

**Paper: Times, The (London, England)**  
**Title: Bush camp attacks newspaper 'treason'**  
**Date: June 29, 2006**

GEORGE BUSH and Dick Cheney are calling The New York Times a disgrace, Republican congressmen say it is guilty of treason and demand the prosecution of the Editor, while a right-wing radio presenter suggests most of its readers must be "jihadists".

They never need much encouragement to attack America's most venerable title which is, at least in critics' eyes, a beacon for anti-war sentiment.

But this time the anger is palpably stronger. The newspaper's offence was to publish an article revealing that the US Administration had kept tabs on suspected terrorists by tapping into bank records which track global transactions.

"What we did was fully authorised under the law," said President Bush. "And the disclosure of this is disgraceful. We're at war with a bunch of people who want to hurt the United States of America, and for people to leak that programme, and for a newspaper to publish it, does great harm."

Tony Snow, the White House press secretary, said that the measures had proved their worth by helping to catch the mastermind of the Bali bombing as well as possibly "tracking down some of those who have been responsible in planning the subway bombings and the bus bombings in London".

Republicans in the House of Representatives prepared to table a motion yesterday condemning the newspaper.

Peter King, a Republican congressman from New York, demanded that the newspaper, which he said had an "arrogant, elitist, left-wing agenda", be prosecuted for violating the 1917 Espionage Act. Rush Limbaugh, the right-wing shock-jock, said: "I think 80 per cent of their subscribers have to be jihadists. If you look at The New York Times...it's clear that they're trying to help the terrorists."

Newt Gingrich, the former House Speaker, said: "You would think that The New York Times, located on the same island where the World Trade Centre once existed, would have some residual memory of 9-11. My sense is that they hate George W. Bush so much that they would be prepared to cripple America in order to go after the President."

The relish with which American conservatives pour vitriol on liberal papers is matched only by the pleasure which an often self-regarding media derives from talking about itself.

The New York Times yesterday ran an editorial entitled "Patriotism and the Press" which declared: "The free press has a central place in the Constitution because it can provide information the public needs to make things right again."

The editorial likened today's atmosphere to the McCarthy era when "a half century ago the country endured a long, amorphous global vigilance against an enemy who was suspected of boring from within".

It argued that the report had exposed "an alarming pattern" in which Mr Bush cited security imperatives to bypass checks and balances, adding that the fight against terrorism had to be coupled with a commitment to defend individual liberties.

The newspaper was criticised last year for endangering national security after disclosing how Mr Bush had, possibly illegally, authorised eavesdropping on thousands of telephone calls made by Americans.

#### PRESS FREEDOM

John Adams (1797-1801): During French Revolutionary War he signed Alien and Sedition Acts, making it illegal to criticise the President or Congress. Several editors arrested and indicted

Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865): During Civil War he enforced mail and press censorship. Military arrested editors who opposed the war and suspended publication of some newspapers

Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909): The New York World alleged corruption in acquisition of the Panama Canal. Publisher was charged with criminal libel  
Richard Nixon (1969-1974): The New York Times published excerpts of secret study on expanding military actions in Vietnam. Injunction prohibiting paper from printing any more was lifted by Supreme Court

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