



Almost 32 years to the day after President Ford created an independent Intelligence Oversight Board made up of private citizens with top-level clearances to ferret out illegal spying activities, President Bush issued an executive order that stripped the board of much of its authority. [more stories like this](#)

The White House did not say why it was necessary to change the rules governing the board when it issued Bush's order late last month. But critics say Bush's order is consistent with a pattern of steps by the administration that have systematically scaled back Watergate-era intelligence reforms.

"It's quite clear that the Bush administration officials who were around in the 1970s are settling old scores now," said Tim Sparapani, senior legislative counsel to the American Civil Liberties Union. "Here they are even preventing oversight within the executive branch. They have closed the books on the post-Watergate era."

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