

Title:

Impeach Bush now

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965

Summary:

President George W. Bush's profane abuses of his office cannot stand before history as acceptable behavior in a president. America must not condone torture of detainees or spying on Americans. Impeach and remove this dangerous man!

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Article Body:

Even a month ago, I was content to let the electoral system punish President George W. Bush for his incompetence in prosecuting the war in Iraq. Let him deal with more Democrats than he bargained for after the 2006 midterm elections, I thought. That would sufficiently punish him for his failures; anything more would set a dangerous precedent discouraging future presidents from launching big endeavors that might not work.

Oh, what a difference a few weeks have made! Now, I say, impeach and remove this dangerous man. Bush's profane abuses of his office cannot stand before history as acceptable behavior in a president.

Why have I resolved thusly?

First, indications have accumulated Bush indeed condones torture of detainees, despite his pleas to the contrary. The military has used doctors to exploit detainees' weaknesses and monitor their health during harsh interrogations, which participants have said leave the subjects injured or, sometimes, dead. A doctor who investigated the abuse reports:

"The range of interrogation techniques, or abuse techniques, is pretty much the whole array of usual stuff that happens in countries that torture. It includes ***beatings***, suspension, near-asphyxia, ***chemical burns***--there were instances of burns with lighter fluid--kicks, slamming against the wall. There was at least one ***thumbscrew*** I saw.

<b><i>Electrical shocks</i></b> with, in our case, external electrodes. I did not see any internal electrodes. There were instances of <b><i>asphyxiation</i></b>, food and water deprivation, deprivation of access to toilets, deprivation of access to medical care, <b><i>forcing people to urinate on themselves</i></b>, forcing people to masturbate, to renounce their religion, <b><i>to put the urine or feces of other people on themselves</i></b>, other forms of nudity, <b><i>forced fondling</i></b>, verbal abuse, threats against family, mock executions, <b><i>forcing the victims to watch other family members being abused</i></b>. They also used what's called "perceptual monopolization," which included loud noise..."

(Emphasis mine. Source: <a href="http://www.citypages.com/databank/26/1305/article13927.asp">The American Way of Torture</a>).

Besides which, the Bush administration has confessed to allowing waterboarding, a technique that entails submerging detainees underwater so they believe they're drowning. This, as well as the tactics described above, is torture.

Even under the most Machiavellian considerations, interrogators shouldn't torture captives in their charge. People will tell their tormentors anything, true or not, to make the horrors stop. This floods intelligence services with bad information. (I wonder if that helped the Bush administration conceive a bogus vision of Iraq's WMD program.) So, practically speaking, condoning torture is stupid policy.

In addition, of course, torture violates the most cherished ideals of the American people. Our country stands to shine benevolent hope into the world, not darken it with the same barbaric cruelty our enemies do. For Bush to lower his administration to the level of thugs and terrorists destroys his moral authority to lead not only our good nation, but the free world. In so doing, he damages the Presidency of the United States.

That alone would warrant Bush's impeachment. As Alexander Hamilton says in Federalist 65:

"A well-constituted court for the trial of impeachments is an object not more to be desired than difficult to be obtained in a government wholly elective. The subjects of its jurisdiction are those offenses which proceed from the misconduct of public men, or, in other words, from the abuse or violation of some public trust. They are of a nature which may with peculiar propriety be denominated POLITICAL, as they relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to the society itself."

A president need not commit a legal crime for impeachment to commence. "High crimes and misdemeanors," instead, encompasses violent of trust and harm to society that can fall outside the strict boundaries of law. (If "high crimes and misdemeanors" meant literal crimes, a president would be impeachable for jaywalking. That's absurd.) Under this criterion from the Federalist Papers, Bush's abuse of power in authorizing systemic torture qualifies as an impeachable offense.

Still, many people might not see brutal treatment of foreign alleged terrorists outside American borders as important. It's not happening in the United States, as far as they know, so it's a foreign policy problem remote from their concern. But, sadly for us, that's not the extent of Bush's transgressions.

The Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution protects American citizens from government searching and snooping without a warrant. When Bush ascended to the Oval Office, he swore to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." And yet he has trampled that very document. Showing his isolation from reality, Bush has matter-of-factly--as if he can't understand why anyone would be upset--admitted to ordering the National Security Agency to spy on American citizens on multiple occasions. No courts issued warrants for these invasions of Americans' privacy. They transpired at the sole behest of the executive.

So not only has Bush adopted the tactics of an authoritarian regime abroad, but he's also done it at home, trampling the Bill of Rights with his cowboy boots. Bush loves to pontificate about freedom, warning us of the danger terrorists pose to it. If terrorists are the enemies of freedom, as Bush maintains they are, then he has become their collaborator.

To borrow from the president's father, George H. W. Bush, "This will not stand."

If Americans value their rights and liberties, then they cannot allow a man who defies the Constitution to remain in office. Such would encourage not only Bush, but future commanders-in-chief, to encroach further on American freedoms. To the Congress of the United States, I say, impeach Bush now. And then kick him out of the West Wing.