

# The Fox Who Ran the Chicken Coop

by Paul Wolf, 20 Aug 2004

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## Introduction

Much of the feedback to my last email ("Demise of the CIA") expressed disbelief that anything could be done to curtail the power of the "invisible government," as the CIA has been called. I have to disagree. Politicians and bureaucrats thrive on reorganizations like this.

Bush's recent nomination of Porter Goss as CIA Director looks like a desperate move to shore up the Agency in time of crisis. And it seems to have already backfired. Members of Congress are taking partisan positions; others wonder why a new director is being appointed before the structure of the reorganized intelligence world has been determined. This appointment just increases the chaos and the calls for reform.

Stansfield Turner, DCI during the Carter administration, comes out of the woodwork to say the appointment of Goss is the worst in the Agency's history. That must be an exaggeration. Goss will have a hard time competing with the CIA's first Director, Roscoe Hillenkoetter, a UFO enthusiast who testified falsely in a Congressional investigation into the CIA's first "intelligence failure" in 1948. Or his replacement, Walter "Beetle" Smith, a conservative thinker who tried to convince President Eisenhower that Nelson Rockefeller was a communist. The CIA has been led by a lot of oddballs, but as Turner points out, wheeler-dealers are rare.

I have to agree that Porter Goss would be a poor choice for the CIA, or whatever new agency might be created. A career politician who sits on a committee charged with oversight of the CIA but is totally loyal to them -- that's called loyal opposition. What kind of loyalty can we expect from Porter Goss as CIA Director? What's the point of putting a loyal opposition type person in that job? What kind of double dealing would he do as DCI?

As I wrote before, the operational and analytical functions of the CIA need to be separated, so that the people in charge of getting things done aren't the same ones evaluating what's going on. That's just common sense. It requires slicing the CIA in half, and I would then rename both halves to give them a fresh start. Both functions now exist within the CIA for historical reasons, to the detriment of the analysts.

For example, if we had independent thinking in the CIA, unaffected by political consequences, then somebody would be questioning whether "al Qaeda" is really responsible for everything attributed to it. Whatever evil happens in the world, it's all blamed on "al Qaeda." The trouble is, we have no way to penetrate "al Qaeda" -- said to have thousands of members in cells all over the world -- because unfortunately, the organization is composed of fanatics.

What a sad state of affairs. Slogans and conspiracy theories are all we have. Analysts work overtime trying to link all the violent groups in the world to each other, because people want to believe they are linked. Politicians to run the show. Plus, as you will read below, paranoia continues to spread across the home front.

- Paul

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### **New CIA Director Wants Power to Spy On, Arrest, U.S. Citizens**

By Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball, *Newsweek*, 16 Aug 2004

Rep. Porter Goss, President Bush's nominee to head the CIA, recently introduced legislation that would give the president new authority to direct CIA agents to conduct law-enforcement operations inside the United States -- including arresting American citizens.

The legislation, introduced by Goss on June 16 and touted as an "intelligence reform" bill, would substantially restructure the U.S. intelligence community by giving the director of Central Intelligence (DCI) broad new powers to oversee its various components scattered throughout the government.

But in language that until now has not gotten any public attention, the Goss bill would also redefine the authority of the DCI in such a way as to substantially alter -- if not overturn -- a 57-year-old ban on the CIA conducting operations inside the United States.

The language contained in the Goss bill has alarmed civil-liberties advocates. It also today prompted one former top CIA official to describe it as a potentially "dramatic" change in the guidelines that have governed U.S. intelligence operations for more than a half century.

"This language on its face would have allowed President Nixon to authorize the CIA to bug the Democratic National Committee headquarters," Jeffrey H. Smith, who served as general counsel of the CIA between 1995 and 1996, told NEWSWEEK. "I can't imagine what Porter had in mind."

Goss himself could not be reached for comment today. But a congressional source familiar with the drafting of Goss's bill said the language reflects a concern that he and others in the U.S. intelligence community share -- that the lines between foreign and domestic intelligence have become increasingly blurred by the war on terrorism.

At the time he introduced the bill, Goss thought the 9/11 commission might recommend the creation of a new domestic intelligence agency patterned after Britain's M.I.5. The commission ended up rejecting such a proposal on civil-liberties grounds. But in his bill Goss wanted to give the DCI and a newly empowered CIA the "flexibility" -- if directed by the president -- to oversee and even conduct whatever domestic intelligence and law-enforcement operations might be needed to combat the terrorism threat, the congressional official said. "This is just a proposal," said the congressional official familiar with the drafting of Goss's bill. "It was designed as a point of discussion, a point of debate. It's not carved in stone."

But other congressional staffers predicted that the Goss bill, even if it has little chance of passage, is likely to get substantial scrutiny at his upcoming confirmation hearings -- in part as an opportunity to explore his own attitudes toward civil liberties.

Those hearings are already expected to be unusually contentious -- partly because of concerns among Democrats that the Florida Republican, a former CIA officer himself who has chaired the House Intelligence Committee, has been too partisan and too close to the Bush White House. But so far, most staffers expect Goss to be confirmed eventually - if only because Democrats are loath to appear overly obstructionist on a matter that might be portrayed as central to national security.

The Goss bill tracks current law by stating that the DCI shall "collect, coordinate and direct" the collection of intelligence by the U.S. government -- except that the CIA "may not exercise police, subpoena, or law enforcement powers within the United States."

The bill then adds new language after that clause, however, saying that the ban on domestic law-enforcement operations applies "except as otherwise permitted by law or as directed by the president."

In effect, one former top U.S. intelligence community official told NEWSWEEK, the language in the Goss bill would enable the president to issue secret findings allowing the CIA to conduct covert operations inside the United States -- without even any notification to Congress. The former official said the proposal appeared to have been generated by Goss's staff on the House Intelligence Committee, adding that the language raises the question: "If you can't control a staff of dozens, how are you going to control the tens of thousands of people who work for the U.S. intelligence community?"

A CIA spokeswoman said today that, while familiar with the provision, she was not aware of any agency official seeking such a modification to the longstanding ban on the CIA from conducting domestic law-enforcement operations. (Ever since the creation of the CIA in 1947, the agency has been excluded from federal law-enforcement within the United States. That function was left to the FBI -- which must operate in conformity to domestic laws and, in more recent years, under guidelines promulgated by the attorney general designed to

insure protection of the rights of citizens.)

Sean McCormack, a White House spokesman, said the president's own proposal for the creation of a national intelligence director -- separate from the director of the CIA -- to oversee the entire U.S. intelligence community does not envision any change along the lines called for in the Goss bill. "I have not heard any discussion of that," said McCormack about the idea of allowing the CIA to operate domestically.

Some congressional staffers speculated today that Goss most likely had reached an understanding with President Bush that, if Congress does create the new position of a national intelligence director, he would move into that position rather than serve in the No. 2 position of CIA director. Asked if such a deal had been reached, McCormack responded: "Nothing has been ruled in or out."

Goss introduced his legislation, H.R. 4584, on June 16 -- before the September 11 commission issued its own recommendations for the creation of a national intelligence director as well as a new National Counterterrorism Center that would conduct "joint operational planning" of counterterrorism operations involving both the FBI inside the United States and the CIA abroad. The congressional official familiar with the Goss bill pointed to that proposal as a recognition of the increasingly fuzzy lines between foreign intelligence operations and domestic law enforcement.

The proposal comes at a time when the Pentagon is also seeking new powers to conduct intelligence operations inside the United States. A proposal, adopted last spring by the Senate Intelligence Committee at the request of the Pentagon, would eliminate a legal barrier that has sharply restricted the Defense Intelligence Agency and other Pentagon intelligence agencies from recruiting sources inside the United States.

That restriction currently requires that Pentagon agencies be covered by the Privacy Act, meaning that they must notify any individual they contact as to who they are talking to and what the agency is talking to them about -- and then keep records of any information they collect about U.S. citizens. These are then subject to disclosure to those citizens. Pentagon officials say this has made it all but impossible for them to recruit intelligence sources and conduct covert operations inside the country - intelligence gathering, they say, that is increasingly needed to protect against any potential terror threats to U.S. military bases and even contractors.

But critics have charged the new provision could open the door for the Pentagon to spy on U.S. citizens -- a concern that some said today is only amplified by the language in the Goss bill.

## **Olympic Threats**

How serious is the terror threat to the Olympics? Because Greece has a long and intricate coastline with dozens of islands, the country is viewed as relatively vulnerable to infiltration. And while security for Olympic venues is tight, Athens presents a whole range of civilian "soft targets" that are less well protected.

Nevertheless, U.S. intelligence officials tell NEWSWEEK, it's not Al Qaeda they are most worried about. Instead, officials say the most imminent threat to the peace of the games is anarchist and antiglobalization activists of the type who caused significant violence and property damage at a summit several years ago in Seattle. Officials believe such protestors plan to swarm Athens and conduct a campaign of disruption and vandalism.

It's not that officials are complacent. But sources say that the "chatter" they are picking up on Al Qaeda-linked Web sites is focused more on targeting the United States mainland and American interests abroad than on possible threats against the Olympics.

Specific Al Qaeda threats to the U.S., to U.S. interests abroad and to countries working with Washington in Iraq are regarded by American intelligence as more foreboding than possible threats to the Olympics. Several months ago, Osama bin Laden issued a message threatening to attack countries which did not withdraw from Iraq within 90 days, a deadline which expired in July. "I think we will be seeing some serious attempts to make good on that promise," a senior U.S. counterterror official told NEWSWEEK. But the official said he was unaware of any more specific threat that bin Laden made against the Olympics.

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## **SEND IN THE CIA**

### **Goss and "Preventive Direct Action" in America**

By Kurt Nimmo, *kurtnimmo.com*, 16 Aug 2004

"Rep. Porter Goss, President Bush's nominee to head the CIA, recently introduced legislation that would give the president new authority to direct CIA agents to conduct law-enforcement operations inside the United States -- including arresting American citizens," write Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball for *Newsweek*.

Law enforcement? We already have militarized police wielding M16s, SWAT regimentals, and black combat helmets for that. Of course, for the Bushcons, "law enforcement" means you attack those who follow the law, for instance the First Amendment of the Constitution, and characterize law-abiding patriots as terrorists, especially if they organize against the Bushcon Master Plan for world domination, beginning in the Middle East.

Once upon a time, that is to say when the CIA was created in 1947, Harry S. Truman made sure the CIA's charter prohibited the spook agency from conducting operations in the United States. Truman feared the creation of a secret police. Now, of course, the Straussian Bushcons, who consider democracy a hindrance to their Master Plan, believe a secret police is needed above all else in America, to keep in check (subvert and possibly assassinate) those who would organize against their all-war, all-the-time madness.

Yes, I said assassinate, for that's one of many things the CIA does. But mostly the CIA is known for overthrowing governments that are not fascist enough for them, or rather for the ruling elite at the behest of the so-called president, actually the CEO of America, Inc.

In 1948, Wall Street lawyer Frank Wisner organized the covert wing of the CIA. According to its secret charter, its responsibilities include "propaganda, economic warfare, preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation procedures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world."

Over the next few decades, it would use these principles in Italy, Greece, Iran, Guatemala, Vietnam, Laos, Hungary, Haiti, Cuba, Zaire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Brazil, Indonesia, Bolivia, Uruguay, Cambodia, Chile, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, and elsewhere (see Steve Kangas' Timeline of CIA Atrocities). "Unlucky nations are targeted for a wide variety of reasons: not only threats to American business interests abroad, but also liberal or even moderate social reforms, political instability, the unwillingness of a leader to carry out Washington's dictates," writes Kangas. The Association for Responsible Dissent estimates that by 1987, 6 million people had died as a result of CIA covert operations.

For Goss and the Bushites, it's time to do the same thing in America. Of course, the CIA has repeatedly violated its charter in the past, so Goss' proposal would simply legalize domestic covert activities. "From 1959 to at least 1974, the CIA used its domestic organizations to spy on thousands of US citizens policies," writes Mark Zepezauer. In response to Vietnam War protests in the 60s, "the CIA vastly expanded its campus surveillance program and stepped up its liaisons with local police departments. It trained special intelligence units in major cities to carry out 'black bag' jobs (break-ins, wiretaps, etc.) against US 'radicals.' In 1968, the CIA's various domestic programs were consolidated and expanded under the name Operation CHAOS. When Richard Nixon became president the following year, his administration drafted the Huston Plan, which called for even greater operations against 'subversives,' including wiretapping, break-ins, mail-opening, no-knock searches and 'selective assassinations.' Bureaucratic infighting tabled the plan, but much of it was implemented in other forms, not only by the CIA but also by the FBI and the Secret Service."

"These people [CIA] are good soldiers and they will respond to orders," Kenneth C. Bass 3rd, a lawyer who oversaw foreign intelligence wiretaps at the Justice Department from 1977 to 1981, told Tim Weiner of the *New York Times*. "The concerns are in the momentum: the whole thrust of being in a wartime environment, and how one responds to that, introduces concerns with respect to overkill. The zeal, the momentum, needs to be checked and balanced."

No checks and balances, however, will be forthcoming under the Bushcons, who harbor a desire to subvert and eventually do away with representative democracy, as the Straussian philosophy demands.

A military-nationalist state, as envisioned by the Bushcons, cannot operate effectively if a vibrant, diverse, and high profile opposition is allowed to exist (even if it is continually dismissed as irrelevant by the Bush Ministry of Disinformation). The American people, sincerely reviled by the Straussian Bushcons, must be programmed to support a vicious nationalism, and exposure to countervailing viewpoints or opposition to this obviously fascist philosophy must be eliminated, or at least severely curtailed. "Strauss posited the Machiavellian proposition that political entities are compelled to use force and fraud if they

are to prosper," explains Kitty Clark. "He believed that democracy, however flawed, was best defended by an ignorant public pumped up on nationalism and religion."

Considering the Bushcon agenda and Straussian philosophy, Goss' proposal to unleash the CIA on the American people makes perfect sense. In fact, it is necessary if the Bushcon Master Plan is to be fully realized in a second Bush "term" as CEO of America, Inc.

Is it possible this blog will disappear in a year's time, victim of CIA dirty tricks and "preventive direct action"? Is it possible the internet will be scoured of "terrorists" (or anarchists and environmentalists, who are rapidly becoming the new terror threat as the Bushcons look homeward) after Bush is installed as CEO a second time? Patriot Act II, now being implemented piecemeal, will not only allow the Bushcon Gestapo, consisting of local police, Ministry of Homeland Security and CIA goons, to sneak and peek your computer while you're away at work, it will also provide the legal basis to have you deported.

[Note: Frank Wisner, mentioned in the article above, was the first chief of the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination, responsible for political subversion around the world. In 1962 he suffered a nervous breakdown and committed suicide. - Paul]

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### **F.B.I. Goes Knocking for Political Troublemakers**

*The New York Times*, 16 August 2004

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15 -- The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been questioning political demonstrators across the country, and in rare cases even subpoenaing them, in an aggressive effort to forestall what officials say could be violent and disruptive protests at the Republican National Convention in New York.

F.B.I. officials are urging agents to canvass their communities for information about planned disruptions aimed at the convention and other coming political events, and they say they have developed a list of people who they think may have information about possible violence. They say the inquiries, which began last month before the Democratic convention in Boston, are focused solely on possible crimes, not on dissent, at major political events.

But some people contacted by the F.B.I. say they are mystified by the bureau's interest and felt harassed by questions about their political plans.

"The message I took from it," said Sarah Bardwell, 21, an intern at a Denver antiwar group who was visited by six investigators a few weeks ago, "was that they were trying to intimidate us into not going to any protests and to let us know that, 'hey, we're watching you.'"

The unusual initiative comes after the Justice Department, in a previously undisclosed legal opinion, gave its blessing to controversial tactics used last year by the F.B.I in urging local police departments to report suspicious activity at political and antiwar demonstrations to counterterrorism squads. The F.B.I. bulletins that relayed the request for help detailed tactics used by demonstrators -- everything from violent resistance to Internet fund-raising and recruitment.

In an internal complaint, an F.B.I. employee charged that the bulletins improperly blurred the line between lawfully protected speech and illegal activity. But the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, in a five-page internal analysis obtained by *The New York Times*, disagreed.

The office, which also made headlines in June in an opinion - since disavowed -- that authorized the use of torture against terrorism suspects in some circumstances, said any First Amendment impact posed by the F.B.I.'s monitoring of the political protests was negligible and constitutional.

The opinion said: "Given the limited nature of such public monitoring, any possible 'chilling' effect caused by the bulletins would be quite minimal and substantially outweighed by the public interest in maintaining safety and order during large-scale demonstrations."

Those same concerns are now central to the vigorous efforts by the F.B.I. to identify possible disruptions by anarchists, violent demonstrators and others at the Republican National Convention, which begins Aug. 30 and is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of protesters.

In the last few weeks, beginning before the Democratic convention, F.B.I. counterterrorism agents and other federal and local officers have sought to interview dozens of people in at least six states, including past protesters and their friends and family members, about possible violence at the two conventions. In addition, three young men in Missouri said they were trailed by federal agents for several days and subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury last month, forcing them to cancel their trip to Boston to take part in a protest there that same day.

Interrogations have generally covered the same three questions, according to some of those questioned and their lawyers: were demonstrators planning violence or other disruptions, did they know anyone who was, and did they realize it was a crime to withhold such information.

A handful of protesters at the Boston convention were arrested but there were no major disruptions. Concerns have risen for the Republican convention, however, because of antiwar demonstrations directed at President Bush and because of New York City's global prominence.

With the F.B.I. given more authority after the Sept. 11 attacks to monitor public events, the tensions over the convention protests, coupled with the Justice Department's own legal analysis of such monitoring, reflect the fine line between protecting national security in an age of terrorism and discouraging political expression.

F.B.I. officials, mindful of the bureau's abuses in the 1960's and 1970's monitoring political dissidents like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., say they are confident their agents have not crossed that line in the lead-up to the conventions.

"The F.B.I. isn't in the business of chilling anyone's First Amendment rights," said Joe Parris, a bureau spokesman in Washington. "But criminal behavior isn't covered by the First Amendment.

What we're concerned about are injuries to convention participants, injuries to citizens, injuries to police and first responders."

F.B.I. officials would not say how many people had been interviewed in recent weeks, how they were identified or what spurred the bureau's interest.

They said the initiative was part of a broader, nationwide effort to follow any leads pointing to possible violence or illegal disruptions in connection with the political conventions, presidential debates or the November election, which come at a time of heightened concern about a possible terrorist attack.

F.B.I. officials in Washington have urged field offices around the country in recent weeks to redouble their efforts to interview sources and gather information that might help to detect criminal plots. The only lead to emerge publicly resulted in a warning to authorities before the Boston convention that anarchists or other domestic groups might bomb news vans there. It is not clear whether there was an actual plot.

The individuals visited in recent weeks "are people that we identified that could reasonably be expected to have knowledge of such plans and plots if they existed," Mr. Parris said.

"We vetted down a list and went out and knocked on doors and had a laundry list of questions to ask about possible criminal behavior," he added. "No one was dragged from their homes and put under bright lights. The interviewees were free to talk to us or close the door in our faces."

But civil rights advocates argued that the visits amounted to harassment. They said they saw the interrogations as part of a pattern of increasingly aggressive tactics by federal investigators in combating domestic terrorism. In an episode in February in Iowa, federal prosecutors subpoenaed Drake University for records on the sponsor of a campus antiwar forum. The demand was dropped after a community outcry.

Protest leaders and civil rights advocates who have monitored the recent interrogations said they believed at least 40 or 50 people, and perhaps many more, had been contacted by federal agents about demonstration plans and possible violence surrounding the conventions and other political events.

"This kind of pressure has a real chilling effect on perfectly legitimate political activity," said Mark Silverstein, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado, where two groups of political activists in Denver and a third in Fort Collins were visited by the F.B.I. "People are going to be afraid to go to a demonstration or even sign a petition if they

justifiably believe that will result in your having an F.B.I. file opened on you."

The issue is a particularly sensitive one in Denver, where the police agreed last year to restrictions on local intelligence-gathering operations after it was disclosed that the police had kept files on some 3,000 people and 200 groups involved in protests.

But the inquiries have stirred opposition elsewhere as well.

In New York, federal agents recently questioned a man whose neighbor reported he had made threatening comments against the president. He and a lawyer, Jeffrey Fogel, agreed to talk to the Secret Service, denying the accusation and blaming it on a feud with the neighbor. But when agents started to question the man about his political affiliations and whether he planned to attend convention protests, "that's when I said no, no, no, we're not going to answer those kinds of questions," said Mr. Fogel, who is legal director for the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York.

In the case of the three young men subpoenaed in Missouri, Denise Lieberman, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union in St. Louis, which is representing them, said they scrapped plans to attend both the Boston and the New York conventions after they were questioned about possible violence.

The men are all in their early 20's, Ms. Lieberman said, but she would not identify them.

All three have taken part in past protests over American foreign policy and in planning meetings for convention demonstrations. She said two of them were arrested before on misdemeanor charges for what she described as minor civil disobedience at protests.

Prosecutors have now informed the men that they are targets of a domestic terrorism investigation, Ms. Lieberman said, but have not disclosed the basis for their suspicions. "They won't tell me," she said.

Federal officials in St. Louis and Washington declined to comment on the case. Ms. Lieberman insisted that the men "didn't have any plans to participate in the violence, but what's so disturbing about all this is the pre-emptive nature -- stopping them from participating in a protest before anything even happened."

The three men "were really shaken and frightened by all this," she said, "and they got the message loud and clear that if you make plans to go to a protest, you could be subject to arrest or a visit from the F.B.I."

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## **Bush's dubious terror alerts**

### **Is administration's political agenda driving warnings of terrorism?**

By Bill Berkowitz, *WorkingForChange*, 19 August 2004

WASHINGTON -- "The Bush administration has discovered no evidence of imminent plans by terrorists to attack U.S. financial buildings, nearly two weeks after the government issued startling warnings about such possible threats, a White House official said." -- *Associated Press*, 12 August 2004.

When the going gets tough, the "tough" get to issuing terrorist alerts, announcing high profile arrests, and raising the terrorism threat level. Since January 2002, according to JuliusBlog, an Internet web log, there have been at least fifteen incidents where Team Bush, responding to adverse news or dipping presidential poll numbers, turned either Attorney General John Ashcroft or Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge loose to ramp up talk of terrorism and terrorist attacks.

The latest episode aired on August 1, shortly after the conclusion of the Democratic National Convention, when Secretary Ridge raised the Homeland Security Department's terrorist level to Code Orange -- "high threat of terrorist attacks" -- claiming that there was ample information about terrorists targeting the financial services sector in New York City, northern New Jersey and Washington, D.C. to warrant the action. In prepared remarks, Ridge told the press: "...reports indicate that al-Qaeda is targeting several specific buildings, including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in the District of Columbia; Prudential Financial in Northern New Jersey; and Citigroup buildings and the New York Stock Exchange in New York." The rest of the country remained at Code Yellow -- "significant risk of terrorist attacks."

One week later, the *New York Times* reported that Pakistan had warned the United States "that Al Qaeda has considered using tourist helicopters in terror attacks in New York City." Within hours reporters were on the scene interviewing heliport personnel and scaring the bejeezus out of tourists coming off their flights.

In the run-up to the Republican Party Convention in New York City later this month, terrorist alerts are rolling out of the Dept. of Homeland Security faster than the grounds crew rolls out the Yankee Stadium tarp during a sudden summer shower.

With each real or perceived threat, the American people are reminded of the president's belief that we live in the age of the permanent war against terrorism, a stance he spelled out in a November 2002 document titled "Securing the Homeland, Strengthening the Nation." While outlining his budget priorities, Bush maintained that the threat of terrorism is "an inescapable reality of life in the 21st century" and "a permanent condition to which America and the entire world must adjust." The president also said:

"Today's terrorists can strike at any place, at any time, and with a wide variety of weapons. The most urgent terrorist threat to America is the Al Qaeda network. We will prosecute our war with these terrorists until they are routed from the Earth. But we will not let our guard down after we defeat Al Qaeda. The terrorist threat to America takes many forms, has many

places to hide, and is often invisible. We can never be sure that we have defeated all of our terrorist enemies, and therefore we can never again allow ourselves to become overconfident about the security of our homeland."

Ramping up the Homeland Security Dept.'s threat level may result in greater vigilance amongst both law enforcement and the public, and it is conceivable that a terrorist attack may have been prevented. The cranking-up of the threat level, however, also drives the panic-mongers, most notably the 24/7 cable news networks: "Terrorist Alert" banners drape the screen, crawls get creepier, and terrorist experts are trucked out to provide wall-to-wall commentary.

After several years of warnings, and no major terrorist incident, some are questioning the accuracy and timing of these alerts: Are they based on new information or old information? Is the information reliable? How great is the threat? Should we take for granted the administration's oft-heard mantra that Al Qaeda wants to disrupt the November elections?

With the presidential election less than three months away, there are those with the temerity to question these warnings: Are there other stories -- the continued fighting in Iraq, the mounting death toll of U.S. service personnel, more Abu Ghraib revelations -- that are overshadowed by terrorist warnings? Are the recent warnings aimed at discouraging protesters from demonstrating at the GOP convention? Is there a relationship between how the president is doing at the polls and the issuing of terrorist alerts?

JuliusBlog, posted under the pseudonym Julius Civitatus, along with Biltud, put together a chart and timeline (available at the site) which in part compares "Bush approval numbers to the timeline of terror alerts." Although JuliusBlog doesn't claim that all the "alerts are politically motivated," it "is important to note...that many of these 'immediate' terror alerts were later on discredited."

A few examples provided by JuliusBlog:

February 2002: A week after Ken Lay was subpoenaed by Congress to testify about Enron, and the media latched on to the Bush/Lay connection, Attorney General John Ashcroft called on "all Americans to be on the highest state of alert" after an FBI warning of a possible imminent terrorist attack.

June 9, 2002: Whistleblower Coleen Rowley testified before Congress "that she had tried to notify her superiors about the suspicious flight students 9/11...compare[ing] the agency's bureaucracy to the 'Little Shop Of Horrors,' [and told] Congress the FBI could have done more to prevent the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Two days later, at a press conference in Russia, Attorney General Ashcroft announced the arrest of Jose Padilla, the "dirty bomb" suspect.

July 25 through July 29, 2003: After delaying the publication of Congress' findings on 9/11, the government publishes them, but deleted 28 pages "believed to detail Saudi funding of members of Al Qaeda in the Untied States prior to Sept. 11." Shortly after U.S. troops were charged with beating Iraqi POWs and 15 U.S. soldiers died over 8 days in Iraq, the Department of Homeland Security "issue[d] a warning about the possibility of suicide attacks on airplanes."

December 18, through December 21, 2003: During this period, 9/11 Committee Chair Thomas Kean pointed out that the attacks were preventable; a federal appeals court ruled the government can not detain U.S. citizen Jose Padilla indefinitely without pressing charges against him or allowing him access to the courts; the Wall Street Journal reported that Pentagon auditors accused Halliburton of refusing to hand over internal documents related to allegations that it overcharged the U.S. government in Iraq; and David Kay, the heads of the weapons inspection team in Iraq, quits, having found no WMDs. Secretary Ridge raised the terror threat level in time for the holidays.

According to JuliusBlog: 1) when Bush's poll ratings dip, "there's a new terror alert"; 2) the alerts are followed by "a slight uptick" in the president's approval ratings; 3) "Whenever there are many unfavorable headlines, there's another alert or announcement (distraction effect)"; 4) As the November elections get closer, "the number and frequency of terror alerts keeps growing, to the point that they collapse in the graphic."

JuliusBlog is paying a price for his work. In an e-mail, the creator of the web log told me that while the "attacks on his computer were waning," the first few days after the posting he received "an avalanche of emails loaded with viruses, some even disguised (or forged), as journalists asking about the timeline. Even though I'm very savvy about these matters, and won't ever open any of these virus-laden emails, somehow something nasty got into my home computer on Sunday and destroyed all data and boot records."

Although he admits to not having a "clue" as to who might be behind the sabotage, it is "obviously someone unhappy" with the chart and timeline. "There are some infamous right-wing activists groups on the net that engage in all sorts of harassment activities like these. While I have no clue or proof to point at anyone in particular, I am working with my ISP and email provider to locate the origins of these attacks."

"Julius Civitatus" said that he was "surprised that nobody in the so-called mainstream media thought about plotting all the terror alerts in a chart."

It is worth remembering that since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, other than the anthrax attacks in 2001 -- the perpetrator/s of those incidents remain at large -- there has been a series of seemingly well-orchestrated false alarms: Terrorist attacks on bridges, water systems, transportation hubs, and nuclear power plants have not occurred; the use of chemical or biological weapons have not materialized; there have been no "dirty bombers" or suicide bombers; and the much-hyped smallpox epidemic -- remember when President Bush pushed for a national smallpox vaccination program? -- has not happened.

When the threat level is raised, polls invariably find Americans becoming more fearful and more anxious. The alerts sustain public anxiety even if information later proves the threat was over-hyped. This was best exemplified by the near-panic atmosphere Secretary Ridge caused by his Duct Tape & Plastic Sheeting Advisory in early 2003. Imagine the response if there actually were another foreign-initiated terrorist attack on American soil?

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## **CIA Wants Cheney Out of Senate Intel Report**

### **Citing national security concerns, the agency tries to keep a critical Intelligence Committee document name-free**

By Timothy Burger and Brian Bennett, *Time Magazine*, 21 June 2004

Never mind the fact that Dick Cheney's hands-on role in developing the prewar intelligence picture of Iraq is, by now, a matter of public record -- the CIA has asked that the declassified version of a highly critical Senate Intelligence Committee report to redact references to the Vice President. The classified version of the document does not use names, referring to actors by their title instead. But the Agency sought to have even references to titles be excised on national security grounds.

To suggestions that the redaction request could be interpreted as an effort to provide political cover for Cheney, a CIA official responds that "the purpose of declassification review is to protect intelligence sources, methods and other classified matters which, if disclosed, could be helpful to adversaries, like weapons proliferators and terrorists. It is not to stifle criticism." Leaders of the Senate panel don't see it the same way. "The Committee is extremely disappointed by the CIA's excessive redactions to the report," Chairman Pat Roberts, a Kansas Republican, and Vice Chairman Jay Rockefeller, and West Virginia Democrat, said in a statement last week, without mentioning any specific CIA-proposed edits.

As the Senate prepares to release a version of its report some time after July 4, a Pentagon official involved with pre-war intelligence suggests the simplest approach for the U.S. intelligence community would be to fess up. "We got fooled," said the official. "We should just admit it... Saddam wanted us to think he had these weapons ready. He wanted to have them. He had programs. He was doing his best to scrape them together. But he didn't have them."

Meanwhile, an intelligence heavyweight last week entered the fray with a new reform proposal that is already gathering high-level attention. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Porter Goss -- a former CIA clandestine services officer and leading contender for CIA director if President Bush is re-elected -- quietly introduced a bill that would significantly expand the CIA director's executive and management authority over the whole intelligence community, a Goss spokesman confirmed to *TIME*. While the Director of Central Intelligence has responsibility for all intelligence gathering, more than 80 percent of the spy budget is outside the CIA's control, much of it in the Pentagon's spy satellite programs. A Goss aide said the bill would give the CIA director authority over 70 percent of the intelligence budget. According to a fact sheet, Goss' bill would implement many of the recommendations issued in December 2002 by a joint inquiry into 9/11 by the House and Senate intelligence committees, and it would boost the director's authority to wield more management power than some critics believe outgoing Director George Tenet has mustered.

The chairman of the September 11 Commission told *TIME* he expects that his panel will review Goss' bill while writing its reform recommendations in the coming weeks. "I would put a lot of weight behind anything Porter Goss recommends," said chairman Tom Kean. "I would take any recommendation he makes very, very seriously."

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ERRATA: Last week I referred to the "Freedom of Information Act of 1975." The FOIA was written some time around 1965 and amended in 1974. I apologize for the error. -- Paul

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