

Civil Liberties Issues in the Aftermath of the September 11th Terrorist Attacks

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Abstract

The U.S. Congress passed the USA Patriot Act in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks of 2001. This act, like some of the similar legislations in the history enacted during an emergency period, became an important and effective instrument for government to deal with dissents. It also has the potential to severely curtail civil liberties cherished by the American people. While advocates of civil liberties raise doubt on the constitutionality of the USA Patriot Act and remind American citizens the unfortunate and unnecessary curtailment of these privileges in the past, the Bush administration seems to be determined in its effort to overlook the issues surrounding civil liberties in its campaign against terrorism. Judging from the cases that reach the Supreme Court in the aftermath of September 11, we reluctantly agree with Chief Justice William Rehnquist's claim that "[t]he laws [on civil liberties] will thus not be silent in time of war, but they will speak with somewhat different voice."

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