




FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2005

## Homeland Security Head: If You Want Security, You've Gotta Give Up Privacy

by Michael in New York on [8/12/2005 08:33:00 AM](#)

USA Today has [an okay interview with Homeland Security head Michael Chertoff](#). What I missed: hearing how Chertoff is going to head off the political abuse of his department, namely the political machinations that Tom Ridge said were behind so many of the "terror alerts" during Bush's first four years. What Chertoff did say: security trumps privacy.

Chertoff said there is too much worry over a plan by the Transportation Security Administration to collect passengers' full names and birth dates before they board.

"The average American gives information up to get a CVS (drugstore discount) card that is far more in-depth than TSA's going to be looking at," Chertoff told reporters and editors at USA TODAY's headquarters in McLean, Va.

True -- that's why a growing number of people DON'T sign up for those cards at grocery stores and drug stores that let them track every single purchase you make, sell it to any and all comers and give you very little in return. Heck, when I buy a battery at Radio Shack and they demand my phone number, I get into a five minute argument every time.

"Would you rather give up your address and date of birth to a secure database and not be pulled aside and questioned," he said, "or would you rather not give it up and have an increased likelihood that you're going to be called out of line and someone's going to do a secondary search of your bag and they're going to ask you a lot of personal questions in the full view of everybody else?"

So the choice is to just roll over and give up all your privacy in advance or we'll single you out for humiliating treatment because if you DON'T want to give Big Brother your blood type, genetic code and first born baby, obviously you have something to hide? That's the same foolish argument people like to say about unnecessary drug testing or having your every move tracked by cameras -- if you've got nothing to hide, why do you object? Uh, because it's my freedom and privacy I'm trying to protect, not lose. Isn't it?



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