrecy-minded bureaucrats" who routinely violates OIA's principles?**  
**Right, him again!**



# ARE YOU SAFE YET?

**The Slowdown**  
<http://www.hightowerlowdown.org>

United States." The White House and its right-wing acolytes promptly launched a "**Hate-the-Times**" political campaign.

Name the guy who was the first to reveal that such a **bank-spying** program was in the works: **George W. Bush!** At a September 2001 press conference, he announced that he'd just signed an **executive order** to monitor all international bank transactions.

## Watch lists:

From the Bushites' ill-fated Total Information Awareness program (meant to monitor all of our computerized transactions) to the robust efforts by Rumsfeld's Pentagon to barge into the domestic surveillance game, America under Bush has fast become The Watched Society.

- Number of data-mining programs being run secretly on us by the federal government: **Nearly 200 separate programs at 52 agencies**
- Number of "local activity reports" submitted to the Pentagon in 2004 under the "Threat and Local Observation Notice" program (TALON), which directed military officers throughout our country to keep an eye on suspicious activities by civilians: **More than 5,000**  
*(They included such "threats" as peace demonstrators and 10 activists protesting outside Halliburton's headquarters.)*
- Number of official "watch lists" maintained by the feds: **More than a dozen run by 9 different agencies**
- Number of Americans on the Transportation Security Administration's "No-Fly" list: **That's a secret.**  
*(TSA concedes that it's in the tens of thousands. In 2005 alone, some 30,000 people called TSA to complain that their names were mistakenly on the list.)*
- Most famous citizen who is on the No-Fly list and has been repeatedly pulled aside by TSA for additional screenings at airports: **Sen. Ted Kennedy**
- How can you get your name removed from TSA list? **That's a secret.**