

WHO IS TO BE "DETAINED"?

Halliburton, the giant government contractor with its own personal sugar daddy, Dick Cheney, keeps getting multibillion-dollar, no-bid contracts from the BushCheney regime, despite having been found guilty of shoddy work, massive cost-overruns, and fraudulent billings.

Its latest windfall, however, is not merely worrisome to tax payers but should set off an alarm regarding the Bushites' antidemocratic penchant to extend ever more police and military power over We the People.

Halliburton has received a \$385 million grant to build a network of detention centers across our country. Each of these centers, which are to be run by homeland-security authorities and possibly located on unused military bases, could "detain" and hold up to 5,000 people.

"Detain," of course, is a euphemism for "incarcerate"—or "lock up." And "center" is a gentle term for "prison."

So why does America suddenly need to spend more than a third of a billion dollars to establish a new mass prison complex in our country? The feds and Halliburton cryptically say that the detention centers could be needed for "some kind of mass migration" or for "the rapid development of new programs." When asked what "new programs" might mean, a Halliburton spokeswoman said she could provide no additional information.

The Bushites refer to this as a "contingency contract," saying that the detention centers might never be built, but that Halliburton will have the cash and authority to move quickly if and when the authorities give the go-ahead. The corporation's executive vice president says that Halliburton is "gratified" because the deal "builds on our extremely strong track record in the arena of emergency man-

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The *High Tower* **LOWDOWN**

■ Edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer ■ Vol. 8 No. 05 ■ May 2006

The Bush push for an imperial presidency—part 2

Who's spying on us? Rumsfeld's Pentagon takes the lead

In 1928, Justice Louis Brandeis wrote that the real threat to American freedom was not from an outside assault, but from the devious manipulations of our own misguided leaders. "The greatest dangers to liberty," he observed, "lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning, but without understanding."

Nearly 80 years after Brandeis's warning, the zealots have been brought in from the far-right fringe on the golden chariot of George W, and they've shown that they have no understanding of the essence of America, which includes our hard-won liberties, our rule of law, and our system of checked-and-balanced governmental power.

But these men of zeal—Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, et al—are hardly well-meaning. They are deliberately and determinedly striving to impose the AntiAmerica on our own land—an unrecognizable America of supreme executive authority, constant surveillance of the citizenry, secret government, and suppression of dissent. Their chief weapon is fear. They feverishly wave the bloody flag of 9/11, shouting that the citizenry must surrender liberties or be attacked again by The Madmen, that we mustn't question authority for this only encourages The Madmen, that all government operations must be cloaked in a dark veil of secrecy to keep The Madmen off balance, and that executive and police power must drastically expand to protect

us from The Madmen.

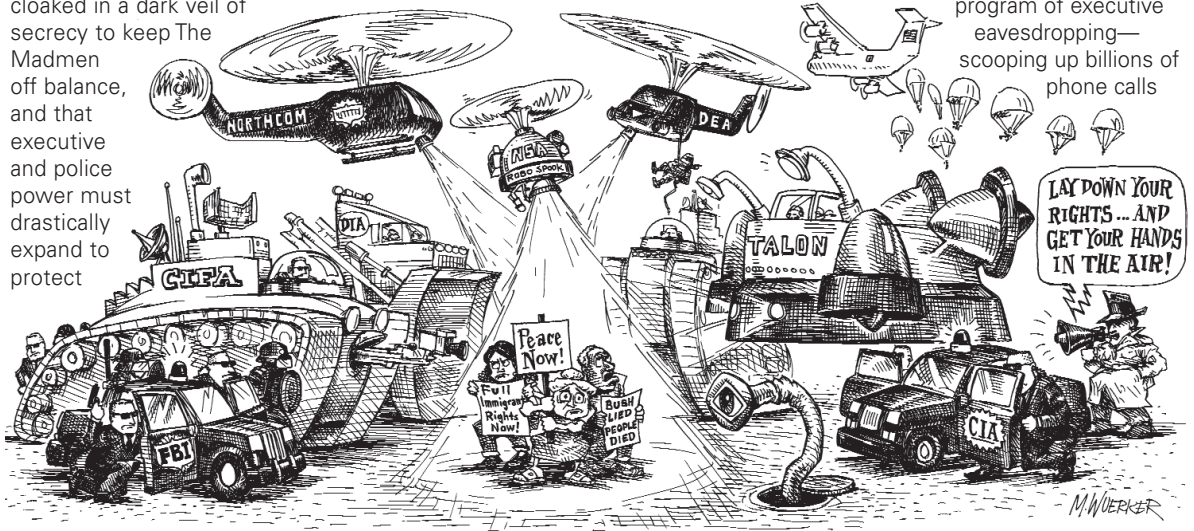
While claiming that they must "secure" America for a post-9/11 world, the BushCheney zealots are taking us back to a pre-1776 world. They have been astonishingly successful in a remarkably short time, insidiously taking autocratic step after step, which a compliant Congress and the establishment media have mostly missed, ignored, minimized—or applauded. These two "institutions of vigilance" have failed us. So it is up to We The People to assert ourselves against this dangerous rise of authoritarianism in Bush's America.

The spook society

"You can fool some of the people all the time, and those are the ones you have to concentrate on," George W said with a laugh at Washington's Gridiron dinner in 2001.

If only we'd known then that behind George's snickers, the Bushites were serious. Employing a combination of deceit, defiance, arrogance, flag-waving, and secrecy, they have fooled a majority of Congress and the media into accepting the overlay of a "spook society" on our Land of the Free. The far-reaching extent of their efforts are only now becoming clear.

Last month's *Lowdown* covered Bush's secret and blatantly illegal directive for the National Security Agency to spy on citizens here at home. This clandestine, four-year program of executive eavesdropping—scooping up billions of phone calls



agement support.”

So who is to be managed, and in support of what policy?

SPORTS “BRANDALISM”

If you think it's a great idea to hoist over our stadiums such lovable names as Office Depot Center, Bank Of America Stadium, and Enron Field (oops!), how about branding the teams themselves? The first victim is the major league soccer team formerly known as the MetroStars. The Austrian corporation that produces Red Bull, the energy drink and cocktail mixer, recently bought this New York City team. So—*shazam!*—the MetroStars are now the New York Red Bulls, and the players trot out for each match in jerseys bearing the corporate logo. As the team president gamely says, “We are part of the Red Bull family.”

Next: the Wal-Mart Warriors, the Yahoo! Yankees, or the Exxon Mobil Cowboys?

DON'T LOOK DOWN ON IMMIGRANTS LOOK UP

Here's a modest suggestion for dealing with illegal immigration: Instead of everyone looking down on all those impoverished Mexicans coming here for jobs, why not start looking up—focusing on the posh executive suites of corporate America, which have saddled both U.S. and Mexican working families with trade and labor policies that knock us all down?

Let's start with NAFTA. Remember that Bill Clinton, the GOP, and all the corporate lobbyists promised that this trade deal would bring prosperity to Mexican laborers—thus stopping the flow of illegal workers into the USA. Well, 12 years later, real wages in Mexico are lower than before NAFTA was imposed, 19 million more Mexicans have fallen into poverty, and about half of Mexico's people are struggling to live on less

and emails sent or received by innocent Americans—has now been getting wide media coverage. But to focus only on this one piece is to miss the more startling reality: the quiet installation inside our country of a massive snooper complex, much of it initiated, funded, and controlled by Donnie Rumsfeld's Orwellian Pentagon.

Since the founding of America, a central tenet of our liberty has been that the military is not to be turned on our own people. Violations of this guiding rule have occurred in the past, but rarely and only temporarily—and when it's been violated, public outcry has forced the reinstatement of the rule.

Bush & Company, however, has not only turned loose the military to spy extensively on the American people, but has also asserted the right to do so in perpetuity. Its claim is that 9/11 turned the homeland into a foreign battlefield, so the nation's historic prohibition against military surveillance of Americans is null and void. And since this war on terrorists has no end (“the long war,” Rumsfeld calls it) the Bushites maintain that the Pentagon can engage in domestic spying ad infinitum.

This military intrusion into our privacy has come with a heavy dose of linguistic perversions by top officials. For example, a secret Pentagon memo from November 5, 2001, has now surfaced. In it, the Army's chief intelligence officer insists that while the Pentagon cannot “collect” information on citizens who have no connection to foreign terrorists, it can “receive” such information. “Remember,” he wrote with Machiavellian delight, “merely receiving information does not constitute ‘collection’.... [Military intelligence] may receive information from anyone, anytime.”

Meanwhile, the ever-sneaky Bushites have quietly been pushing

Bush annuls a law

Down in the recently renewed USA Patriot Act is a small but important provision requiring the Bushites to keep close track of how the FBI uses the new search-and-seizure powers granted by the bill and mandating that the White House report this information to Congress by set dates. The Bushites had opposed this provision, for they imperiously believe that they are not accountable to anyone, but it passed anyway.

So Bush got sneaky. He held a big media event when he signed the bill. After the media had departed, however, George snuck an executive “signing statement” onto it. In this extralegal addendum, Bush autocratically asserts that, despite Congress's clear legal directive, he does not consider himself bound to tell lawmakers how the Patriot Act's expanded police powers are being used. He declares that if he thinks that disclosure would “impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative process of the executive [whatever the hell that is], or the performance of the executive's constitutional duties,” he can just ignore the law.

Excuse us, George, but the Constitution is clear on this: Congress alone writes the laws of our land, and it is the president's constitutional duty to execute those laws faithfully. But the heck with the Constitution and presidential duty—“Bleep you, Congress,” snorts Bush, “I'm *El Rey!*”

legislation that would compel the FBI and other police agencies to give information that they collect on you and me to the Pentagon, as long as the info is somehow “related” to a foreign intelligence investigation. This does not mean that, to spy on you, the snoops must have cause to think that you are in any way tied to terrorism, but only that they claim their investigation to be vaguely related to some foreign matter—a catchall that sweeps up war protestors, for example.

The legislation has yet to pass, but intelligence watchdogs say that Bush has already implemented it by fiat—Executive Order 13388 appears to authorize the Pentagon to access domestic intelligence files. Also, the military has already created a robust *collection* system of its own. A new Northern Command, established in Colorado in 2001 to monitor Americans, now employs more intelligence analysts than does the Homeland Security Department. Also, the Marines launched an oper-

ation under a 2004 executive order for the “collection, retention and dissemination of information concerning U.S. persons,” noting that the corps will be “increasingly required to perform domestic missions.” And, during the past five years, each of the service branches has created its own domestic snooping enterprises. As Sen. Ron Wyden complained last year, “We are deputizing the military to spy on law-abiding Americans in America. This is a huge leap without even a [public] hearing.”

TOTAL INFORMATION AWARENESS. A nightmare right out of 1984, complete with the ominous, all-seeing name it was given, TIA was the ugly spawn of John Poindexter, the convicted master schemer behind the Iran-Contra scandal in Reagan's White House. George W and Rummy had snuck him back into the government in 2001, ensconcing him deep inside the Pentagon, where he ran a team to develop

Do something!

Information and Agitation: Here are a few of the excellent watchdog and activist groups that monitor and challenge the BushCheney implementation of a spook society in America:

■ **Center for National Security Studies**

1120 19th Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
202-721-5650
www.cnss.org

■ **American Civil Liberties Union**

125 Broad Street., 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004
www.aclu/spyfiles

■ **Electronic Privacy Information Center**

1718 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20009

■ **Federation of American Scientists, Project on Government Secrecy**

1717 K Street, NW, Suite 209
Washington, DC 20036
202-546-3300
www.fas.org

TIA's unprecedented and voracious ability to grab every speck of private data on Americans from every public and corporate databank. The plan was to put it all in a Pentagon super-computer and mine it to build files on anyone the authorities might deem suspicious.

Luckily, a couple of years ago, this massive invasive madness came to light. The public howled so loudly that Congress rose up and demanded that the program be terminated—and Poindexter was forced to slink away.

But wait—who's that guy in the shadows, and what's he doing? He's Brian Sharkey, Poindexter's close pal who was a key player in the creation of TIA. He now heads a firm that's been getting government contracts to keep pursuing TIA's shadowy projects. In an internal email to TIA's subcontractors, Sharkey gleefully announced: "Fortunately, a new sponsor has come forward that will enable us to continue much of our previous work." He added that the TIA effort would henceforth go by the cryptic code name of "Basketball."

The new "sponsor" of this hoops game is a highly classified outfit called Advanced Research and Development Activity (ARDA) that is housed inside NSA (yes, the very agency that's been running George W's illegal domestic spying program). In a February public hearing, Sen. Wyden asked Bush's director of national security and the head of the FBI a direct question: "We want to know if Mr. Poindexter's programs are going on somewhere else." We don't know, replied our nation's top two snoops. When a reporter asked an NSA spokesman whether TIA had been moved to ARDA, he clammed shut: "We can neither confirm nor deny actual or alleged projects."

ARDA itself is now being moved to the national intelligence agency and given a new name: "Disruptive Technology Office." It's hard to follow all of the trick passes of "Basketball," but the bottom line is that TIA was halted in name only, having been stealthily slipped into another agency that has been moved and had its own name changed.

SALUTE YOUR BIG BROTHER. Three years ago, the Pentagon set up a new, ultra-secret agency called CIFA, for Counterintelligence Field Activity. Its initial task was to detect terrorist plots against military installations in the U.S., but two years ago, a directive from the Pentagon's top ranks ordered CIFA to broaden its scope by creating and maintaining "a domestic law enforcement database." The agency's motto became "Counterintelligence to the Edge."

In May 2003, Rumsfeld's top deputy, "Howling Paul" Wolfowitz, authorized a new snooping operation code-named TALON (Threat And Local Observation Notice). It directed military officers throughout the country to collect raw information about suspicious activities by local people and to feed reports on them into CIFA's humming computers. In its first year alone, TALON's far-flung network of military snoops fed more than 5,000 "local activity" reports into the electronic maw of CIFA.

Nearly everything about CIFA, including its budget, is kept secret, but it is known that the agency has generously spread its budgetary wealth to Pentagon contractors. Northrop Grumman, for example, received funds to develop a CIFA database dubbed "PersonSearch," and Computer Sciences Corporation got a grant for an electronic system to detect and monitor people's "abnormal activities and behaviors."

You might say, *okay, Hightower, but surely these fine public servants and civic-minded corporations are merely protecting us homelanderers by watching known terrorist types with Arab-sounding names and Muslim affiliations. Right?*

Uh-uh. Forget about merely needing to defend the rights of Arab-Americans—the Pentagon is invading everyone's liberties. You could ask these folks:

In October 2004, the Broward County Anti-War Coalition was discovered by the ever-alert snoops to be planning a demonstration outside a military recruitment office. The group ended up in the CIFA database, even though the only crime of the 15-20 members who protested was to wave a giant sign proclaiming, "Bush Lied."

In 2004, George Main, head of the Sacramento chapter of Vietnam Veterans for Peace, had organized a small Veterans Day protest in front of a military office. Not only did he and his VVP buddies end up with their names in a TALON report, but he also got a call from his government the night before the protest, pointedly suggesting that he was a threat to national security. "It was very intimidating to have a special agent call out of the ether," George says.

About 10 peace activists who showed up outside Halliburton's Houston headquarters in June 2004 also were reported to CIFA by a TALON team. Why would Halliburton warrant coverage under a program supposedly designed to stave off attacks on military installations? Pentagon officials say that its "force protection" mission now includes its private contractors.

These intrusions into perfectly legitimate First Amendment activities are not isolated mess-ups by a few overzealous military officers.

than \$5 a day.

CEOs in our country, the ruling elites in Mexico, and the political puppets of both deliberately created this NAFTA economy of a few fabulously rich families and an impoverished working class. Now here they come again, fostering xenophobia, proposing an absurd and shameful wall along our shared border, and encouraging a new bracero program to turn Mexicans earning low wages at home into a permanent flow of indentured workers for U.S. businesses.

Meanwhile, these same corporations and their political flunkies have been busting wages here at home, offshoring middle-class jobs, canceling pensions and health-care plans, waging war against labor unions, and shredding our social contract.

To deal effectively with illegal immigration, let's restore our labor laws so they actually help the workaday majority of people, raising middle-class possibilities here and in Mexico.

THE MANNING MEMO

Back in March 2003, Bush said that if Saddam Hussein did not give up his weapons of mass destruction, Iraq would face war. But earlier, in a January 31 closed-door meeting, Bush told his British buddy Tony Blair that the attack would take place even if no WMDs were found. Indeed, George and Tony candidly conceded that the discovery of such weapons was unlikely.

This deliberate deception is revealed in a confidential five-page memo written by David Manning, Blair's top foreign-policy advisor, who was at the meeting.

Manning records that both Bush and Blair were uptight that the WMDs were not going to be found, so George W offered another fabrication to give them an excuse to attack. He suggested that the U.S. would paint one of our own surveillance planes in the colors of

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the United Nations and fly it over Iraq, hoping that Saddam would be provoked into shooting it down. Then the U.S. and Brits could invade, claiming that they were retaliating for Saddam's attack on the UN.

Ultimately, Bush and Blair stuck with the WMD lie, apparently assuming that the war would be quick, a new Iraqi democracy would spring up, and no one would remember all that WMD stuff.

Meanwhile, more than 2,300 Americans have died, Iraq is a bloody mess, and George W says his war of lies will continue at least until 2009.

A NEW HORROR FROM THE IRS

It's time to call 9-1-1 about an IRS proposal to change Section 7216 of the Internal Revenue Code. This regulation would authorize giants like H & R Block or any other tax preparer to sell the contents of your private tax return to any corporation wanting to buy it! All of your personal contact information—including your Social Security number—could be sold, as well as information about your income, employer, medical expenses, children, charitable donations, etcetera.

Who's pushing this crass sell-off of our privacy? A powerful lobby of data brokers, including Choicepoint, credit companies like MasterCard, and marketers who want to use your 1040 filing to target you for sales.

The IRS says your data will not be sold unless you sign a form authorizing your tax preparer to do it. But it's all too easy for this so-called "consent" to be shuffled in with the stack of forms you have to sign to complete your filing, or to reduce it to fine-print, boiler-plate language that no one reads.

Our tax-return information should not be sold. Period. To learn more, call the Public Interest Research Group at 202-546-9707.

Even the Pentagon concedes that thousands of TALON reports have been filed on totally innocent, non-threatening civilians and are retained in CIFA's computer banks.

DATA MINING. The Pentagon is hardly alone in rummaging through America's vast array of computerized records—collecting, cross-checking, storing, analyzing, and monitoring trillions of bits of our personal data, from our credit-card transactions and our phone calls to every single internet search we've ever made. The Government Accountability Office reports that 52 federal agencies now operate nearly 200 of these data-mining programs, building files on anyone that the computers and bureaucrats deem the least bit suspicious. As one privacy expert puts it, "We have lists that are having baby lists at this point. They're spawning faster than rabbits."

The irony is that this mass invasion of our privacy does nothing to make Americans safer. Internet security expert Bruce Schneier points out that these data-mining systems are "so flooded with false alarms" that they're "useless," forcing agents to waste money and time chasing after thousands of innocent people.

POLITICAL ENEMIES. Dick Nixon must be grinning in his grave, for the FBI is now reprising the abusive role it played in tracking down Tricky Dick's infamous enemies list. The FBI's own "terrorist" files show that the agency has again been spying on such non-threats as peaceful demonstrators at the 2004 political conventions, while also maintaining a "Terrorist Watch" list that includes such groups as "Food Not Bombs"—a volunteer group that serves vegetarian meals to homeless people.

Also, in 2002, the FBI's Pittsburgh office spied on a group of "terrorists" operating in a "cell" called the Thomas Merton Center for Peace and Justice. An agency memo warned that the center "holds daily leaflet distribution activities in downtown Pittsburgh." The memo notes that the Merton Center "is a left-wing organization advocating, among many political causes, pacifism."

Pacifism! Holy J. Edgar Hoover! Forget about terrorists attacks—there are pacifists passing out leaflets in Pittsburgh!

SECRET SERVICE. Speaking of disruptive, the newly extended Patriot Act creates a new class of federal felon: the disruptor.

This chilling provision, tucked into the bill in January without a hearing or debate, authorizes the Secret Service "to charge suspects with breaching security or disruptive behavior at National Special Security Events." What is NSSE? An event where the president or other protected official "will be temporarily visiting"—such as a public speech, a political rally, an inauguration ball, the Olympics, the Super Bowl, or any other event designated by the Secret Service as being of "national significance."

We've seen that simply wearing an anti-Bush T-shirt or having a pro-Democrat bumper sticker is enough to get you branded a disruptor, bounced from a Bush event, and thrown in jail. But this provision broadens the reach of Bush's exclusion zones, sanctions the lockdown on free speech and assembly rights, and turns what was a trespassing misdemeanor into a felony. Also, you can be considered a disruptor even if the VIP has not arrived at the NSSE or has already left. Under this provi-

sion, not only is the public official protected from "disruptors," but also the NSSE itself becomes the protectee, criminalizing free speech at public events.

UnAmerican

There are a thousand other cuts that the Bushites are making to America's Bill of Rights, the rule of law, and separation of powers. Theirs has become, for example, the most secret government in our history, spending billions of tax dollars a year to classify millions of even mundane documents, issuing executive fiats to deny We The People access to crucial public information under right-to-know laws, and trying to make it a federal crime not only to leak internal executive information (unless, of course, the White House does the leaking), but also to receive any leaked info.

The Bushites have made unprecedented efforts to silence scientists and dissenters within government. This administration has also launched a sweeping array of "citizen watch" programs—with names like Coastal Beacon, CAT Eyes, and Eagle Eyes—enlisting individuals and groups to spy on neighbors and report even the most unsubstantiated gossip to authorities. The eerie slogan of these watch programs is "Be our eyes and ears so we can calm your fears."

Using its never-ending war as a bugaboo, the BushCheney regime is asserting that it is entitled to operate as a *military presidency*. The Madmen hate our freedoms, the Bushites screech, so in order to defeat The Madmen, our freedoms must be suspended...for as long as it takes. Not only is that grotesquely absurd, it is entirely un-American.

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