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## What to do when the Emperor has No Clothes

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These are troubling times for all of us who love this country, as surely we all do, even the satirists. You may poke fun at your mother, but if she is belittled by others it burns your bacon. A blowhard French journalist writes a book about America that is full of arrogant stupidity, and you want to let the air out of him and mail him home flat. And then you read the paper and realize the country is led by a man who isn't paying attention, and you hope that somebody will poke him. Or put a sign on his desk that says, "Try much harder."

Do we need to impeach him to bring some focus to this man's life? The Feb. 27 issue of The New Yorker carries an article by Jane Mayer about a loyal conservative Republican and U.S. Navy lawyer, Albert Mora, and his resistance to the torture of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. From within the Pentagon bureaucracy, he did battle against Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and John Yoo, who then was at the Justice Department, and shadowy figures taking orders from Vice President Dick "Gunner" Cheney, arguing America had ratified the Geneva Convention that forbids cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners, and so it has the force of law. They seemed to be arguing that President Bush has the right to order prisoners to be tortured.

One such prisoner, Mohamed al-Qahtani, was held naked in isolation under bright lights for months, threatened by dogs, subjected to unbearable noise volumes and otherwise abused, so that he begged to be allowed to kill himself. When the Senate approved the Torture Convention in 1994, it defined torture as an act "specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering."

Is the law a law or is it a piece of toast?

Wiretap surveillance of Americans without a warrant? Great. Go for it. How about turning over American ports to a country more closely tied to Sept. 11, 2001, than Saddam Hussein was? Fine by me. No problem. And what about the war in Iraq? Hey, you're doing a heck of a job. No need to tweak a thing. And your blue button-down shirt--it's you.

But torture is something else. Most people agree with this, and in a democracy that puts the torturers in a delicate position. They must make sure to destroy their e-mails and have subordinates who will take the fall. Because it is impossible to keep torture secret. It goes against the American grain and it eats at the conscience of even the most disciplined, and in the end the truth will come out. It is coming out now.

Our adventure in Iraq, at a cost of billions, has brought that country to the verge of civil war while earning us more enemies than ever before. And tax money earmarked for security is being dumped into pork-barrel projects anywhere somebody wants their own SWAT team. Detonation of a nuclear bomb within our borders--pick any big city--is a real possibility, as much so now as five years ago. Meanwhile, many Democrats have conceded the very subject of security and positioned themselves as Guardians of Our Forests and Benefactors of Waifs and Owls, neglecting the most basic job of government, which is to defend this country. The peaceful lagoon that is the White House is designed for the comfort of a vulnerable man. Perfectly understandable, but not what is needed now. The U.S. Constitution provides a simple, ultimate way to hold him to account for war crimes and the failure to attend to the country's defense. Impeach him and let the Senate hear the evidence.

