

## Tampering With Our Lives

In a speech before West Point graduates, the President made it clear that preemptive action is essential for America to win the war on terrorism. Though he was referring to the foreign battlefield, our government's actions since September 11<sup>th</sup> reflect that this doctrine applies to fighting terrorists on the homefront as well. Regretfully, civil libertarians and other wayward activists are busy pursuing their own campaign of preemption, using the courts and the media to combat every move government officials make to safeguard citizens.

While these entrenched ideologues are busy fiddling, America has become the world's safest place for terrorists. Such a sad predicament didn't befall us overnight. Oblivious to the consequences, self-styled public interest groups worked for decades to tie our intelligence and law enforcement capabilities up in a legalistic straightjacket of written and unwritten rules. Domestic security policy became defensive and tarnished with political correctness, as risk-averse bureaucrats resisted scrutinizing visa applications, aggressively investigating terror suspects, or profiling airline passengers for fear of offending someone's "rights."

Instead of taking September 11<sup>th</sup> as a reality check, the horrific attacks seemed to further energize these activists. Some are suing to demand that Taliban and al-Qaeda detainees be afforded all the legal courtesies the U.S. Constitution has to offer. Many promise lawsuits against minor changes to domestic intelligence gathering, while others continue to flood the courts with suits meant to expand the rights of illegal aliens and suspected terrorists. Our enemies must be laughing themselves to sleep.

Sadly, some federal judges, seemingly unaware that America is at war, are elevating ideological agendas over personal safety and national security. One judge recently put the U.S. military at risk by halting live-fire training exercises on an uninhabited Pacific island to protect non-endangered migratory birds. Others are forcing our Justice Department to make sensitive information and hearings on certain detainees public. Will "Miranda warnings" for foreign terrorists captured overseas be next?

Don't legal activists and nervous libertarians get it? America can no longer afford the legalistic culture they created. Our enemies are not common criminals who can be deterred by traditional means. They follow no rules and measure success by how many innocent civilians they kill. These enemies will, as they did on September 11<sup>th</sup>, exploit our every weakness.

It's quite ironic that the very same ideologues who persistently hinder homeland security measures eagerly joined the indignant finger-pointing over government's inability to prevent September 11<sup>th</sup>. They want personal security, but only on their terms. Such an approach is quickly becoming a relic of the frivolous 90's, as more people understand that in order to effectively preempt future terrorism, we cannot apply an absolutist view of rights to our enemies. Americans should know that if we do, many more of us will lose our most treasured civil liberty – life itself.



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