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## Bush Administration Infighting Rears Head

by Michael in New York on [10/25/2004 02:10:00 AM](#)

Usually, the scandals and infighting of an administration come out after they've left office. You'd expect that to be even more the case for the Bushies -- he demands unswerving loyalty and hates any interoffice sniping getting into the press.

But story after major, detailed story is spilling out of the New York Time, the Washington Post and all the other major players with a lot of juicy dirt. Here's the first of a massive two-part look at those ridiculous military [tribunals set up for the terrorists](#) held at Guantanamo Bay. It's fascinating, but political junkies will especially enjoy the score-settling.

"The plan was considered so sensitive that senior White House officials kept its final details **hidden from the president's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, and the secretary of state, Colin L. Powell**, officials said. It was so urgent, some of those involved said, that they hardly thought of consulting Congress.

"White House officials said their use of extraordinary powers would allow the Pentagon to collect crucial intelligence and mete out swift, unmerciful justice. "We think it guarantees that we'll have the kind of treatment of these individuals that we believe they deserve," said Vice President Dick Cheney, who was a driving force behind the policy.

"But three years later, not a single terrorist has been prosecuted. Of the roughly 560 men being held at the United States naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, only 4 have been formally charged. Preliminary hearings for those suspects brought such a barrage of procedural challenges and public criticism that verdicts could still be months away. And since a Supreme Court decision in June that gave the detainees the right to challenge their imprisonment in federal court, the Pentagon has stepped up efforts to send home hundreds of men whom it once branded as dangerous terrorists."

Here's part two, [another massive but engrossing article](#) that nails down that the worst of the worst held in extraordinary circumstances at Guantanamo are mostly low-level nothings. Plus, more infighting!

"Although White House lawyers said they rushed to devise a new judicial structure that could handle serious Qaeda terrorists, many of the detainees sent to Guantánamo turned out to be low-level militants, Taliban fighters and men simply caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Pentagon's efforts to gather intelligence from more valuable prisoners were also deeply flawed, military intelligence officers said, complicating the prosecution of some detainees and nearly paralyzing efforts to release others.

"Interviews with dozens of officials show that the myriad problems ignited an often fierce behind-the-scenes struggle that set the Pentagon and its allies in the White House against adversaries at the National Security Council, the State Department and Justice Department. The friction among officials like Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld; the national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice; and Mr. Ashcroft sheds new light on the internal dynamics of an administration that has shown a remarkably united public front."



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