

RICHARD CLARKE TO BUSH: STOP FEAR- MONGER TO TAKE AWAY CIVIL LIBERTIES

This article, from the man whose warnings about 9/11 Bush refused to believe, ought to be sent to every Senator.

For this president, fear is an easier political tactic than compromise. With FISA, he is attempting to rattle Congress into hastily expanding his own executive powers at the expense of civil liberties and constitutional protections.

I spent most of my career in government fighting to protect this country in order to defend these very rights. And I know every member of Congress – whether Democrat or Republican – holds public office in the same pursuit.

That is why in 2001, I presented this president with a comprehensive analysis regarding the threat from al-Qaeda. It was obvious to me then – and remains a fateful reality now – that this enemy sought to attack our country. Then, the president ignored the warnings and played down the threats. Ironically, it is the fear from these extremely real threats that the president today uses as a wedge in a vast and partisan political game. This is – and has been – a very reckless way to pursue the very ominous dangers our country faces. And once again, during the current debate over FISA, he continues to place political objectives above the practical steps needed to defeat this threat.

In these still treacherous times, we can't afford to have a president who

leads by manipulating emotions with fear, flaunting the law, or abusing the very inalienable rights endowed to us by the Constitution. Though 9/11 changed the prism through which we view surveillance and intelligence, it did not in any way change the effectiveness of FISA to allow us to track and monitor our enemies. FISA has and still works as the most valuable mechanism for monitoring our enemies.

In order to defeat the violent Islamist extremists who do not believe in human rights, we need not give up the civil liberties, constitutional rights and protections that generations of Americans fought to achieve. We do not need to create Big Brother. With the administration's attempts to erode FISA's legal standing as the exclusive means by which our government can conduct electronic surveillance of U.S. persons on U.S. soil, this is unfortunately the path the president is taking us down.

Click through for the rest—and then send copies to your Senators.

You think maybe Clarke is getting fed up with this false debate?