

“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 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**

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

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** (Of these, 32 sent fewer than 1,000 troops. Many sent no fighting units, deploying only engineers, trainers, humanitarian units, and other noncombat personnel.)

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt’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Number of the 39 COW nations contributing troops that have since withdrawn them: **17** (An additional 7 have announced plans to withdraw all or part of their contingents this year.)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” WOLFOVITZ**, 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**
- 2002: **\$162,392**
- 2003: **\$178,437**
- 2004: **\$194,852**
- 2005: **\$211,465**

Cash bonus paid to Cheney by Halliburton just before he took office: **\$1.4 million**

Retirement package he was given in 2000 after only 5 years as CEO: **\$20 million**

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: **3**

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: **“Go #@!% yourself.”**

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: **81%**

■ Number of government documents stamped “secret” in 2001: **8.6 million**

■ Number of government documents stamped “secret” in 2004: **15.6 million** (a new record)

■ Cost to taxpayers of classifying and securing documents in 2004: **\$7.2 billion** (\$460 per document)

■ 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: **25,315**

■ Number of different “official designations” the government now has to classify nonsecret information so it still is kept out of the public’s reach: **Between 50 and 60** (They include such stamps as CBU - Controlled But Unclassified, SBU - Sensitive But Unclassified, and LOU - Limited Official Use Only.)

■ 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: **“Buckshot” Cheney**

■ Number of documents Cheney has classified: **That’s a secret.** (He claims he does not have to report this to anyone—not even the president.)

■ 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: **64%** (a new record)

■ 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: **4**

■ Number of times the same privilege was invoked between 2001 and 2006: **At least 24**

■ 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: **31%** (a one-third increase over the 2004 backlog)

■ Median waiting time to get an answer on FOIA request from Bush’s justice department: **863 days**

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**

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**

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 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.**

Name that guy!

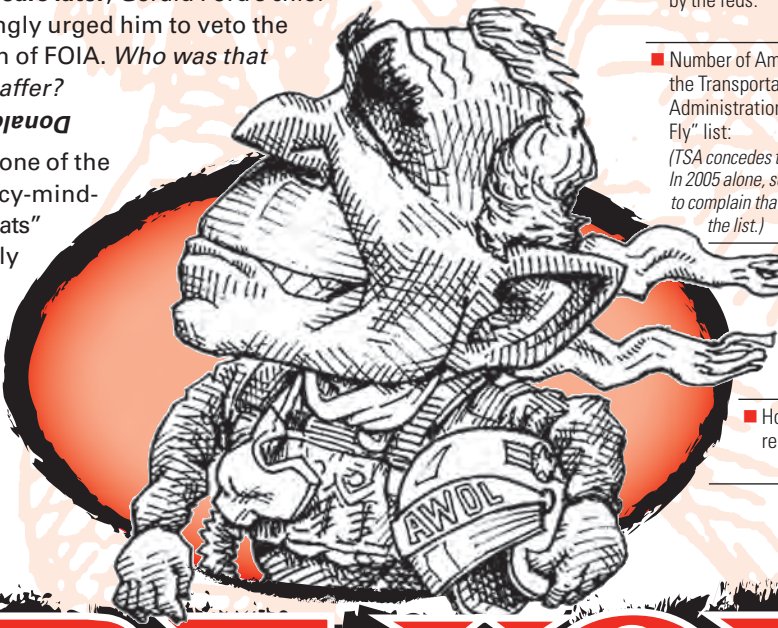
In 1966, a young Republican congressman stood against his party’s elders to cosponsor the original **Freedom of Information Act**, valiantly declaring that public records “are public property.” He said that FOIA “will make it considerably more difficult for secrecy-minded bureaucrats to decide arbitrarily 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 **LOWDOWN** <http://www.hightowerlowdown.org>