



Awlaki Killing: Did the U.S. Sanction Murder?

I was raised with a profound respect for the fact that we are a nation of laws, not men: That “no one is above the law,” that a jury of our peers will decide our guilt or innocence, that we are guaranteed the right to face our accusers, that “our home is our castle,” and that we will be protected in our persons and our property.

Does that sound like the America you were taught to love and revere when you were young?

It is promises like these that made our country the inspiration of the world. They are some of the reasons we became the wealthiest nation this planet has ever seen. Even the poorest among us lived better than the majority of citizens in other countries. No wonder people dreamed of becoming Americans — so many, in fact, that we had to establish a lottery to decide who could get in.



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Yes, the United States of America that you and I were born into was a very special place. We knew it and were profoundly grateful for it. We gave thanks that we were lucky enough to be born here, because we knew that no other place on earth enjoyed our freedoms, our protections and our prosperity.

So what on earth happened?

Or maybe a better question is: What have we allowed our government to do to these cherished principles?

The God of the Old Testament asked His people to give 10 percent of all they earned to Him and His work. Today, our government takes four times as much from us. In fact, if you add up all of the hidden taxes we pay, the figure is probably closer to 60 percent.

In the Declaration of Independence, our Founding Fathers said one of the reasons for their rebellion against King George is that he had “erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance.”

Those brave gentlemen wouldn't believe how many Swarms of Officers harass us today, or how much of our Substance they consume. Have you flown anywhere lately? How many Transportation Security Administration employees did you see — many of whom were guarding hallways no one was using.

Pity you if you ever do fall afoul of some Federal bureaucrat. Our government has created so many rules



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and regulations and has so many agents and inspectors to enforce them, there is no way on earth you can obey them all. If they want to get you for something, they can. And worst of all, in many cases you are guilty until you prove yourself innocent.

We have gone from what was once “the land of the free and the home of the brave” to what is rapidly becoming the land of the cowed and the cowardly. Untold millions of our countrymen (some legal, some not) feed at the public trough — and get angry at us producers if we suggest cutting back their goodies by even a penny.

All of that is bad enough. But now our government has decided that it is above the law. That it can listen in on any conversation it wishes; open any mail; snoop on any citizen any time and any where; accuse us of all sorts of crimes and misdemeanors; and incarcerate us at will.

Oh, and murder anyone it says deserves it.

You think I’m exaggerating? Please consider for a moment the fate of one Anwar al-Awlaki. I won’t disagree that this demented jihadist was one of the bad guys. I’ll even grant that this renegade U.S. citizen did all he could to give “aid and comfort” (the Constitutional definition of treason) to our enemies. But so what?

As far as I know, he was never accused of a crime by any legal authority in this country or abroad. Not only did he never get a chance to face his accusers, there was never a trial or even a hearing by any court, military or civilian.

Yet the President of the United States ordered his death. And an unmanned drone, armed with a Hellfire missile, carried out the execution.

And what an interesting outcry that has produced! Ron Paul probably did his candidacy for the White House no favors when he said that it would be “sad” if “the American people accept this blindly and casually.”

The ACLU — an organization that I have never voluntarily gotten in bed with — declared:

This is a program under which American citizens far from any battlefield can be executed by their own government without judicial process and on the basis of standards and evidence that are kept secret not just from the public but from the courts.

Former Vice President Dick Cheney praised the Obama Administration for the attack, then added that Obama owes George Bush an apology for his criticism of the Bush Administration’s actions against suspected terrorists.

But the nastiest assault on the libertarian position came from the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*, who promptly denounced what they called “the caviling” over Awlaki’s death. After a lengthy introduction explaining why such anonymous executions are “manifestly legal,” the [Journal concluded](#):

For ridding the world of the menace that was Awlaki — even while ignoring the advice of some of its ideological friends — the Administration deserves congratulations and thanks.

I’m sorry, but this is not the America I grew up in. And it is not the America I want to see my children and my children’s children inherit.

I’m not saying we’ve never done anything wrong in the past. Abraham Lincoln suspended the U.S. Constitution for anyone he considered any enemy of the State, whether Northerner or Southerner. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in one of the most shameful moments of a Presidency that did our nation much



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harm, ordered 110,000 Japanese Americans to be rounded up at gunpoint and herded into concentration camps. During my lifetime, legal authorities in the South often conspired to break the law to deny black citizens their civil rights, and even encouraged (or at the very least did not stop) mob violence.

All of this was bad. And like most Americans who give any of it a moment's thought, I regret it happened.

I feel the same way today about the frightening growth in the cost, the power, and the wicked aggressiveness of our national government. Nobody's called me an enemy of the State ... yet. But I'm worried that that day may not be far off.

When they come for us conservative opponents, how many on the left do you think will rush to our defense? Heck, how many of our colleagues on the right will be what I used to call "foxhole buddies"?

I don't know about you, but I'm becoming more and more frightened by more and more of the actions of our government. As I said, this isn't the America I knew and revered. How about you?

Until the next time, keep some powder dry.

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