



# A Declaration for Our Times

By Christopher Pyle

## Let these facts be submitted to a candid world:

The history of this president is one of **arbitrary usurpations of power**, the effect of which is to establish tyranny in the name of false security.

**He has created a multitude of new programs, and sent swarms of petty officers to spy on Americans** in a misguided effort to combat foreign terrorism. He has invested these agents with sweeping new powers to burglarize our homes, monitor our conversations, and invade our personal papers and effects without judicial supervision, or any reason to believe – as the Constitution requires – that a crime has been committed, and that evidence of the crime will be found in the place to be searched.

**He has suspended the laws and treaties against torture**, authorized the kidnapping of mere suspects, and transported hundreds of prisoners beyond seas, where the legality of their mistreatment could not be questioned by an independent judiciary.

**He has further claimed the power to disregard legislation** that Congress has passed and that he, himself, has signed into law.

**He and his supporters in Congress have granted amnesty** to the officials who unleashed torture and humiliation upon helpless prisoners, to the disgrace of our nation throughout the world.

**He has rendered the military superior to civil authority** by stealing civilians from civil courts, and has held those prisoners for years without charges in military prisons, in violation of their rights to prompt arraignment, speedy trial, and trial by jury.

**He has denied these prisoners access to attorneys, family, and friends**, and has claimed the right to try them before military tribunals specifically designed to disregard the most basic principles of law.

**He has imprisoned thousands of harmless immigrants** for months without charges, under brutal conditions, until his agents, rather than independent courts, decided that they posed no threat. His minions have refused to disclose the identity of these prisoners, their numbers or whereabouts, or any offenses, real or imagined, for which they were supposedly held.

**He has wrapped his usurpations of power and his deprivations of liberty in thick cloaks of secrecy**, thereby showing contempt for the opinions of humankind, the rule of law, and the proper functions of Congress, the courts, and the press.

**At every stage of these oppressions we have sought redress**, but our petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A president, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the leader of a free people.

**We, therefore, resolve to resist these usurpations by all lawful means** at our disposal. To this end, we demand that our state and local authorities deny assistance to federal agencies that engage in unlawful spying, detentions, and the abuse of prisoners. We insist that the powers of our national government continue to be shared by all branches of government, and not concentrated in one alone. And we call upon Congress, the courts, and the press to reassert their constitutional functions vigorously, and restore the promise that is America.

**To these ends, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.**

**Contact the Bill of Rights Defense Committee:** Tel: 413-582-0110 or [east@bordc.org](mailto:east@bordc.org). We invite local coalitions to place this declaration in their local papers as a signature ad on Independence Day 2008.

**Get involved locally:**