Terror War Expanding, Shifting to the Right

Prior to mass-murderer Anders Breivik's rampage that killed over 75 people, DHS released what critics labeled a "propaganda" video that "characterizes white middle class Americans as the most likely terrorists." The film showed various minorities calling authorities to report suspicious whites in almost every scenario.

Outrage ensued as the original *Infowars* story went "viral," being picked up by Fox, the Drudge Report, and even foreign newspapers. And as the news spread commentators promptly blasted the Homeland Security campaign as essentially racist.

"We at The Five [Fox News program] this morning, we're looking over some stuff, and this thing came, it hit us right smack in the face," said one TV-show panelist, noting that the DHS film shows "white male average Americans end up being the terrorists, and the people calling the terror in happen to be — all of them happen to be black, Asian or Arab."

The film is part of the federal government's "See Something, Say Something" campaign encouraging citizens to spy on and report each other to authorities. But critics say there are more than a few problems with the approach.

For one, many of the activities portrayed as suspicious — video-camera recording, chatting with police, or even using cellphones — are hardly indicative of terror plots. And as several analysts noted, every person indicted in the United States on terror-related charges in 2009 and 2010 was actually Muslim.

After the uproar, DHS denied that its video had "racial overtones." But critics weren't buying it. More than a few pointed out that if nearly all of the supposed terrorists in the film had been Arab, black, or anything other than white men, a deluge of lawsuits would have immediately followed.

And it wasn't an isolated incident. Even before the recent DHS video sparked an outcry, Homeland Security was busy painting "right-wing extremists" as the "the most dangerous domestic terrorism threat in the United States." This included Americans who are pro-life, pro-gun rights, pro-Constitution, opposed to illegal immigrations — even returning veterans were listed as prime suspects.

Of course, the 2009 report provoked a massive backlash from conservatives and even members of Congress. Homeland Security boss Janet Napolitano was eventually forced to withdraw it and apologize.

But the "intelligence assessment" was indicative of a broader pattern: The new terrorists — in the eyes of government, at least — are conservatives, constitutionalists, and other average Americans. The massive terror apparatus erected and cheered on by neo-conservatives in the wake of September 11 is slowly being turned against potentially everyone.

After the attacks in Norway, left-wing extremists erupted in what one critic referred to as "ghoulish

glee." Suddenly the casting of a cloud of suspicion on all right-wing white people was vindicated in their eyes.

In the aftermath of the Norwegian tragedy, shameless political opportunism exploded. Every big-government apologist with an ax to grind tried to blame Christianity, conservatism, bloggers – basically anyone with whom they disagreed.

Ironically, it has emerged that the Norwegian terrorist was in fact a Darwin supporter who frequented prostitutes and marched in gay-pride parades. He admitted that he was not a Christian in the accepted sense, and even suggested collaborating with al Qaeda — hardly the "conservative Christian fundamentalist" caricature being painted by large swaths of the media.

But the damage was done. The new face of terror is apparently middle-aged blonde right-wingers. Or anyone else. Across Europe, authorities and activists are fiendishly targeting political opponents under the guise of fighting hate, intolerance, or extremism.

In the U.K., police recently urged British subjects to report people with anti-government political views. A debate is also raging about whether or not an anti-immigration rally should be prohibited.

And the "crackdown" on political opinions called for by editorialists and "experts" is only just getting started. It will inevitably affect people on both sides of the Atlantic, too.

Unfortunately, the rush to blame all Muslims for terrorism by some segments of the American political class played right into the trap that was just sprung. Now, terrorism is no longer viewed as an atrocious criminal act committed by an individual or a group of individuals — today, assigning collective responsibility for acts of terror is the norm.

And as astute analysts have pointed out, this is being used as a tool to stifle dissent and to narrow the spectrum of political discourse. Although, in many cases, it still only goes one way.

As the debate about the debt ceiling raged in recent days, for example, more than a few prominent voices in media and politics attacked members of the Tea Party movement as "terrorists." But after the Arizona rampage, the establishment press even blamed political leaders for the murders because they had used terms like "enemy" when referring to their opposition.

Beyond political and religious opinions that supposedly incite terror, however, is another important factor to consider. Yes, Anders Breivik murdered almost 70 youths in cold blood, saying it was sad but "necessary."

But as Prof. Mark LeVine noted in a recent column, most people hardly batted an eyelid when former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright famously said "the price was worth it" on national TV. She was, of course, referring to the *500,000* dead Iraqi children whose deaths were attributed to American sanctions.

But now, as the terror-war machine slowly begins to scrutinize anyone and everyone as a potential terrorist, the state is emerging — in the general public's mind, anyway — as the benevolent protector. This is troubling.

To avoid calamity, the debate must soon shift away from political views as a motivation for mass murder. If Americans allow themselves to be led down that road, a path that has been traveled by innumerable dictatorships throughout history, the result *will* be disaster.

It's time to assign the blame for mass murder where it belongs — deranged individuals, sometimes

seeking power, often associated with the state.

Just like the neo-cons demonized Muslims collectively over the last decade; libertarians, leftists, Muslims and others are now hysterically pointing the finger at neo-cons for the rampage in Norway. But if the next lunatic who kills people happens to be a leftist or a libertarian, should everyone who shares similar political beliefs be held responsible? Of course not.

The blame game is rapidly spinning out of control. And if it doesn't stop soon, everybody with a "non-approved" opinion will almost certainly regret it.

Thumbnail photo at top: screen grab from DHS video

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