

The Grave Threat Is the Bush Administration

Building a Police State

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According to news reports, at a U.S. Naval Academy speech on Wednesday, President Bush will announce plans for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq. It will be diverting to watch the propagandists at Fox "News" flip-flop with the White House line and explain that now is the time to cut and run after all.

A month ago, the administration's line was that cutting and running was the dastardly act of cowards and traitors who would abandon our troops and all they have fought for. A month ago, senior U.S. commanders in Iraq said that the U.S.-trained new Iraqi army only had 700 troops who could operate independently of U.S. support.

Now, suddenly, the new Iraq has the troops to do the job and America's soldiers can come home. What this means is that Republican pollsters have made it clear that the Republicans cannot win next year's congressional elections if the U.S. is still mired in Iraq. The war is unpopular. A large majority of Americans do not believe the war was justified, and they no longer support it. Republicans have no prospect of rehabilitating Bush if he keeps the country bogged down in a pointless war.

The war, in other words, no longer serves the Republicans' political interest and must be got rid of. So much for "staying the course."

What will happen to Iraq and the Middle East no one knows. Our concerns need to be directed at what happens here in the U.S. Bush's war against Iraq might be over, but the police state Bush built at home is still in place.

On Nov. 27, Walter Pincus [reported](#) in the *Washington Post* that the Pentagon is expanding its domestic surveillance activity and that all sorts of proposals are afoot to allow military agencies to spy on law-abiding Americans and to build secret dossiers on citizens. The demand for police-state powers is said to be necessary in order to fight the "war on terror."

Considering the drastic, Gestapo-type activities for which Washington is clamoring, a person would think that America is being overwhelmed by terrorist attacks. Yet, despite an aggressive and brutal war that Bush has been waging in Iraq for going on three years, terrorist attacks in America are even more rare than a honest politician. There has not been a terror attack since Sept. 11, 2001, more than four years ago!

The Bush administration's hype about terrorism serves no purpose other than to build a police state that is far more dangerous to Americans than terrorists.

Ever since the “war on terror” was initiated by the Bush administration, the U.S. has been holding large numbers of “detainees.” By chance or the laws of probability, a few of these people might fit some definition of “terrorist.” The vast majority, however, are innocents picked up in the equivalent of Stalin-era KGB street sweeps. Many are hapless people sold by warlords to the U.S. in order to receive cash awards for turning in “terrorists.”

Despite the large number of alleged “terrorists” or “enemy combatants” that are being held, the Bush administration simply hasn’t a shred of evidence with which to bring “detainees” to trial. If truth be known, the “detainees” are merely props for Bush’s hype about the “terrorist threat.” The “detainees” were arrested in order to make Americans feel safe and at ease with the police state.

Perhaps the most famous of the alleged terrorists, a man held for more than three years, is the “dirty bomber” Jose Padilla. Padilla was the “grave threat” who was going to set off a radioactive dirty bomb in a U.S. city.

The charge never made any sense. If al-Qaeda had a dirty bomb, they certainly would not entrust it to the loudmouthed Padilla, who was being followed around by FBI agents. Such a weapon would be kept secret and entrusted only to the most competent and proven hands. Who could possibly believe that top al-Qaeda operatives would meet and plot with Jose Padilla?

The Bush administration has itself given up its Padilla fantasy. After three years of hype about this most dangerous of terrorists who allegedly intended to kill large numbers of Americans, the government’s indictment doesn’t mention dirty bombs or the murder of Americans. Instead, Padilla is indicted for conspiring “to commit at any place outside the United States acts that would constitute murder” for the purpose of advancing “violent jihad.” Padilla is also charged with “conspiracy to provide material support for terrorists.”

In other words, the government has no case against Padilla and is putting him on trial in the U.S. for conspiring to kill unidentified foreigners in an effort to overthrow an unidentified foreign country. His case is lumped in with a case against four other persons, one or more of whom may have committed an actual crime that can be used to tar them all.

Both the attorney general and president of the United States branded Padilla a “grave threat” to the lives of Americans. After three years of this propaganda, all the U.S. government can come up with is the trumped-up charge of conspiracy to kill foreigners and to provide support for terrorists.

A police state has to catch enemies in order to keep the people frightened and appreciative of its watchful eye. Now that the Padilla case has evaporated, the Bush administration has come up with a replacement. An American student of Arab descent, who was studying at a Saudi Arabian university, has been [indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiracy to assassinate President Bush](#). The indictment rests on the confession wrung out of the young man by torture in a Saudi prison.

Does anyone really believe that al-Qaeda leaders would conspire with an American college student to assassinate President Bush? Indeed, President Bush has been Osama bin Laden’s greatest benefactor. Why would al-Qaeda want to kill the man who is doing them so much good? Before Bush launched his war on terror and invaded Iraq, the vast majority of Muslims supported the U.S. and thought bin Laden was a nut case. Today, Muslims think Bush is a

nut case and support bin Laden.

What kind of a country have we become when we put a citizen on trial on the basis of a confession obtained under torture by a foreign government? Is the case against this student anything other than an attempt to enlist the sympathy factor for Bush in order to repair his standing in the polls?

Americans need to understand that a police state has to produce results in order to justify its budget and its powers. It doesn't really care who it catches. Stalin's police state caught the wife of Stalin's foreign minister in one of its street sweeps.

The Bush administration justifies torture and threatens to veto congressional attempts to restrain its use. The Bush administration justifies indefinite detention of American citizens without charges. It asserts the power of indefinite detention based on its subjective judgment about who is a threat. An American government that preaches "freedom and democracy" to the world claims the powers of tyrants as its own.

Americans need to wake up. The only danger to Americans in Iraq is the one Bush created by invading the country. The grave threat that Americans face is the Bush administration's police-state mentality.

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