



A former senior C.I.A. official says that officials in the Bush White House sought damaging personal information on a prominent American critic of the Iraq war in order to discredit him.

Glenn L. Carle, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer who was a top counterterrorism official during the administration of President George W. Bush, said the White House at least twice asked intelligence officials to gather sensitive information on Juan Cole, a University of Michigan professor who writes an influential blog that criticized the war.

“These allegations, if true, raise very troubling questions,” said Jeffrey H. Smith, a former C.I.A. general counsel. “The statute makes it very clear: you can’t spy on Americans.” Mr. Smith added that a 1981 executive order that prohibits the C.I.A. from spying on Americans places tight legal restrictions not only on the agency’s ability to collect information on United States citizens, but also on its retention or dissemination of that data.

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