

# 10-Year U.S. Strategic Plan For Detention Camps Revives Proposals From Oliver North

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*Editor's Note: A recently announced contract for a Halliburton subsidiary to build immigrant detention facilities is part of a longer-term Homeland Security plan titled ENDGAME, which sets as its goal the removal of "all removable aliens" and "potential terrorists." Scott is author of "Drugs, Oil, and War: The United States in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Indochina" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). He is completing a book on "The Road to 9/11." Visit his Web site at <http://www.peterdalescott.net>.*



The Halliburton subsidiary KBR (formerly Brown and Root) announced on Jan. 24 that it had been awarded a \$385 million contingency contract by the Department of Homeland Security to build detention camps. Two weeks later, on Feb. 6, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced that the Fiscal Year 2007 federal budget would allocate over \$400 million to add 6,700 additional detention beds (an increase of 32 percent over 2006). This \$400 million allocation is more than a four-fold increase over the FY 2006 budget, which provided only \$90 million for the same purpose.

Both the contract and the budget allocation are in partial fulfillment of an ambitious 10-year Homeland Security strategic plan, code-named ENDGAME, authorized in 2003. According to a 49-page Homeland Security document on the plan, ENDGAME expands "a mission first articulated in the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798." Its goal is the capability to "remove all removable aliens," including "illegal economic migrants, aliens who have committed criminal acts, asylum-seekers (required to be retained by law) or potential terrorists."

There is no question that the Bush administration is under considerable political pressure to increase the detentions of illegal immigrants, especially from across the Mexican border. Confrontations along the border are increasingly violent, often involving the drug traffic.

But the problem of illegal immigration cannot be separated from other Bush administration policies: principally the retreat from traditional American programs designed to combat poverty in Latin America. In Florida last week, Democratic Party leader Howard Dean attacked the new federal budget for its almost 30 percent cut in development aid to Latin America and the Caribbean.

In truth, both parties have virtually abandoned the John F. Kennedy vision of an Alliance for Progress in Latin America. Kennedy's hope was that, by raising the standard of living of Latin America's poor, there would be less pressure on them to emigrate to the United States.

That vision foundered when successive administrations, both Democratic and Republican, contributed to the overthrow of democratically elected governments in Brazil, Chile and elsewhere, replacing them with oppressive dictatorships.

Since about 1970, the policies of the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund have also aggravated the problem of poverty in the rest of the world, especially Latin America. U.S. programs abroad, like programs at home, are now designed principally around the concept of security — above all for oil installations and pipelines.

In consequence, the United States is being redefined as a vast gated community, hoping to isolate itself by force from its poverty-stricken neighbors. Inside the U.S. fortress sit 2.1 million prisoners, a greater percentage of the population than in any other nation. ENDGAME's crash program is designed to house additional detainees who have not been convicted of crimes.

Significantly, both the KBR contract and the ENDGAME plan are open-ended. The contract calls for a response to "an emergency influx of immigrants, or to support the rapid development of new programs" in the event of other emergencies, such as "a natural disaster." "New programs" is of course a term with no precise limitation. So, in the current administration, is ENDGAME's goal of removing "potential terrorists."

It is relevant that in 2002, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced his desire to see camps for U.S. citizens deemed to be "enemy combatants." On Feb. 17 of this year, in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spoke of the harm being done to the country's security, not just by the enemy, but also by what he called "news informers" who needed to be combated in "a contest of wills." Two days earlier, citing speeches critical of Bush by Al Gore, John Kerry, and Howard Dean, conservative columnist Ben Shapiro called for "legislation to prosecute such sedition."

Since 9/11 the Bush administration has implemented a number of inter-related programs, which had been planned for secretly in the 1980s under President Reagan. These so-called "Continuity of Government" or COG proposals included vastly expanded detention capabilities, warrantless eavesdropping and detention, and preparations for greater use of martial law.

Prominent among the secret planners of this program in the 1980s were then-Congressman Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, who at the time was in private business as CEO of the drug company G.D. Searle.

The principal desk officer for the program was Oliver North, until he was forced to resign in 1986 over Iran-Contra.

When planes crashed into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, Vice President Cheney's response, after consulting President Bush, was to implement a classified "Continuity of Government" plan for the first time, according to the 9/11 Commission report. As the Washington Post later explained, the order "dispatched a shadow government of about 100 senior civilian managers to live and work secretly outside Washington, activating for the first time long-standing plans."

What these managers in this shadow government worked on has never been reported. But it is significant that the group that prepared ENDGAME was, as the Homeland Security

document puts it, “chartered in September 2001.” For ENDGAME’s goal of a capacious detention capability is remarkably similar to Oliver North’s controversial Rex-84 “readiness exercise” for COG in 1984. This called for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to round up and detain 400,000 imaginary “refugees,” in the context of “uncontrolled population movements” over the Mexican border into the United States.

North’s exercise, which reportedly contemplated possible suspension of the United States Constitution, led to questions being asked during the Iran-Contra Hearings. One concern then was that North’s plans for expanded internment and detention facilities would not be confined to “refugees” alone.

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