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THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2004

**Trent Lott Is Right!**

by Michael in New York on 8/26/2004 09:49:00 AM

Hey, a broken clock has the correct time twice a day and Trent Lott is right about the **government classifying way too many documents**. He extolls the beauty of open government in this opinion column for the New York Times. As Lott reminds us, 9/11 chairman Thomas H. Kean said three-quarters of the classified material he reviewed should not have been classified in the first place.

This is a decades-long trend, but Clinton put guidelines into place that automatically declassified many documents after a certain amount of time in the belief that anything that could be made public should be made public. Bush has reversed that policy, seeming to practice the belief that anything that doesn't HAVE to be made public shouldn't be made public.

As Lott writes, "Secrecy has become so pervasive in the federal government that it's often unclear whether facts are classified for legitimate security reasons, or simply for the political protection of agencies and officials... At its extreme, the culture of classification can impair the information-sharing among intelligence agencies necessary to ensure sound policymaking; it can also deprive the American people of their ability to judge the effectiveness of their government on national security matters."



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