

REPLACING THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL WARMING

I'd like to use the occasion of Al Gore's op-ed in the NYT today to expand on something I said in my talk on Curbing the Imperial Presidency. In his book *The Imperial Presidency*, Arthur Schlesinger argued that the Imperial Presidency derived from foreign policy:

The Imperial Presidency was essentially the creation of foreign policy. A combination of doctrines and emotions—belief in permanent and universal crisis, fear of communism, faith in the duty and the right of the United States to intervene swiftly in every part of the world—had brought about the unprecedented centralization of decisions over war and peace in the Presidency. With this there came an unprecedented exclusion of the rest of the executive branch, of Congress, of the press and of public opinion in general from these decisions.

We would only need to replace the word terrorism for communism to apply this paragraph today—to describe how the rationale of crisis and fear justified the dangerous consolidation of power under the Executive. At the close of my talk on the Imperial Presidency, I said,

Finally, we have to use the Administration's botched propaganda against it. It is clear to most, now, that the invasion of Iraq had nothing to do with an attempt to prevent the proliferation of WMD, a desire to spread democracy, or a fight against terrorism. We need to keep refuting those who want

to claim this war is part of the war on terror. But we need to take that a step further and talk about the real reason the Administration did invade Iraq: to prop up America's threatened hegemonic position using a grand strategy that is not only outdated and immoral, but guaranteed to be ineffective in an era of global warming and peak oil.