



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 26, 2013

Chris Christie Finds Liberty a “Dangerous Idea”

On the eve of a House vote Wednesday on his amendment to curb the National Security Agency’s daily dragnet collection of Americans’ phone records, Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) tweeted, “Washington’s elites fear liberty. They fear you.” On Thursday, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (shown) demonstrated just how eager he is to join the Washington elite.



Speaking at the Republican Governors Conference in Aspen, Colorado, Christie delivered what Aaron Blake at the [Washington Post](#) described as a “clear broadside” against Republicans of a libertarian bent, including Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, expected to be competing with Christie for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016.

“As a former prosecutor who was appointed by President George W. Bush on Sept. 10, 2001, I just want us to be really cautious, because this strain of libertarianism that’s going through both parties right now and making big headlines, I think, is a very dangerous thought,” Christie said.

Asked whether he meant to include Paul in that call for caution, Christie said, “You can name any one of them that’s engaged in this. I want them to come to New Jersey and sit across from the widows and the orphans and have that conversation.... I’m very nervous about the direction this is moving in.”

One of the things making Christie nervous is the battle for privacy rights against what some see as a flagrant overreach by the federal government in the kind of surveillance conducted by the NSA in the name of national security. “I think what we as a country have to decide is: Do we have amnesia? Because I don’t,” Christie said. “And I remember what we felt like on Sept. 12, 2001.”

By citing both September 10 and September 12 of the year 2001, Christie has September 11 surrounded, perhaps with the thought of capturing it as his issue for 2016. By doing so he would be picking up the mantle of fallen presidential hopeful Rudy Giuliani, who campaigned so hard on that tragic event in the 2008 campaign that Joe Biden suggested every sentence from the former New York mayor contained only three things: “a noun, a verb and 9/11.”

Over more than a decade now, there have been a lot of explanations offered for the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and our nation’s inability to detect and prevent it. Some have blamed lax security or intelligence failures, or an attention deficit regarding terrorist threats on the part the president at the time, the aforementioned George W. Bush. Some blamed it on inadequate response to previous terror attacks, while others cited our nation’s long record of military interventions and political machinations in the Middle East, including the imposition of no-fly zones in, and an economic embargo against, Iraq — or, to borrow a phrase from the late columnist Joseph Sobran, it may have been due to “all the good will we built up through years of bombing Arab cities and starving Arab children.”



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But Gov. Christie is way ahead of the curve. He has already figured out who is to blame for the next 9/11 if, God forbid, there should be one. Future widows and orphans will be able to blame those libertarian members of Congress, who take seriously their oath of office and want to put some real constitutional and statutory restraint on the activities of that “big government.” Republicans rail against big government on the campaign trails, while generously funding it in the intervals between elections. They are the true “wacko birds,” as Sen. John McCain called Rand Paul and the handful of senators who supported Paul’s filibuster over the president’s use of drones to kill American citizens without due process of law.

Christie obviously approves of all the drone attacks and other bombings President Obama has ordered in Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere, as well as our 12-year war grinding on in Afghanistan.

“I want to say that I think both the way President Bush conducted himself and the way President Obama has conducted himself in the main on those types of decisions hasn’t been different because they were right and because we haven’t had another one of those attacks that cost thousands and thousands of lives,” Christie said. Of course, Bush’s war in Iraq cost more “thousands of lives” than the 9/11 attacks. And Iraq was not involved in 9/11, a detail that Christie, like so many others, is willing to overlook.

The Amash amendment was not about dismantling America’s defenses, or even the NSA, though the agency’s very existence may be unconstitutional, since it was created by order of President Truman without Congress even knowing about it. What was proposed by the amendment was limiting the NSA’s collection of telephone call records to investigation of actual terror suspects instead of its current practice of scooping up all the calls, along with all e-mails and other communications, of the entire population as a matter of daily routine. It is hardly a wild-eyed libertarian idea. While it lost by a narrow 12-vote margin, it attracted the support of a wide range of representatives, many of whom could hardly be classified as libertarians. Even Wisconsin Republican Jim Sensenbrenner, often “credited” as a legislative author of the PATRIOT Act, [voted](#) for the amendment. But after an all-out lobbying effort by White House and members and friends of the “national security” establishment, the supporters of the amendment were outnumbered by its foes. As the *Washington Times* observed in its editorial summation:

“A strange coalition of spooks, veterans of the George W. Bush White House, Republican and Democratic committee chairmen and the Obama administration emerged from the shadows to prevent the defunding of the domestic spying. Nothing creates ‘bipartisanship’ quite like undermining the Constitution.”

Photo of New Jersey Governor Christ Christie: AP Images



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