

Top 10 Signs of the Impending U.S. Police State

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Is the U.S. becoming a police state? Here are the top 10 signs that it may well be the case

1. The Internet Clampdown

One saving grace of alternative media in this age of unfettered corporate conglomeration has been the internet. While the masses are spoon-fed predigested news on TV and in mainstream print publications, the truth-seeking individual still has access to a broad array of investigative reporting and political opinion via the world-wide web. Of course, it was only a matter of time before the government moved to patch up this crack in the sky.

Attempts to regulate and filter internet content are intensifying lately, coming both from telecommunications corporations (who are gearing up to pass legislation transferring ownership and regulation of the internet to themselves), and the Pentagon (which issued an "[Information Operations Roadmap](#)" in 2003, signed by Donald Rumsfeld, which outlines tactics such as network attacks and acknowledges, without suggesting a remedy, that US propaganda planted in other countries has easily found its way to Americans via the internet). One obvious tactic clearing the way for stifling regulation of internet content is the growing media frenzy over child pornography and "internet predators," which will surely lead to legislation that by far exceeds in its purview what is needed to fight such threats.

2. "The Long War"

This little piece of clumsy marketing died off quickly, but it gave away what many already suspected: the War on Terror will never end, nor is it meant to end. It is designed to be perpetual. As with the War on Drugs, it outlines a goal that can never be fully attained — as long as there are pissed off people and explosives. The Long War will eternally justify what are ostensibly temporary measures: suspension of civil liberties, military expansion, domestic spying, massive deficit spending and the like. This short-lived moniker told us all, "get used to it. Things aren't going to change any time soon."

3. The USA PATRIOT Act

Did anyone really think this was going to be temporary? Yes, this disgusting power grab gives the government the right to sneak into your house, look through all your stuff and not tell you about it for weeks on a rubber stamp warrant. Yes, they can look at your medical records and library selections. Yes, they can pass along any information they find without probable cause for purposes of prosecution. No, they're not going to take it back, ever.

4. Prison Camps

This last January the Army Corps of Engineers gave Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root nearly \$400 million to build detention centers in the United States, for the purpose of unspecified “[new programs](#).” Of course, the obvious first guess would be that these new programs might involve rounding up Muslims or political dissenters — I mean, obviously detention facilities are there to hold *somebody*. I wish I had more to tell you about this, but it’s, you know... *secret*.

5. Touchscreen Voting Machines

Despite clear, copious evidence that these nefarious contraptions are built to be tampered with, they continue to spread and dominate the voting landscape, thanks to Bush’s “Help America Vote Act,” the exploitation of corrupt elections officials, and the general public’s enduring cluelessness.

In Utah, Emery County Elections Director Bruce Funk witnessed security testing by an outside firm on Diebold voting machines which showed them to be a security risk. But his warnings fell on deaf ears. Instead Diebold attorneys were flown to Emery County on the governor’s airplane to squelch the story. Funk was fired. In Florida, Leon County Supervisor of Elections Ion Sancho discovered an alarming security flaw in their Diebold system at the end of last year. Rather than fix the flaw, Diebold refused to fulfill its contract. Both of the other two touchscreen voting machine vendors, Sequoia and ES&S, now refuse to do business with Sancho, who is required by HAVA to implement a touchscreen system and will be sued by his own state if he doesn’t. Diebold is said to be pressuring for Sancho’s ouster before it will resume servicing the county.

Stories like these and much worse abound, and yet TV news outlets have done less coverage of the new era of elections fraud than even 9/11 conspiracy theories. This is possibly the most important story of this century, but nobody seems to give a damn. As long as this issue is ignored, real American democracy will remain an illusion. The midterm elections will be an interesting test of the public’s continuing gullibility about voting integrity, especially if the Democrats don’t win substantial gains, as they almost surely will if everything is kosher.

Bush just suggested that his brother Jeb would make a good president. We really need to fix this problem soon.

6. Signing Statements

Bush has famously never vetoed a bill. This is because he prefers to simply nullify laws he doesn’t like with “signing statements.” Bush has issued over 700 such statements, twice as many as all previous presidents combined. A few examples of recently passed laws and their corresponding dismissals, courtesy of the [Boston Globe](#):

-Dec. 30, 2005: US interrogators cannot torture prisoners or otherwise subject them to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

Bush’s signing statement: The president, as commander in chief, can waive the torture ban if he decides that harsh interrogation techniques will assist in preventing terrorist attacks.

-Dec. 30, 2005: When requested, scientific information "prepared by government researchers and scientists shall be transmitted [to Congress] uncensored and without delay."

Bush's signing statement: The president can tell researchers to withhold any information from Congress if he decides its disclosure could impair foreign relations, national security, or the workings of the executive branch.

-Dec. 23, 2004: Forbids US troops in Colombia from participating in any combat against rebels, except in cases of self-defense. Caps the number of US troops allowed in Colombia at 800.

Bush's signing statement: Only the president, as commander in chief, can place restrictions on the use of US armed forces, so the executive branch will construe the law "as advisory in nature."

Essentially, this administration is bypassing the judiciary and deciding for itself whether laws are constitutional or not. Somehow, I don't see the new Supreme Court lineup having much of a problem with that, though. So no matter what laws congress passes, Bush will simply choose to ignore the ones he doesn't care for. It's much quieter than a veto, and can't be overridden by a two-thirds majority. It's also totally absurd.

7. Warrantless Wiretapping

Amazingly, the GOP sees this issue as a plus for them. How can this be? What are you, stupid? You find out the government is listening to the phone calls of US citizens, without even the weakest of judicial oversight and you think that's okay? Come on — if you know anything about history, you know that no government can be trusted to handle something like this responsibly. One day they're listening for Osama, and the next they're listening in on Howard Dean.

Think about it: this administration hates unauthorized leaks. With no judicial oversight, why on earth **wouldn't** they eavesdrop on, say, Seymour Hersh, to figure out who's spilling the beans? It's a no-brainer. Speaking of which, it bears repeating: terrorists *already knew* we would try to spy on them. They don't care if we have a warrant or not. But you should.

8. Free Speech Zones

I know it's old news, but... come on, are they fucking *serious*?

9. High-ranking Whistleblowers

Army Generals. Top-level CIA officials. NSA operatives. White House cabinet members. These are the kind of people that Republicans fantasize about being, and whose judgment they usually respect. But for some reason, when these people resign in protest and criticize the Bush administration *en masse*, they are cast as traitorous, anti-American publicity hounds. Ridiculous. The fact is, when people who kill, spy and deceive for a living tell you that the White House has gone too far, you had damn well better pay attention. We all know most of these people are staunch Republicans. If the entire military except for the two guys the Pentagon put in front of the press wants Rumsfeld out, why on earth *wouldn't* you listen?

10. The CIA Shakeup

Was Porter Goss fired because he was resisting the efforts of Rumsfeld or Negroponte? No. These appointments all come from the same guys, and they wouldn't be nominated if they weren't on board all the way. Goss was probably canned so abruptly due to a scandal involving a crooked defense contractor, his hand-picked third-in-command, the Watergate hotel and some hookers.

If Bush's nominee for CIA chief, Air Force General Michael Hayden, is confirmed, that will put every spy program in Washington under military control. Hayden, who oversaw the NSA warrantless wiretapping program and is clearly down with the program. That program? To weaken and dismantle or at least neuter the CIA. Despite its best efforts to blame the CIA for "intelligence errors" leading to the Iraq war, the picture has clearly emerged — through extensive CIA leaks — that the White House's analysis of Saddam's destructive capacity was not shared by the Agency. This has proved to be a real pain in the ass for Bush and the gang.

Who'd have thought that career spooks would have moral qualms about deceiving the American people? And what is a president to do about it? Simple: make the critical agents leave, and fill their slots with Bush/Cheney loyalists. Then again, why not simply replace the entire organization? That is essentially what both Rumsfeld at the DoD and newly minted Director of National Intelligence John are doing — they want to move intelligence analysis into the hands of people that they can control, so the next time they lie about an "imminent threat" nobody's going to tell. And the press is applauding the move as a "necessary reform."

Remember the good old days, when the CIA were the bad guys?

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