

Criminal Empire: we own the Law

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Terrorist State in action

[Few would be surprised by the latest news of Bush commuting Libby's sentence. But it does serve to remind the American people what a bunch of submissive shit eaters they really are. What a perfect travesty! Ed.]



Libby with his boss, Cheney

Jul 3 08:30 AEST ninemsn:

Bush commutes ex-White House aide's jail term

US President George W. Bush has commuted a 30-month jail term imposed on a former top White House aide, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, for lying to federal investigators in a case which highlighted doubts over the case for the war in Iraq.

"I respect the jury's verdict. But I have concluded that the prison sentence given to Mr. Libby is excessive," Bush said in a statement.

"Therefore, I am commuting the portion of Mr. Libby's sentence that required him to spend 30 months in prison."

Libby, who was a former trusted aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, still faces however a US\$250,000 fine and a two-year probation after being convicted in March of perjury and obstructing justice.

He was found guilty of lying to federal investigators in a case probing whether White House officials had leaked the name of CIA officer Valerie Plame.

It was alleged that Plame's cover as a CIA agent was blown to avenge criticism of the White House's decision to go to war by her husband, ex-diplomat Joseph Wilson, who argued the case for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq was flawed.

Libby, 56, was found guilty in March of lying about conversations he had about Plame, but not of actually leaking her name to the press in July 2003.

Bush's decision came after a US judge ordered on June 14 that Libby had to go to jail while his lawyer appealed his sentence.

Federal judge Reggie Walton rejected Libby's bid to remain free on bail while appealing his conviction, saying his attorney had failed to show that he had a chance to win a reversal.

"I have said throughout this process that it would not be appropriate to comment or intervene in this case until Mr. Libby's appeals have been exhausted," Bush said.

"But with the denial of bail being upheld and incarceration imminent, I believe it is now important to react to that decision.

"Critics point out that neither Mr. Libby nor anyone else has been charged with violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act or the Espionage Act, which were the original subjects of the investigation," Bush said.

"Finally, critics say the punishment does not fit the crime: Mr. Libby was a first-time offender with years of exceptional public service and was handed a harsh sentence based in part on allegations never presented to the jury."

The US president added that his decision to commute the jail term still left Libby facing a "harsh punishment" with his reputation "forever damaged."

A recent CNN poll had shown that 72 percent of the American public were against a full pardon for Libby.

Presidents typically pardon hundreds of people while in office. But high profile political pardons, as distinct from the commutation of a sentence granted to Libby, have been fraught with peril for presidents.

President Gerald Ford granted a preemptive pardon in 1974 to his predecessor Richard Nixon, forced to resign in disgrace over the Watergate scandal, which many analysts believe contributed to Ford's defeat in the 1976 election.

The first president George Bush pardoned six Reagan administration officials involved in the Iran-contra affair, including former defense secretary Caspar Weinberger, which also whipped up a political storm.

On his final day in office, Bill Clinton pardoned fugitive financier Marc Rich, who faced tax evasion charges. The move sparked charges the pardon was granted following donations to Clinton's campaigns.

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