

# The Administration's domestic Surveillance and Torture programs: Obama appoints former Bush deputy Attorney General to lead FBI

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*Last week, sources within the Obama administration announced the president's plans to appoint James Comey as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He would replace Robert Mueller, who is scheduled to step down later this year.*

*Comey served as deputy and acting attorney general for the George W. Bush administration, where he participated in the attack on democratic rights by approving, among other measures, the administration's domestic surveillance and torture programs.*

After playing a leading role in covering for the unprecedented unconstitutional actions of the Bush administration, Comey moved on to take a leading position with Lockheed Martin, the world's largest weapons manufacturer.

Comey worked as general counsel for Lockheed from 2005 to 2010, a period during which the company reaped immense profits off of contracts with Comey's former employer, the US government, to build deadly weapons for use in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2010, Comey left Lockheed to accept the position of general counsel with Bridgewater Associates, the \$122 billion hedge fund that became the world's largest investment management firm in 2011.

Comey, who is also a member of the board of directors at London-based HSBC Holdings, became senior research scholar and Hertog Fellow of Security Law at Columbia Law School in early 2013.

Despite this record, the Democratic Party is lauding the selection of Comey as a progressive step in the defense of democratic rights.

Comey, a Republican, is "near and dear to the hearts of many liberals in Washington," writes ABC News in an article titled "Obama's GOP FBI Pick a Folk Hero for Democrats".

Along with president Obama's speech at National Defense University last week, the Washington Post called the nomination of Comey "an equally important statement about his intentions in the fight against terrorism."

The Post concluded, "It's that strong moral compass that the president apparently wants to lead the nation's chief domestic law enforcement agency. That Obama would seek out someone who has so jealously guarded civil liberties, even at great personal and career risk,

speaks more loudly than his speech about the legacy he wants to leave in the fight against terrorism.”

Overblown tales of Comey’s role as a defender of democratic rights are based on the only notable instance in which Comey has not actively pursued the most anti-democratic agenda possible.

In March 2004, Comey, alongside Attorney General John Ashcroft and FBI Director Mueller, opposed a maneuver by White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales. Comey had opposed Gonzales’ surreptitious nighttime visit to Ashcroft’s hospital bed in an attempt to prevent Gonzales from procuring a signature for the extension of an expanded warrantless wiretapping program. The program had been in effect under the National Security Agency from 2002 to 2004.

Comey’s actions were likely motivated by an awareness of the illegal character of the operations that the Bush administration was carrying out. He fully supported the NSA surveillance program once minor changes had been made to the wording of program guidelines.

Comey was satisfied once the Bush administration lawyers had brought the spying program under the guidelines of the Authorization for the Use of Military Force Act, which gave the president the unprecedented executive powers, ostensibly in response to the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Comey and the Department of Justice worked tirelessly to erect a scaffolding of pseudo-legal justifications for the unconstitutional spying campaign throughout 2004 and after Comey departed in 2005. It is likely that Comey and the rest of the Bush legal team were partly motivated by a desire to prepare their own legal defenses in case criminal charges were ever brought against them.

Furthermore, Comey played a leading role in the trial of US citizen Jose Padilla as an enemy combatant in a military tribunal without due process rights. Beginning in 2002, Padilla was held for over three years and was repeatedly tortured without having been charged with any crime. In 2004, Comey claimed that Padilla was “more than a criminal defendant with a broad menu of rights...”

In 2005, Comey also signed-off on the program of torture implemented by the Bush administration. A series of emails between Comey and CIA officials detail Coney’s approval of all 13 proposed “extraordinary rendition” tactics, including waterboarding and sleep deprivation. Coney wrote at the time that the torture program “was ready to go out and I concurred.”

The fact that the liberal Democratic establishment can rain such high praise on a war profiteer, financial parasite, and legal champion of the Bush administration speaks volumes to the political and moral decay of liberalism, as well as to the intensifying reaction of all sections of the American ruling class.

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