



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on August 17, 2009

## The Health of the Disgustingly Strong State

“We will always live in a terrorist threat environment.” So says Janet Napolitano, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in an interview with *USAToday*. Its editors wholeheartedly agree.

They like their government big — OK, enormous — and [nothing grows the State faster than perpetual war](#), whether on Terror, Drugs, or Poverty. Ergo, the politicians and bureaucrats prosecuting those cruel boondoggles enjoy complete credibility with *USAToday* and most mainstream media. So much for the Fourth Estate’s vaunted skepticism.

Indeed, the editors challenged none of Napolitano’s assertions, however preposterous. (But the readers’ comments do; thrillingly, most also excoriate the newspaper for its gullibility.) *USAToday*’s quislings proved their loyalty with their very first question: “It is striking how attitudes have changed since 9/11,” they harrumphed. “Do you perceive a reduced sense of urgency about the terrorist threat?” Napolitano hit that softball right out of the park: terrorism “is something that we just have to be prepared to live with. ... We need to do all we can to mitigate the risk. But that means individuals undergo a certain amount of inconvenience at times.”

“Inconvenience.” [Jose Padilla](#) and the War on Terror’s millions of other victims might decry the suspension of such Constitutional bedrock as habeas corpus in terms a tad stronger.

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As DHS’s chief cheese, Ms. Napolitano has a vested and extremely compelling interest in the War on Terror: it hands her and her immense bureaucracy virtually unlimited power over their fellow citizens. That would be true even if the DHS stuck to its [“primary mission”](#) as codified in the legislation that banded [33 bureaucracies together to create it](#) in 2002: “(A) prevent terrorist attacks within the United States; (B) reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism; and” - when DHS inevitably fails at A and B - “(C) minimize the damage, and assist in the recovery, from terrorist attacks that do occur within the United States.”





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But DHS had barely begun tyrannizing us before it amplified its already-overweening power. By 2008, its website claimed that its “[overriding and urgent mission](#)” was “to lead the unified national effort to secure the country” — not only from terrorism but from [whatever the Feds consider a “threat,”](#) including owners of guns, voters for third-party candidates, and Americans who understand that abortion is murder.

In addition to the power Napolitano wields, she scoops up hefty amounts of our taxes with [a salary of \\$193,400 per annum](#). There are also the majestic perks — staff and entourage, sumptuous office, luxurious travel, even more luxurious pension — that accompany busywork on the national stage. Yet *USAToday's* editors managed to shrug off all cynicism while collaborating with Napolitano. Not once did they counter her fallacies with facts.

Lurking among the DHS's bureaucracies is the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Its thugs grope us at airports and rifle our bags while forcing us to shed our shoes — all direct violations of the [Fourth Amendment](#). Naturally, when the editors inquired about the TSA, they made no mention of groping, rifling, or the Amendment. Rather, they implied that reasonable people object only to the inconvenience, not the unconstitutionality, of this warrantless search: “Will there ever be a time when fliers can go through security with their shoes on...?”

Apparently not. Instead of answering, Napolitano replied that passengers “take off their shoes because there was a shoe bomber.”

That's an absurdity on its face. [A nut tried but failed to blow his own feet off 8 years ago](#), so TSA requires two million passengers to pad barefoot on filthy floors every day? Yet not a single editor objected.

Nor did any of them point out that shoe-bombs are among the most ineffective ways to bring down an airplane; indeed, *Air Safety Week* reports only two known cases besides the one Napolitano cited. [In the mid-1980's, a terrorist](#) checked a suitcase containing a shoe with explosives hidden in the heel for his flight from Karachi, Pakistan to Amman, Jordan. The heel detonated while the plane was on the ground for a stopover in Dubai, Saudi Arabia, but did little damage. [And in 1995, Ramzi Yousef of First-World-Trade-Center-Bombing](#) notoriety hid the components of a bomb in his shoe. He assembled the materials aboard his flight on Philippine Airlines, then stuffed the device under a seat. It killed the unfortunate Japanese business man who sat there on the next flight, but the crew safely landed the plane in Okinawa.

We'll excuse editors ignorant of such arcane history — and for sure Ms. Napolitano was not about to enlighten them. But whatever happened to fact-checking? Any free-lance writer who charges government with even the most minor misdemeanor must substantiate his charge before newspapers will publish it — and they often refuse to do so anyway, despite overwhelming evidence. Why don't they follow standards even half that rigorous with bureaucrats?

The same lack of due diligence greeted Napolitano's defense of the indefensible FEMA, another of the bureaucracies under the DHS's umbrella. “We've done quite a bit there (in New Orleans) to get the Katrina recovery going,” she alleged. And gosh, it's only four years since the hurricane hit, too. “One of the elements of education that I would like to get done is that FEMA is not the first responder in emergencies — the individual is.” Really? Then why did [FEMA chase away private volunteers](#) who [flocked to help Katrina's survivors](#)? That brutality made headlines nationwide, unlike the story on the shoe-bombing buried in a trade publication. Perhaps *USAToday* employs amnesiacs.



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Alas, Napolitano and *USAToday's* editors are typical. Leviathan's lackeys lie; editors wink at the whoppers, however obvious. Indeed, Napolitano's predecessor, [Michael Chertoff, and the \*Chicago Tribune\*](#) played the same game two years ago.

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government," [Thomas Jefferson declared](#), "I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter..." Unfortunately, there's no longer any difference.



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