

ADDINGTON'S METHODS

Before I get too deep in the detail of today's installment of WaPo's series on Cheney, I'd like to remind you of a point I made in my Take Back America speech. While David Addington's theories on executive power are tremendously dangerous, Addington does believe in the rule of law. He admitted in his Libby trial testimony, for example, that the "Treated as Top Secret/SCI" stamp that OVP had used with all the evidence turned over to investigators was not covered by the Presidents EO on classification. And he described scolding Dan Bartlett after the White House exonerated Libby and Rove publicly in Fall 2003. Whereas Alberto Gonzales appears to blithely transgress all normal legal limits on behavior (as when he coached Monica Goodling's testimony), Addington respects those limits, so long as they don't clash with the power of the presidency.

Which is why this passage from the WaPo article is so telling:

Flanigan said that Addington's personal views leaned more toward Olson than against him, but that he beat back the proposal to grant detainees access to lawyers, "because that was the position of his client, the vice president."

The issue was whether enemy combatants could have a lawyer represent them. And on that issue, Addington appears to have suppressed his own judgment (which sounds like a pragmatic judgment on how best to retain presidential powers) in favor of Cheney's intractable stance.