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Columns
Robert Abele: An Attack on Democracy
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The November presidential election is arguably the most important one in at least fifty years. As citizens, we are being asked whether or not to "continue the course" that we are on as a country. Stated another way, we are being asked whether or not we want to keep the current regime in power in the White House.
However, a better question for this election year is why would we want to keep the Bush administration in power, given their misdeeds these past three years?
"Misdeeds" is perhaps an understatement, but whatever term one uses, the important case to be made is that the Bush White House is the most corrupt one we have seen in recent history. By "corrupt," I mean that the actions and policies of the Bush administration have been unconstitutional, undemocratic in principle, unethical, and/or illegal. Although the misdeeds that characterize this administration are legion, I will limit my examples for sake of space.

I. Unconstitutional Acts

James Madison, the author of our Constitution, stated that this document is a sacred trust between the people and the government. Thus, "every [government] usurpation [of power over the people] is an encroachment on the private rights not of one, but of all." How has the Bush administration encroached upon the "rights of all"?

The USA PATRIOT Act—This is the legislation pushed through the Congress immediately after 9/11/01 by Mr. Bush and Mr. Ashcroft. When the Judicial branch of government drafts legislation that allows itself permission to spy on its citizens, often without warrant and without judicial oversight, and to search and seize the property of its citizens with the same lack of warrant and oversight, then manipulates that proposal through Congress instead of relying on

the usual period for reading and debating the law, our democracy is in peril.

One cannot argue that it is needed to “protect us from terrorism,” not only because one cannot preserve rights by rejecting them, but also because the dismantling of our rights-based system is precisely what the terrorists seek to do! Here are the main rights under attack by PATRIOT:

• Probable Cause (the Fourth Amendment)—First, PATRIOT allows governmental spying on U.S. citizens for “suspicion” only, which is a direct contravention of the Fourth Amendment requirement for probable cause. Second, Section 214 states that no warrant is required for use of devices designed to monitor incoming and outgoing phone numbers from citizens phones; just “relevance to an ongoing terrorist investigation;”

• Privacy (the Fourth Amendment)—First, Section 206 allows “roving wiretaps.” Thus, if the FBI is investigating someone who uses a library computer, any person who also uses that computer can be monitored by the FBI without their knowledge or consent. Second, Section 213 permits “sneak-and-peek” searches of one’s home and/or office by Federal agents, without notifying the person they were there. Further, this Section allows delayed notification of search warrant, and prohibits the person searched from monitoring what was searched or what was taken’

• Checks and Balances between the Judicial, Executive, and Legislative branches of government, which provide a guarantee that governmental power will not be consolidated or abused by one branch: First, Section 206 rules that no judicial review is permitted of roving wiretaps. Second, Section 215 requires a judge to court order seizures of “any tangible thing” the FBI requests, merely by claiming that it is “sought for” a terrorism investigation or that it is for “clandestine intelligence activities;”

• Free Speech (the First Amendment)—First, Section 218 permits surveillance of any “U.S. person” for any criminal investigation, as long as information gathered is for “a significant purpose.” Second, Sections 215 & 505 issues gag orders on those visited by the FBI. Third, Section 412 allows detention and deportation of any immigrant who even verbally supports a terrorist

organization. Fourth, Section 802 defines “domestic terrorism” as “acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of criminal laws…[that] appear to be intended…to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion.”

II. Circumventing the Principles of Democracy

The Bush administration has circumvented democracy in at least four particularly horrific ways. First of all, its secrecy. Judge Damon Keith stated from the bench, in a ruling against the use of the PATRIOT Act by the administration that “democracy dies behind closed doors.” By most accounts, this administration has maintained the highest degree of secrecy of any administration in recent history. This includes the following actions taken by Mr. Bush and/or his administration:

• withholding the names and treatment of the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay;
• barring the press and public from immigration hearings;
• most prominently, the extreme secrecy surrounding the events leading up to 9/11, including the long stonewalling the administration did to prevent an investigation into intelligence and other failures leading to 9/11. Even though Mr. Bush eventually acquiesced to such a panel under political pressure, he continued to stonewall on providing them timely and important information;
• excluding members of Congress from gaining information they have legally asked for in order to perform their constitutional duties. The Bush Whitehouse has told Congress flat out that no more questions from them concerning its spending of taxpayer money will be accepted or answered;
• the new legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security forbids disclosure of any information concerning public health, safety, and the environment that private industry labels “sensitive.” Thus, businesses are now allowed to conceal even the most minor of safety violations which concern the public health;
• Vice President Dick Cheney has successfully blocked public knowledge of his meeting with energy company lobbyists who were involved with his energy task force;
• The Vice President refuses to answer questions concerning the his four heart attacks, and his current health status. He has consistently told reporters that

he would give them information on his health, but he never does. It is fully within bounds that citizens be informed about the failing health of the second-highest leader in our land;

• Mr. Cheney's secrecy concerning the fact that while he was in charge of Halliburton, the company did oil business with Iraq, Iran, Libya, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan. These are all countries that are well known for massive human rights violations. Not only that, but Congress had passed legislation forbidding economic aid to Azerbaijan due to such rights violations. But Mr. Bush signed a presidential order overriding the law, and Mr. Cheney's company was right back in business there;

• Bush tightly controlled the media by bringing friendly and out of town journalists in to cover his official doings instead of relying on the usual White House press corps;

• The administration's involvement in the Project for a New American Century. It's first publication came in 1992, and outlined plans for U.S. hegemony in the world by attacking Iraq, Iran, Syria, and North Korea, and all they needed was something "like a new Pearl Harbor;"

• Mr. Cheney's creation of a secret government, making decisions out of the spotlight and with no accountability to Congress or to the public;

• The White House covering up the Red Cross report concerning prisoner abuse in Abu Graib, which was delivered to Mr. Bush a full two months before the pictures that came out that shook the world. Not only have they kept that report secret, but they have also stifled the report from Army Major General Antonio Taguba, which was presented to the Pentagon in March of this year;

The second alarming way in which the Bush team has inhibited democracy from functioning as it should is in its secret executive orders—Any of the following executive orders can be researched on www.whitehouse.gov, or by perusing journalistic articles on them:

• Postponed public release of thousands of declassified presidential documents that are 25 years old or more;

• stopped the Reagan presidential papers from being released to the public, even though President Reagan had signed off on doing so, as required by law;

• sent hundreds of millions of dollars to religious organizations with no obligation to show us where the money is going or how it's being used;

• signed an executive order shifting the approval needed for use of the Carnivore computer system, used to collect and store massive amounts of information on citizens from their Internet Service Provider use, from the Assistant Attorney General's office to the field offices, which means easier use and less judicial oversight;
• A Canadian citizen was secretly deported to Syria last year by the U.S. government, where he was beaten and tortured for ten months before his release. This was done on a secret presidential "finding" authorizing the CIA to deport foreigners without due process;
• order takes the entire court system out of the process of arrest and detention of alien terrorist suspects;
• Removal of information from government websites concerning "the use of condoms to prevent HIV/AIDS, the fact that abortions do not increase the risk of breast cancer, Labor Department statistics on mass layoffs, and budget information showing state-by-state cuts in federal programs."
• Placing judges on the bench by fiat when it becomes clear that they will not obtain congressional approval;
• Three executive orders expanding whom in his administration can classify records to make information unavailable to reporters or the public (e.g. secretary of agriculture, secretary of health and human services, and the head of the EPA).

The third, and perhaps the most chilling, undermining of democracy Mr. Bush has engaged in concerns his involvement in religion. Siding with the extremists of the so-called "religious right" (who are neither religious nor right but rather represent the viewpoints of the equivalent of an American Taliban), Mr. Bush has systematically excluded all other faith perspectives from having an influence on his policies, and has engaged policies calculated to solidify the far-right base of the Republican Party, which has far more power than its numbers should allow. For example:
• he rejected the plea of not only the pope, but of many mainstream religious voices in the U.S. and in the world, not to rush to war in Iraq. For example, the American Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Episcopal Bishop of Washington John Chane, and Shelby Spong, all made appeals that were

flatly
rejected by Bush;
• his rejection/limitation of stem-cell research, opposition to abortion, and
his public opposition to gay marriage are issues focused on by the “religious
right;”
• continuing with this theme, Mr. Bush is quietly involvement with the hard-right group “Focus on the Family,” and joined them in crafting a political
move against gay marriages well before mayors and states began to discuss and/or
act on the question.
• Bush and members of his administration meet with evangelical Christians
(organized into the “Apostolic Congress” and calling themselves “the Christian
Voice in the Nation’s Capital,” and openly advocating a “one-state solution” in
Israel [i.e. no Palestinian state]), before formulating or announcing mid-East
policies;
• Mr. Bush has allowed religious groups to obtain federal grants to build
centers for religious worship, something never before done in the history
of this country, which traditionally has respected the First Amendment more than
apparently Mr. Bush does;
• his nearly single-issue litmus test for nomination of new federal judges of
being anti-abortion;
• his “faith-based initiatives” which clearly violate the First Amendment and
also steer needed funds away from those in need;

The fourth way the Bush administration has undermined democracy is by overturning environmental legislation by fiat, and by replacing scientists and
scientific research with committee members and findings that are ideologically
determined, not scientifically and objectively researched. Examples of this
include the following:
• the Union of Concerned Scientists, with support from many other organized and
unorganized scientists, have charged the Bush administration with suppressing
research and manipulating science in favor of ideology “on global warming, air
quality, sexual health, cancer and other issues.” When the White House denied
the charges, a group of scientists, including 20 Nobel laureates, responded to
the White House denial with a point by point rebuttal;
• Bush has also become known for dumping respected scientists from governmental

panels and replacing them with political appointees whose opinions are more in line with his and corporate America's business ideology.

• Robert F. Kennedy has accused the Bush administration of drastically changing over 200 environmental laws to favor corporate and polluter interests;

• the EPA now does the bidding of corporate America, and where they do not, Bush simply orders them to do this. For example, the agency mysteriously killed the EPA's planned emergency announcement that 16 billion tons of termolite, a substance that contains lethal levels of asbestos, had been mixed with fertilizers and home insulation. For another example, telling the EPA that carbon dioxide is not a pollutant that the agency is permitted to regulate;

• his "Clean Skies Initiative" will allow 17,700 older coal-burning plants to continue to pollute by avoiding having to purchase expensive "scrubbers" to clean their emissions;

• the refusal of the Bush administration to sign or to abide by the Kyoto agreement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which cause global warming, even though the U.S. is the greatest producer of these emissions, will make it extremely difficult for the world to avoid environmental catastrophe in the near future;

• Bush has also covered up and suppressed his own scientists' research into the seriousness of global warming. For example, it is already known that global warming kills over 150,000 people a year worldwide. In addition, a German government study states that measures four times greater than the Kyoto agreement that Mr. Bush refused to sign will now be needed to stem the tide of global warming and stop the polar ice caps from melting. In fact, the chief scientist in England has warned that global warming is a bigger threat than terrorism, and the environmental policies of the U.S. President are also worse than terrorism.

• the Bush administration has announced plans to scuttle the "Roadless Area Conservation Rule" passed in January, 2001. This law limits logging and development where no roads were already built. When Bush cuts this law down, his friends in the logging industry will be cutting down our national forests as well;

• Bush's EPA has also dropped investigations into over 100 power plants and factories for violating the Clean Air Act, and also dropped 13 cases in

which it
was determined that pollution laws had in fact been violated. In response,
Democratic senators, attorneys general, and lawyers from seven Northeastern
states are not only pressing for an investigation, but have sued the Bush
administration for failing to regulate power plant emissions of carbon dioxide;
• Bush has proposed a new directive, which would exempt numerous governmental
agencies from following environmental law, under the guise of “national
security.” The plan includes allowing the “degradation of public resources--such
as building new roads through national forests for use by the border patrol—with
no input from the public whatsoever;”
• In July of this year, Bush proposed to scrap a rule “that put nearly 60
million acres of national forest largely off limits to logging, mining or other
development in favor of a new system that would leave it to governors to seek
greater—or fewer—strictures on road construction in forests;”
• Bush has made an effort to amend the 1973 Endangered Species Act so U.S.
companies can import endangered animals if they pay the country they are taking
it from, for conservation efforts. Renowned primatologist Jane Goodall calls
this effort “terrifying,” and blames lobbyists from businesses that use animals
for entertainment in the U.S. for these attempts to undo important legislation;
• Mr. Bush said of his energy plan, unveiled in May, 2001, that it would “make
this country the world’s leader in energy efficiency and conservation in the
21st century.” However, the bill he presented “devotes less than ten percent of
the $25.7 billion in tax breaks to energy efficiency;”
• The Bush administration is also in the process of weakening laws regarding the
levels of mercury in the air;

III. Class wars (economics)

James Madison and Thomas Jefferson agreed that taxation should be proportional
to one’s share of property, and that the purpose of taxes was “the general
welfare.” As these founders recognized, there is certainly nothing wrong with
people having different levels of income. But when the tools of government are
used to enhance the standing of those at the top of the economic scale and to

exacerbate the tension-filled gap between the “haves” and the “have nots,” then government has ceased to live up to its end of the sacred trust that the people at large put in it. Here are some of the ways in which Mr. Bush has failed to live up to his duty to allow general prosperity, preferring instead to assist the wealthy to become wealthier:

• He has given massive tax cuts to the wealthy ($726 billion proposed for this fiscal year alone, cut back a the last minute by more level-headed Republicans who joined with Democrats to cut that amount), combined with massive spending, especially for the military, combined on the other side with massive cuts in government services such as Medicaid, foster care and adoption programs, school lunch programs, and student loans. The proposed tax cuts would give more than $93,000 to a family with a million-dollar income, while half of all taxpayers would receive $100 or less, this according to the Tax Policy Center of the Brookings Institution. According to the Financial Times, the stimulus the cuts can be expected to give to the economy would be "negligible;" b) in a related item, the Congressional Budget Office states forthrightly that the biggest cause of the massive deficit we have accumulated under Bush is the massive tax cuts for the wealthy;

• The Bush administration has claimed that “outsourcing,” that is, the movement of jobs overseas, is good for the economy. But a list of the main “outsourcers” in corporate America just so happens to coincide with the top contributors to the Bush campaign: American Express, Bechtel, Dell Computers, Ford, General Electric, Hewlett Packard, and Sallie Mae, to name just some of them;

• The leading Republican strategist today, Grover Norquist, has made public the economic plans for the Bush administration and the right-wing ideology. He said the goal is “to starve the beast” (government) with trillions of dollars in deficits, until, as Bill Moyers summarizes it, “the United States government is so anemic and anorexic it can be drowned in a bathtub;”

• He has re-classified low-paying fast-food jobs as “manufacturing jobs” in order to cover up the massive loss of the latter type of job during his tenure as President;

• While giving tax cuts, he opposed giving health care to National Guard members, and proposed cutting $1.5 billion from funding for military family housing and medical facilities. In addition, he has cut $700 million from job training programs for those recently displaced by the movement of jobs overseas, and $225 million in funding for youth job training grants, and;
• his ideas for funding education include a cut of $270 million from Pell Grants for students, a cut of $230 million from vocational and community colleges, a freezing of Teacher Quality State Grants for teacher training, and an increase in his “No Child Left Behind Initiative” by elimination of 45 education programs and cutting back 18 education programs;
• his (failed) attempts to cut overtime pay for American workers can only be considered a war on the lower and middle class;
• Bush’s veteran’s package includes denials of hundreds of thousands of claims or “better-off” veterans, $250 annual enrollment fees.

IV. Moral issues

It is certainly no secret that every President has lied on occasion to the American people. But when lying becomes pervasive and thus a modus operandi for a given presidency, that President and his administration have failed to set and lead by example of moral rectitude. Here are a few of the Bush administration’s serious lies:
• Bush has claimed that he served a complete term in the Texas Air National Guard, but records show that Mr. Bush accumulated no flying experience during the entire year of 1972, nor is he on the payroll for the third quarter of that year. Furthermore, in Mr. Bush’s annual performance review while in the service, dated May 2, 1973, it stated “Lt. Bush has not been observed at this unit” for the past year;
• Continuing with this theme of his military service, Mr. Bush stated that he has already released all records of his military service. The Washington Post, in response, stated that “no such information has been released,” in response to which the administration released documents which they claimed “proved” Bush served during 1972-1973. However, the third quarter pay period records were

missing from those documents. When the New York Times filed a Freedom of Information Request with the Pentagon to obtain them, the Pentagon said those records were “inadvertently destroyed,” and that no paper back-up of them existed;

• the untrue charge that government labor unions were refusing to cooperate in key homeland security measures;

• Mr. Cheney has told almost too many lies to count, particularly about Halliburton and during the lead-up to the Iraq war. John Dean has the best collection of them I have read so far, but here are three that did not make the Dean’s list: i) Iraq is “the geographic base of the terrorists who have had us under assault now for many years, but especially on 9/11.” Mr. Cheney has apparently forgotten about Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and Afghanistan; ii) his insistence that Mohamed Atta, the head of the 9/11 hijackers, met in Prague with Iraqi intelligence officials before the attacks, even in the face of Czech President Havel’s conclusion, along with his intelligence community, that there is no evidence for this; iii) Cheney’s doing business with Cayman Islands and with Iran in defiance of a U.S. ban against such activities. The Grand Jury is now investigating these Cheney/Halliburton actions;

• The Bush administration kept the true cost of Medicare from the country, with prescription drug cards costing more than they claimed they would, with evidence that they knew this in advance. Even Richard S. Foster, the government’s chief analyst of Medicare costs, said that the White House had participated in the decision to withhold information that indicated that Mr. Bush’s proposed legislation would “be far more expensive than lawmakers knew;”

• Mr. Bush has stated, concerning his tax plan, that “by far the vast majority of the help goes to the people at the bottom of the end of the economic ladder,” when in fact, the Congressional bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation stated that households making less than $40,000 a year (i.e. the bottom half of the “economic ladder”) received only 10% of Mr. Bush’s tax cut;

• For more, Senator Charles Rangel has edited a documentation of the 237 most pernicious and important lies Bush has told. There are quite a few impressive collections of Bush lies, and the list is growing. See also David Corn, The Lies

of George W. Bush; Al Franken, Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them; Michael Moore, Dude, Where's My Country?; Jim Hightower, Thieves in High Places. I have also done a Google search on "Bush lies," and "lying," and it turned up over three million hits!

The second way in which Mr. Bush has failed as a moral leader includes a host of immoral actions that violate the general sanctions of any given moral code. These include the following actions:

• Mr. Bush bilked the taxpayers of Texas millions of dollars, which he put into his pocket, through his shady dealings concerning the Texas Rangers baseball team and their new stadium;
• He has rewarded his main corporate supporters by giving them billions of dollars of business in Iraq;
• Mr. Bush regularly has protestors removed from his sight, from his vicinity, and from his motorcade route, to the point of having them arrested;
• Bush takes revenge on people who either criticize or leak even unclassified information to the press;
• he deliberately refuses to count Iraqi civilian casualties inflicted by our military;
• his administration has revealed the name of a CIA agent's wife, putting her life in danger and her career at an end, all for retaliation for taking issue with the President's lies about Iraq's attempting to buy "yellow cake" from Niger for nuclear weapons. This is still "under investigation" by our Justice Department;
• The Bush administration has planned to develop what they euphemistically call "mini-nukes" so that the U.S. can use nuclear weapons in a future war without destroying the world. Destroying even a part of the environment and the people for hundreds if not thousands of miles around the explosion by radiation is highly immoral and irresponsible. It also will lead to a new arms race, something from which we just emerged;
• the administration constantly attempts to keep Americans living in fear and thus quietly submissive to administrative actions by crying wolf regarding possible terrorist threats. This is especially disturbing because, in case after case, after the warning has been made, others come forward to demonstrate that

the administration had no or very little evidence on which to base its warning.
All the warnings that have been coming out this summer had little evidentiary basis to sound the alarms they did, including the so-called “threat to U.S. financial institutions;”
• they have obstructed investigators from everything from the 9/11 Commission to the latest investigation, that of the leak of the CIA operative’s name (Valerie Plame). The delaying tactics of the administration on this case has caused not only a letter from four senators asking the President what he is doing, but it is raising suspicions about evidence tampering and legal obstruction of justice.

V. Violations of Constitutional and International Law: The Iraq invasion
• it is now well known some of the biggest lies and misinformation Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney, et. al. used to sell the war;
• Abu Graib, which involves Bush to at least the degree that he had his lawyer, Alberto Gonzales, send him a brief showing a legal way around being prosecuted for crimes violating the Geneva Convention regarding the torture of prisoners.
Over and above this, however, news now comes out of President Bush signing off on the torture plans, and also sitting on videotapes of U.S. soldiers sodomizing young Iraqi boys. We have only seen the beginning of this massive scandal, which, if connected to Mr. Bush, would make him a war criminal;
• his deliberate ignoring of the civilian casualties inflicted by U.S. forces;
• his lies to Congress (an impeachable offense—why is the media not screaming about this, like they did for Clinton’s lie about his BJ?), including telling Congressional leaders that Iraq was developing its nuclear capabilities and that it was connected to 9/11, so Mr. Bush wanted the Congress to act quickly, based on his promise that he would provide them with more information. He never did.
In fact, the hype that culminated in Colin Powell’s lie-filled speech to the United Nations has been completely discredited by numerous articles and authors.
They knew full well that Iraq was not connected to 9/11, did not have nuclear weapons program, did not have WMD’s, did not attempt to purchase uranium from Niger, did not have significant connections with al Qaeda, and did not

meet with
one of the 9/11 hijackers in Prague before the attack, yet they stated it all
anyway. Even the Senate Intelligence committee, in its report on the intelligence failures prior to the invasion, concluded that the White House had
“misrepresented” conflicting intelligence claims;
• blatant disregard of the international community in pushing for war;
• ignoring the international laws of war;
• ignoring the ethical need for a just cause (i.e. imminent threat) in order to
go to war;
• giving contracts in Iraq to his corporate friends and campaign contributors.
The list starts, of course, with Halliburton ($7 billion in Iraq oil contracts),
but also includes big donors to the Republicans like Science Applications
International Corporation (gave approximately $3 million to the Republican
Party, and landed an Iraq contract for $82 million);
• the administration is covering up the fact that the U.S. is now also involved
in what is called “extraordinary rendering,” which means that a prisoner
arrested in the U.S. is secretly taken to another country, such as Syria or
Jordan or Pakistan, where torture is routinely done. They are called “ghost
prisoners” because no one knows their whereabouts. That the U.S. does this often
under the Bush administration is now becoming news;
• Mr. Bush has stated that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was done “to defend…the
credibility of the United Nations,” when the U.S. rejected the U.N. involvement
prior to and after the invasion;
• keep in mind the reports from two well-respected public servants, former
Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neill and former National Security Advisor
Richard Clarke, both of whom have claimed consistently that Mr. Bush planned to
attack Iraq right after 9/11/01. In addition to these men, British Ambassador to
the U.S. Christopher Meyer said that Bush had made it clear at a dinner with
Prime Minister Tony Blair, on 9/18/01, that he wanted to attack Iraq. The
Washington Post has also confirmed this report. Also, Senator Bob Graham of
Florida stated that a senior military commander told him in February of 2002
that “we are moving military and intelligence personnel and resources out of
Afghanistan to get ready for a future war in Iraq.” Also, U.N. weapons inspector

Hans Blix has consistently made the same claim; Bush's order that no media be permitted to show the flag-draped coffins returning with our dead soldiers from Iraq;

• The administration has engaged in economic bribery of other nations to join "the coalition of the willing" to send troops to assist in the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. For example, Israel was "rewarded" $4-5 billion in military aid for allying against Iraq; Jordan picked up about $1 billion; Egypt $1.5 billion; Poland, Hungary, and 15 other countries who sent troops split $308.1 million.

These are all very serious charges and very serious issues (my original list of Bush misdeeds that I used to write this article covers over sixteen pages!). It would seem clear that when a President and/or his administration engage in subterfuge and circumventions of democratic processes on a regular basis, the citizens are left with little choice but to replace that President. The possible response to these accusations on the part of supporters of Mr. Bush would be to attempt to change the subject by attacking John Kerry or "liberals." During discussions of this issue from now to the election, we cannot allow such failures to respond directly to the charge of Mr. Bush's undermining of democracy to be left unchallenged. Bush supporters owe the American people an explanation as to what it is that Mr. Bush has done for the general good, for the majority of people, that we should give him allowances for the acts he has performed so far? It is insufficient in reason to give simplistic or pietistic answers or to be a single-issue voter (e.g. "He protects us from terrorism," or "he is a Christian," or "he opposes abortion and gay marriage"). Such simple answers only bypass the charge we should be making of Mr. Bush: that he has ignored the Constitution, undermined democracy, acted immorally, and lost the standing America has around the world as a moral leader. These issues far outweigh the stands Mr. Bush might have on any given issue, or any small series of issues. It is my position that unless America wakes up and gets this man out of office this time around, it may be too late to maintain democracy in

the future.

Dr. Robert Abele is a professor of philosophy at Illinois Valley Community College, located near Chicago. He has written articles on political philosophy and also on ethics and warfare, and is now in the process of completing a book on ethics and the invasion of Iraq. He also has a new book entitled A User's Guide to the USA PATRIOT Act, published by University Press of America, due out in November.He can be reached at rabele@ivnet.com