



## Obama Justice Department Pushes to Target “Thought Crime”

Attorney General Eric Holder has announced that the Justice Department will be utilizing a program originally designed to prevent domestic threats to the United States. The program will label as threats individuals the government has deemed anti-government or racially prejudiced, paving the way to targeting political dissenters.

WND reports, “The Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee was created in the wake of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing but was scrapped soon after the 2001 terrorist attacks as intelligence and law enforcement officials shifted their focus to threats from outside the country. The committee will be comprised of figures from the FBI, the National Security Division of the Justice Department and the Attorney General’s Advisory Committee.”

Holder justified the resurrection of the program by asserting that the DOJ is concerned by attacks prompted by Islamic extremists and added that the program will be identifying a variety of threats.

“We must also concern ourselves with the continued danger we face from individuals within our own borders who may be motivated by a variety of other causes from anti-government animus to racial prejudice,” Holder said.

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The announcement has sparked fear from civil libertarians who are concerned that the program will be used to target critics of the federal government. Groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union see an opportunity for civil liberties violations.

The ACLU is reportedly opposing the program, articulating fears “it could be a sweeping mandate to monitor and collect controversial speech.”

The conservative Project 21 National Advisory Board has also raised concerns over the program. “It appears there’s an attempt to marginalize people who hold views that are sharply different from those of the administration and much of the establishment,” said Project 21 National Advisory Board co-chairman Horace Cooper.

Cooper added, “We’re particularly bothered by mixing together so-called domestic insurrectionists and racists. There is simply no anti-black or anti-minority underground movement in America that is threatening in any way the stability of our government or the stability of local governments. There is just nothing like that. That’s just a complete and total boogeyman.”





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Cooper asserts that the administration's policies are reactionary to a problem that they've invented.

"When we see this administration talking as if the real threat is that if you're a young black male, you're going to be shot, you're going to be kidnapped or you're going to be forced to prison without actually having any charges against you, there's simply no evidence to show that.," he said.

At the heart of the criticism over the DOJ program is the notion that it will target people based on their thinking. And while it is unconstitutional to do so, we have already seen Americans penalized for thought crimes.

Jesse Larner noted in the Spring 2010 issue of *Dissent Magazine* that hate crimes are in fact thought crimes:

The idea that courts can weigh the thought, belief, or emotional affect behind an act is chilling. Hate itself counts for nothing in American law. Violence counts for a lot. Hate paired with violence, under hate crimes laws, counts for even more: zero plus one is more than one. Like the neutrino, hate has no mass, but it changes things. In a free society it should be axiomatic that only action, never thought, can be subject to punishment.

Likewise, First Lady Michelle Obama made headlines last month when she encouraged graduating high school students in Topeka, Kansas, to monitor their families for politically incorrect thoughts.

"Our laws may no longer separate us based on our skin color, but nothing in the Constitution says we have to eat together in the lunchroom, or live together in the same neighborhoods," she said. "There's no court case against believing in stereotypes or thinking that certain kinds of hateful jokes or comments are funny," she said.

Cheryl Chumley, a reporter for the *Washington Times* and the author of [Police State USA](#), referred to Michelle Obama's remark as proof of a growing trend in America to target and attack individuals for committing "thought crime."

"Michelle Obama's push for kids around the nation to monitor their family members for perceived racist comments is just another way the government seeks to inject itself into an area it doesn't really belong — the American home," Chumley told the Daily Caller.

"Having the first lady wag her finger at us and send America's youth on some sort of quest to scour the homes and backyards of our nation's families for any mention of a racist joke, slur or slight is nanny-governance run amok — something that belongs in a George Orwell novel, not the White House," Chumley said.

Besides the obvious absurdity of targeting Americans for the way they think, there is also the issue of whether or not that policy is being fairly administered. The Daily Caller addressed this very issue by pondering, "I wonder if this extends towards hateful jokes or comments about white people? Or is that simply considered social justice?"

After all, it was Attorney General Eric Holder who refused to prosecute the New Black Panthers for their acts of voter intimidation outside of a Philadelphia polling facility during the 2008 presidential elections. Years later, former Department of Justice Official Christian Adams testified before the Civil Rights commission and claimed that the Obama administration has generally failed to prosecute "non-whites" in voter intimidation cases.

The DOJ program appears to be the latest effort by this administration to target Americans who are heavily critical of the federal government. Alert Americans may recall the Stop Online Piracy Act, which



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would have given the Justice Department authority over websites and copyright infringement.

The *International Business Times* (IBT) noted in 2011 when the bill was being debated that the SOPA bill was aimed at “quashing dissent:”

The real purpose of the SOPA bill (and its sister bill, PIPA [Protect IP Act], in the Senate) is to target the web-based movements that have fueled revolutionaries both here and abroad.

IBT also pointed out the same type of insidious agenda in the NDAA:

Certain provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act have a similar purpose at heart. They are ostensibly aimed at al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and will likely lead to some unconstitutional arrests of Muslim terror suspects. But the other purpose of the indefinite detention provisions, and the reason it is before the Congress now, is to allow the government to arrest those who loudly disagree with it.

IBT contended that the Internet provisions in the NDAA are intended to destroy “whistleblowers in independent news media from exposing corruption in the government.”

Fury over the SOPA proposal prompted protesters across the country to demonstrate and to tweet President Obama urging him to veto the bill. Many websites, such as Wikipedia.org, hosted “blackouts” to protest the bill. The legislation united groups from both ends of the political spectrum over concerns that once these measures become law, there is nothing to stop further infringements upon the civil liberties of American citizens. Fortunately, SOPA was defeated (for now) as it never made it through Congress. The NDAA, however, is still in force.

Perhaps Americans can once again unite to stop the new DOJ program.



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