

The Militarisation of the United States

Bush policies increase Pentagon's role in U.S. government

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Under the guise of the war on terror the Bush administration has managed to set in motion the process of militarizing the United States by completely undermining the United States Constitution, dividing the nation, and restructuring the intelligence and defense department positions to appoint military officers to key leadership positions

Since 9/11, Bush has signed the [Patriot Act](#) and the [Homeland Security Act](#) of 2002, giving federal law enforcement agencies broad powers to monitor citizens. The [American Civil Liberties Union](#) and human rights group opposed both laws, arguing

“These acts infringe on Americans’ civil liberties and constitutional rights such as the rights to freedom of speech, religion, assembly and privacy; the rights to counsel and due process; and protection from unreasonable searches and seizures.

By taking away people’s liberties, the acts help advance the process of militarization.

On Sept. 20, 2001, President Bush during an address to a joint session of Congress made the statement, “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” In making this statement he was applying a very old tactic called divide and conquer. By the time the British and U.S. soldiers invaded Iraq in March of 2003, the American population was so split and divided that antiwar activists were considered subversive groups by the U.S. government and unpatriotic by many fellow Americans.

Today, both Congress and President Bush have continued to fuel this division in the mainstream media by playing in a political theater of power struggle. This has helped to create an even greater division between the Bush administration, Congress, and the Republican and Democratic parties, and even between the extreme and moderate wings of each party. By fueling infighting and division, opposition is weakened.

While the infighting continues, President George W. Bush signed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. This Act completely restructured the Intelligence Community by abolishing the position of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), who was concurrently head of the CIA, and creating the position of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), which oversees the entire intelligence community and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)). The post of Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (D/CIA) now reports to the DNI. On May 30 2006, General Michael V. Hayden, an active duty officer of the United States Air Force, became the 18th Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a position only previously held by civilians.

The first Director of National Intelligence was John Negroponte, a career diplomat. When Negroponte became Deputy Secretary of State on Feb. 13, 2007, he was replaced as DNI by John Michael McConnell, a retired naval admiral. This means that the two top posts in the U.S. intelligence community are held by active duty or retired military officers.

As Congress and Bush are duking it out in the media over the illegal invasion of Iraq, McConnell on March 23, 2007 announced even more organizational changes, which included designating the Chief of Staff position as the new Director of the Intelligence Staff and establishing an Executive Committee. The effect of this reorganization would be to give the executive branch power for the first time in history over all intelligence activities.

To make matters even worse, on May 2007 President Bush created a new position in the defense department for Lieutenant General Douglas E. Lute as the Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan. This appointment represents a sort of “militarization” of defense policy — at the expense of the civilian [Secretary of Defense](#).

We cannot forget the infamous disaster in August 2005, Hurricane Katrina, when President Bush [urged Congress](#) to give the military the authority to take over during national disasters, without state approval as mandated by American law. My research lead me to a published [research report](#) [PDF] conducted for the Army by the Rand Corporation and dated 2004. The report discussed the role the U.S. Army might play in such disasters under the Department of Homeland Security. This study demonstrates that the Bush administration was considering increasing the military’s domestic role even before Katrina.

The “John Warner Defense Authorization Act of 2007” (H.R.5122), was signed by President Bush on Oct. 17, 2006, allowing the president to declare a “public emergency” and station troops anywhere in America and take control of state-based National Guard units without the consent of the governor or local authorities. Title V, Subtitle B, Part II, Section 525(a) of the JWDA of 2007 reads, “The Secretary [of the military service] concerned may order a member of a reserve component under the Secretary’s jurisdiction to active duty... The training or duty ordered to be performed ... may include ... support of operations or missions undertaken by the member’s unit at the request of the President or Secretary of Defense.”

On May 15 2006, Bush called for 6,000 troops to be placed along the US border. The media helped the Bush administration accomplish this by playing up the illegal immigration issue in the news.

The net effect of all these moves is to instill in Americans the ideology that militarization is for the good of the nation. The [same tactic](#) was used by the Argentine military prior to the [Dirty War](#).

All this emphasis on militarization leads me to wonder about a [statement](#) made by Bush in a joking manner after his first meeting with congressional leaders as president-elect. “I told all four that there are going to be some times where we don’t agree with each other, but that’s OK. If this were a dictatorship, it would be a heck of a lot easier, just so long as I’m the dictator.”

Was this the plan all along?

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