



Reining in the Imperial Presidency: Lessons and Recommendations Relating to the Presidency of George W. Bush

John C. Conyers

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Through transcripts, memos, and analysis, Representative John C. Conyers, Jr. and the House Judiciary Committee reveal how the Bush administration again and again assumed more power than the Constitution allows, and circumvented the traditional checks and balances of our system. From ignoring laws that forbid torturing, to determining that the president himself—not the courts—can decide the reach of the law, to using creative counselors to recast the statutory law or the Constitution itself, the administration’s approach to power was, at its core, little more than a restatement of Richard Nixon’s famous rationalization of presidential misdeeds: “When the president does it, that means it’s not illegal.” *Reining in the Imperial Presidency* includes forty-seven separate recommendations, including calls for continued committee investigation, a blue ribbon commission to fully investigate administration activities, and independent criminal probes.

Conyer writes, “The Constitution has been sorely tested over the last eight years. But . . . I am confident in our capacity to self-correct. Doing so will require much hard work and diligence, and that effort only continues with the release of this Report. Our work is far from complete.”

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