Deception in Clinton's State of the Union Speech

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"There's one more right you should have. As more of our medical records are stored electronically, the threats to our privacy increase. . . . We will protect the privacy of medical records this year."

Bill Clinton received big applause for that line in his State of the Union speech. Although it hasn't yet made headlines in the media, his private polls and focus groups have alerted him that this is a hot and growing issue at the grassroots.

Assuring Americans that he is going to be our savior about medical privacy is just one of the many false promises Clinton made in that speech. The record is clear that he doesn't believe in the privacy of medical records (except, of course, for his own).

A major feature of Bill and Hillary Clinton's nationalized health plan, which the public rejected in 1994, was to allow the Federal Government to build a database containing every American's medical records. We all remember Clinton's 1993 television speech when he displayed his "Health Security Card" that was to contain our personal identifying number and assure our access to health care.

Control of that massive government database, with every American's medical records identified by a number, would have enabled the Clinton Administration to achieve its proclaimed goal of "global budgeting," i.e., government control of both public and private health care spending by allowing or rationing payments. The American people rejected Clinton's takeover of health care, but he has been incrementally working toward the same goal ever since.

The 1996 Kennedy-Kassebaum law gave the Department of Health and Human Services the power to create "unique health care identifiers" so government can electronically track and monitor every citizen's personal medical records. Fortunately, Congress last year put this authority on hold, pending further Congressional action.

We should never forget (even if Ken Starr forgot) that the Clinton White House demanded and illegally got nearly a thousand FBI files on individuals. That cache of personal information could be the source of some of the damaging private information about Republicans that has been leaked to the press.

It's so phony for the Clintonites to complain about the "poisonous politics" of spying on public officials' misbehavior when this Administration has a comprehensive plan to spy on private citizens' money and whereabouts. The Administration is already far down the road of putting us all on databases in order to monitor not only our medical records, but also our bank accounts and daily activities.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's new "Know Your Customer" regulation has stirred up a hornet's nest of adverse public comments. And no wonder; it requires your bank to notify a government database in Detroit called the Suspicious Activity Reporting System about any "inconsistent" deposits in or withdrawals from your personal bank account.

The Federal Communications Commission's regulation to monitor the location of all wireless phones will enable the government to know where you are when you make every call. New federal regulations of state driver's licenses are designed to turn them into de facto national I.D. cards so the government can track everyone's movements about the country.

The welfare reform act allows the Clinton Administration to put all workers on a federal database called the Directory of New Hires, which will ultimately allow a comprehensive monitoring of nearly all employed Americans. The government is using the "instant background check" required by the 1993 Brady Act to set up a database of lawful gun buyers.

Putting all this personal information on a government database means giving government the power to control our very life, our health care, our access to a job, and our financial transactions. It's the power to destroy individuals who get in Clinton's way; look at all the people who crossed Clinton and are now dead, in jail, in debt, a fugitive, or discredited.

Clinton is using terrorists, drug kingpins, criminals, illegal aliens, welfare cheats, and deadbeat dads as phony excuses to impose progressive government surveillance over our private lives. His plan is to monitor law-abiding citizens rather than punish law-violators.

In addition, the Clinton Administration has been demanding a power that no free society has ever given its rulers: the power to read our mail. Vice President Al Gore, Attorney General Janet Reno, and FBI Director

Louis Freeh are all aggressive advocates of the effort to enable the government to get access to our e-mail and computer files without our knowledge or consent.

Their cover phrase for this totalitarian plan is "key recovery." Fortunately, their plan did not pass in the last Congress and, if we value our freedom, it should remain permanently buried.

Contrary to Clinton's boast in his State of the Union speech, he will not protect our medical records or any other private information; he is steadily gathering power into his own hands to bring about the end of privacy as we know it.