

For obvious reasons, the most blindly loyal Bush followers of the last eight years are desperate to claim that nobody cares any longer about what happened during the Bush administration, that everyone other than the most fringe, vindictive Bush-haters is eager to put it all behind us, forget about it all and, instead, look to the harmonious, sunny future. That's natural. Those who cheer on shameful and despicable acts always want to encourage everyone to forget what they did, and those who commit crimes naturally seek to dismiss demands for investigations and punishment as nothing more than distractions and vendettas pushed by those who want to wallow in the past.

Surprisingly, though, demands that Bush officials be held accountable for their war crimes are becoming more common in mainstream political discourse, not less so. The mountain of conclusive evidence that has recently emerged directly linking top Bush officials to the worst abuses -- combined with Dick Cheney's brazen, defiant acknowledgment of his role in these crimes (which perfectly tracked Bush's equally defiant 2005 acknowledgment of his illegal eavesdropping programs and his brazen vow to continue them) -- is forcing even the reluctant among us to embrace the necessity of such accountability.

It's almost as though everyone's nose is now being rubbed in all of this: now that the culpability of our highest government officials is no longer hidden, but is increasingly all out in the open, who can still defend the notion that they should remain immune from consequences for their patent lawbreaking? As Law Professor Jonathan Turley said several weeks ago on The Rachel Maddow Show: "It's the indictment of all of us if we walk away from a clear war crime." And this week, Turley pointed out to Keith Olbermann that "ultimately it will depend on citizens, and whether they will remain silent in the face of a crime that has been committed in plain view. . . . It is equally immoral to stand silent in the face of a war crime and do nothing."

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