

# Police State USA

Did you know that under the terms of the new Patriot Act prosecutors will be able to seek the death penalty in cases where "defendants gave financial support to umbrella organizations without realizing that some of its adherents might eventually commit violence"? (NY Times; editorial 10-30-05) So, if someone unknowingly gave money to a charity that was connected to a terrorist group, he could be executed.

Or, that the Senate Intelligence Committee is fine-tuning the details of a bill that will allow the FBI to secretly procure any of your personal records **without "probable cause"** or a court order giving them "unchecked authority to pry into personal and business matters"? (New York Times, "Republicans seek to widen FBI Powers, 10-19-05)

Or, that on June 29, President Bush put "a broad swath of the FBI" under his direct control by creating the **National Security Service** (aka; the "New SS")? This is the first time we've had a "secret police" in our 200 year history. It will be run exclusively by the president and beyond the range of congressional oversight.

Or, that on October 27, 2005 president Bush created the **National Clandestine Service**, which will be headed by CIA Director Porter Goss and will "expand reporting of information and intelligence value from state, local and tribal law enforcement entities and private sector stakeholders"? This executive order gives the CIA the power to carry out covert operations, spying, propaganda, and "dirty tricks" within the United States and on the American public. ("The New National Intelligence Strategy of the US" by Larry Chin, Global Research)

Or, that Pentagon intelligence operatives are now permitted to collect information from US citizens without revealing their status as **government spies**? ("Bill would give Cover to Pentagon Spies", Greg Miller, Times Staff writer, "The Nation")

Or, that within 2 years every American license and passport will be made according to federal uniform standards including microchips (with biometric information) that will allow the government to trace every movement of its citizens?

Or, that recent rulings, the DC District Court unanimously decided in two different cases that foreign prisoners have no rights under international law to challenge their indefinite imprisonment by the United States and, (in Rumsfeld vs. Padilla) that the president can lock up an American citizen "without charges" if he believes he may be an "enemy combatant"? Both verdicts overturn the fundamental principles of "inalienable rights", habeas corpus, and the presumption of innocence; replacing them with the arbitrary authority of the executive.

The American people have no idea of the amount of energy that has been devoted to stripping them of their constitutional protections and how stealthily that plan has been carried out. It has required the concerted efforts of the political establishment, the corporate elite, and the collaborative media. For all practical purposes, the government is no longer constrained in its conduct towards its citizens; it can do as it pleases.

The campaign to dismantle the Bill of Rights has focused primarily on the key amendments; the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th and 14th. These are the cornerstones of American liberty and they encompass everything from due process to equal protection to free speech to a ban on the "cruel and unusual" treatment of prisoners. Freedom has little tangible meaning apart from the safety provided by these amendments.

At present, there's no reason for the administration to assert its new powers. That would only dispel the widely-held illusion of personal freedom. But, the existing climate of "well being" will not last forever. The poisonous effects of war, tax cuts, burgeoning budget deficits, and inflation indicate that darker days lie ahead.