

[PRESIDENCY]
SCOFFLAW IN CHIEF

A little less than a decade ago, Republicans reminded the country that the president is not above the law in the matter of President Clinton's perjury over his sexual antics. George W. Bush has indeed restored dignity to the Oval Office. Unfortunately, he has not restored the rule of law. Far from it—according to an analysis by the *Boston Globe*, Bush has taken it upon himself to flout no fewer than 750 laws passed since he took office.

Bush subscribes to a novel notion of constitutional jurisprudence that makes the president nearly equal to the Supreme Court in deciding which laws are constitutional. When Bush believes a law encroaches on presidential power—examples include congressional bans on torture and the use of illegally obtained evidence, as well as laws to protect whistleblowers—he either ignores it or issues a “signing statement” reserving the right to ignore it or apply an interpretation clearly at odds with congressional intent.

“This is an attempt by the president to have the final word on his own constitutional powers, which eliminates the checks and balances that keep the country a democracy,” Bruce Fein, a Reagan administration deputy attorney general, told the *Globe*. “There is no way for an independent judiciary to check his assertions of power”—at least within the secretive realm of national-security policy—“and Congress isn't doing it, either. So this is moving us toward an unlimited executive power.”

[IRAQ]
EMBASSY ROW

The *Washington Post* reports that political appointees at the Department of Agriculture recently received an e-mail: “The President has requested that all members of his cabinet and sub-cabinet incorporate message points on the Global War on Terror into speeches.”



PATRICK CHAPPAPE WWW.CAGLECARTOONS.COM

They are to remind audiences that “President Bush has a clear strategy for victory in Iraq”—just the sort of thing seamlessly integrated when discussing farm subsidies.

But coherence is a minor point compared to the greater problem: it's simply untrue. If the new \$592 million American embassy in Baghdad is any indication, far from declaring victory and coming home, the U.S. appears to be hunkering down for the long haul,

The 104-acre compound—comparable in size to Vatican City and ten times larger than a typical embassy—includes 21 buildings behind a 15-foot wall. Since electricity comes on only four hours per day and clean water is problematic in the rest of Baghdad, the embassy will include its own power generator and water purification plant—along with a swimming pool, gym, food court, and six apartment buildings. Four American “superbases” are also planned, complete with neighborhoods for contractors and an indoor golf course—not that we're going to be a permanent presence, the administration still assures. It's all just part of the “clear strategy for victory.”

[IMMIGRATION]
JOSE, CAN YOU SEE?

Illegal immigrants marching under foreign flags, “the Star-Spangled Banner” sung in Spanish to a Latin beat—to Nancy Pelosi, it can only mean one thing: “Hispanics are clearly vested in our country and want to continue to

contribute to the strength of our nation.” So she told the nation in a Cinco de Mayo broadcast, while President Bush called on immigrants to learn English—surprising because during the 2000 campaign he put considerable effort into Hispandering in Spanish. As Kevin Phillips reported in *American Dynasty*, Bush “would drop in at Hispanic festivals and parties, sometimes joining in singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” in Spanish.” Outgoing White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan denied that, saying Bush “couldn't possibly sing the national anthem in Spanish. He's not that good with his Spanish.”

The Spanish version of the national anthem, “Nuestro Himno,” signals more than just that “Hispanics are clearly vested in our country.” It also shows that even the record-producing scion of one of Britain's leading Marxist families knows how to bring in the Benjamins when opportunity calls. The mastermind behind “Nuestro Himno” is Adam Kidron, the son, as *TAC's* Steve Sailer has pointed out, of a man eulogized by Britain's *Socialist Review* as “probably the most important Marxist economist of his generation.” Adam combines his father's passion for Third World causes with an appreciation of capitalism: as well as selling “Nuestro Himno,” he's also purchased Al Sharpton's million-man mailing list for marketing purposes. Sounds like he has the makings of a future Bush “Pioneer”—perhaps as part of a bilingual George P. campaign in 2012.

[MEDIA]

NO AMNESTY—YET

After publishing a few solid anti-amnesty pieces, *National Review* appears to be engaging in a little mixed messaging on immigration. An editorial posted on the magazine's website begins by taking to task unnamed conservatives who regard immigration reformers as "yahoos" but then takes a wobbly turn.

NR gives congressional Republican leaders the following advice: get tough on the border—and then capitulate. "Once we have brought illegal immigration under control," they urge the GOP to say, "we will consider increasing legal immigration levels and granting an amnesty to some illegal immigrants who are already here." A cover story last month also floated an increase in legal immigration after stepping up enforcement, as if that is much different from the grand guest-workers compromise.

Perhaps *National Review* wants to triangulate, putting itself between *The Weekly Standard* and real immigration reformers. Or maybe the editors are preparing for an eventual endorsement of amnesty, in keeping with their idea that conservatism entails support for yesterday's liberalism. Readers who oppose any kind of amnesty—today or tomorrow—and favor reducing legal immigration to manageable levels should now know where the post-Buckley *National Review* stands. Athwart history, indeed.

[STRATEGY]

REHEATED COLD WAR

Having already jettisoned the containment policy that won the Cold War in favor of reckless pre-emption, perhaps Dick Cheney now wishes to reverse that victory itself. At least that's the impression the vice president's incendiary remarks made in the Russian media.

Speaking in Lithuania, Cheney accused the Russian government of violating its

citizens' rights, backsliding on democracy, and using its energy reserves to intimidate its neighbors. But there is apparently nothing intimidating in an ultimatum from the vice president of the United States: "Russia has a choice to make." Russian officials and media outlets rightly interpreted Cheney's comments as an attempt to provoke Moscow and intervene in its internal affairs. Cheney, naturally, is bewildered by the response. He says his comments were "fairly measured."

Vladimir Putin's regime certainly deserves some criticism, but not the kind of bull-in-a-china shop "diplomacy" that Cheney personifies. As the White House fantasizes about World War IV and revisits Cold War tensions, it might well ponder how many enemies America really needs.

[TRENDS]

WARDS OF THE STATE

According to *USA Today*, those Americans enjoying the sharpest rise in personal income over the past five years weren't those who built better mouse-traps. Those who built anything at all—from furniture to Fords—were the big losers, with North Carolina recording its sixth-worst drop and former manufacturing powerhouses Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois reaching their lowest ranks in per capita income.

The winner, Wyoming—with its significant coal, natural gas, and oil reserves—can thank higher energy prices and low population for its first-place per-capita growth. Close behind came Maryland and Virginia, states nestled next to Leviathan, where incomes have spiked 19.8 percent since 2000—keeping pace with a 22 percent spending boom.

That's grim news for a country that still preaches freedom. For if our most prosperous pocket owes its affluence to government, wealth can only grow as the state does—a condition no Republic can long endure. ■

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The Persecution of the Palestinians

“Why do they hate us?” So stunned Americans asked, after 9/11, when we learned that across the Arab world, many were saying, “The Americans had it coming.”

For a textbook example of why we are hated, consider Gaza and the West Bank. There, a brutal Israeli/U.S.-led cutoff in aid has been imposed on the Palestinians for voting the wrong way in a free election.

Immediately after Hamas's victory, Israel halted the \$55 million a month the Palestinian Authority received as its share of tax and customs revenue. Israel demanded Europe and the U.S. also end all aid to the PA until Hamas renounces terror, recognizes Israel, and disarms.

President Bush, though he was conducting a worldwide crusade for democracy and had urged that the Palestinian elections be held and Hamas participate, obediently complied. For months now, U.S. and European aid to the PA, half its budget, has been halted.

The early returns are in. “Surgeons at Gaza's biggest hospital,” says the *Financial Times*, “have suspended non-essential surgery for lack of sutures, laboratory kits and anesthetics.” Environmental protection agency workers have no money for petrol to monitor sewage and industrial waste entering the water supply. Some 150,000 civil servants, 60,000 of them armed security personnel, have gone unpaid for months.

Supermarkets have to extend credit to customers who have no money for food. The *Washington Post* relates an incident that gives a flavor of what is happening.

“In Gaza's gold market Monday, Nahed al-Zayim stared at the wedding ring her husband, a Palestinian police officer, gave her six years ago. She had placed it on a glass counter offering it

for sale, joining several other wives of public employees who had not been paid in two months...

“Her head covered by a black veil, Zayim said she needed the proceeds from her ring to buy diapers and milk supplements for her three children, including Hazem, 4, who tugged at her tunic in the afternoon bustle. ‘This is the last one, we have no more,’ Zayim, 28, said of her ring.”

Woodrow Wilson called sanctions “the silent, deadly remedy.” Its victims are always the sick, the elderly, the women, and the children.

In March, the World Bank predicted the aid cutoff would lead to a 30 percent fall in average personal incomes among the Palestinians. The bank now considers that prediction “too rosy” and expects “the worst year in the West Bank and Gaza's recent dismal economic history.”

Already, violent clashes have broken out between Hamas and Fatah. There is a danger of collapse of the Palestinian Authority, chaos, and a need for the Israeli army to intervene anew to restore order. Finally, May 9, under European pressure, the U.S. relented and a trickle of aid began to flow.

Query: who, besides al-Qaeda and recruiters of suicide bombers, can conceivably benefit from persecuting the Palestinian people like this? Does President Bush or Condi Rice think the Palestinians will respect an America that did this to their children, after we urged this election, called for Hamas to participate, and preached our devotion to democracy?

“The aid cut-off appears to be increasing anti-U.S. sentiment here,” writes the

Post's Scott Wilson, quoting 33-year-old pharmacist Mustafa Hasoona: “The problem is the West, not us. ... If they don't respect democracy, they shouldn't call for it. ... We are with this government we elected. I voted for it.”

According to the *Financial Times*, Hamas is winning converts for refusing to buckle. Said Khalil Abu Leila, a Hamas leader, “They have misunderstood the Arab mentality. As long as the pressure increases on Hamas, the more popular it will become.”

The White House says we don't negotiate with terrorists. But when we had to, we did. FDR and Truman summited with Stalin at Yalta and Potsdam. Nixon met with Mao in Beijing. Kissinger negotiated with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese at Paris. Bush I allied with Assad in the Gulf War. Clinton had Arafat to the White House too many times to count.

Rabin and Peres shared a Nobel Prize with Arafat. Netanyahu gave him Hebron. Barak offered him 95 percent of the West Bank.

Bush's agents negotiated with the architect of the Lockerbie massacre to persuade Colonel Khadafi to give up his WMD. In 2004, Bush's men called it a victory for Bush diplomacy. Khadafi's regime had been at the top of the State Department's list of state sponsors of terror.

The purpose of U.S.-Israeli policy today is to punish the Palestinians for how they voted and to force Hamas to yield or to collapse its government. How does such a policy win hearts and minds for America?

Terrorism has been described as waging war on innocents to break their political leaders. Is that not a fair description of what we are doing to the Palestinians? No wonder they hate us. ■