

THE ROAD TO GUANTÁNAMO

Lessons of *The Road to Guantánamo*: The President is Not Above the Law

“A film of staggering force.” – The New York Times

“Powerful. A film every American voter should see.” – Michael Moore

“A punch in the gut.” – Variety

The ACLU is proud to be sponsoring a special screening of “The Road to Guantánamo” on June 22 in New York City. We hope that this invited audience of leaders in politics, law, academia, media and entertainment will help spread the importance of this film and the issues behind it to community leaders throughout the country.

Sadly, the abuse of power that “The Road to Guantánamo” so vividly portrays is not confined to the U.S. military detention facility.

Under the guise of protecting national security, the Bush Administration is systematically expanding its power to violate the law. The Administration is undermining the Constitution and America’s values of freedom and fairness. And it is denying Congress and the courts any real oversight.

From kidnapping and torturing detainees abroad to illegal domestic wire-tapping and keeping files on peaceful protests here at home, the government is not only dramatically expanding – and abusing – its authority. It is also attempting to do so under a veil of secrecy in order to avoid being held accountable to the law.

TORTURE AND CRUELTY

The images from Abu Ghraib prison shocked people everywhere and tarnished America’s standing as a champion of freedom. Who can forget the horrifying pictures of Iraqi detainees cowering as they were being snarled at by guard dogs, and naked prisoners piled one upon another in efforts to humiliate them and break their will? Similar travesties occurred in Guantánamo, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The Bush Administration and Congress have ignored their obligation to end the torture and abuse of detainees in U.S. military custody and restore faith in America’s commitment to human rights at home and around the world.

ILLEGAL DOMESTIC SPYING

We now know that when President Bush established a warrantless surveillance program, he ordered the National Security Agency to secretly and illegally bypass the courts and the Constitution.

The news media discovered late last year that the National Security Agency, at the direction of President Bush, has been listening to phone calls between people in the U.S. and people in other countries without a warrant, in complete violation of the law.

Later, we learned of other, even more widespread secret programs that track information on the telephone calls and e-mails of millions and millions of Americans.

The president has argued he is not bound by the Constitution or the courts. He claims these programs are necessary for security, and says existing laws were inadequate or “impractical.” But the Constitution does not leave it up to the president to decide which laws he will obey. In America, no one is above the law, not even the president.

ILLEGAL KIDNAPPING

The CIA is engaging in a practice known as “extraordinary rendition” – abducting foreign nationals for detention and interrogation in secret overseas prisons. This practice must be stopped before more innocent victims are targeted. The American sense of justice cannot tolerate kidnappings and secret prisons.

ACT NOW TO STOP THESE ABUSES OF POWER!

These secret programs – spying, rendition and torture – signify a disdain for the American traditions of freedom, privacy and justice. They assume that the rules do not apply to the president. No free people should stand for this, and we must act now to stop these abuses of power.

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Shut Down Gitmo. Send a letter urging your representative to act now to shut down the Guantánamo Bay prison and all secret federal government facilities where individuals have been tortured or abused. Go to www.aclu.org/shutdowngitmo

Stop Torture. Sign our Torture is Un-American Petition. Go to www.aclu.org/torture

Tell the FCC to Get the Spies Off the Line. Send a letter to the FCC, or join a local petition to your public utility demanding an investigation into the sharing of our telephone call data. Go to our phone spying Action Center at www.aclu.org/nophonespying

Join the ACLU. Become a card-carrying member of the ACLU and support the fight to protect civil liberties. www.aclu.org/join

