

Drawing on recent precedents, the next president could launch preemptive wars with only minor interference from Congress, ignore the ancient right of habeas corpus and imprison political enemies, spy on American citizens without serious legal restraint, use practically any federal agency for political purposes, manipulate the press in ways inconceivable prior to 2000, corrupt the federal justice system for political gain, destroy evidence in criminal cases, use the Justice Department to prosecute members of the opposing party, offer lucrative no-bid government contracts to friends, expand the creation of private security armies, use torture, create secret prisons, assassinate inconvenient foreign leaders, circumvent laws with signing statements, and a great deal more. Such things are now possible because the system of checks and balances carefully written into the Constitution and explained in great detail in the Federalist Papers were weakened as a result of historical circumstances of the 20th century, but systematically and with great forethought by the administration of George W. Bush.

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