



Coalition of American Veterans

"Defending One Nation Under God"

Rep. Kucinich (D-Ohio) Questions The 'Patriot Act'

2-25-2

How Can We Justify This?

Let us pray that our nation will remember that the unfolding of the promise of democracy in our nation paralleled the striving for civil rights. That is why we must challenge the rationale of the Patriot Act. We must ask why should America put aside guarantees of constitutional justice?

How can we justify in effect canceling the First Amendment and the right of free speech, the right to peaceably assemble?

How can we justify in effect canceling the Fourth Amendment, probable cause, the prohibitions against unreasonable search and seizure?

How can we justify in effect canceling the Fifth Amendment, nullifying due process, and allowing for indefinite incarceration without a trial?

How can we justify in effect canceling the Sixth Amendment, the right to prompt and public trial?

How can we justify in effect canceling the Eighth Amendment which protects against cruel and unusual punishment?

We cannot justify widespread wiretaps and internet surveillance without judicial supervision, let alone with it. We cannot justify secret searches without a warrant. We cannot justify giving the Attorney general the ability to designate domestic terror groups. We cannot justify giving the FBI total access to any type of data which may exist in any system anywhere such as medical records and financial records.

We cannot justify giving the CIA the ability to target people in this country for intelligence surveillance. We cannot justify a government

which takes from the people our right to privacy and then assumes for its own operations a right to total secrecy. The Attorney General recently covered up a statue of Lady Justice showing her bosom as if to underscore there is no danger of justice exposing herself at this time, before this administration.

Let us pray that our nation's leaders will not be overcome with fear. Because today there is great fear in our great Capitol. And this must be understood before we can ask about the shortcomings of congress in the current environment. The great fear began when we had to evacuate the Capitol on September 11. It continued when we had to leave the Capitol again when a bomb scare occurred as members were pressing the CIA during a secret briefing. It continued when we abandoned Washington when anthrax, possibly from a government lab, arrived in the mail. It continued when the Attorney General declared a nationwide terror alert and then the Administration brought the destructive Patriot Bill to the floor of the House. It continued in the release of the Bin Laden tapes at the same time the President was announcing the withdrawal from the ABM treaty. It remains present in the cordoning off of the Capitol. It is present in the camouflaged armed national guardsmen who greet members of Congress each day we enter the Capitol campus. It is present in the labyrinth of concrete barriers through which we must pass each time we go to vote. The trappings of a state of siege trap us in a state of fear, ill equipped to deal with the Patriot Games, the Mind Games, the War Games of an unelected President and his unelected Vice President.

Let us pray that our country will stop this war. "To promote the common defense" is one of the formational principles of America. Our Congress gave the President the ability to respond to the tragedy of September the Eleventh. We licensed a response to those who helped bring the terror of September the Eleventh. But we the people and our elected representatives must reserve the right to measure the response, to proportion the response, to challenge the response, and to correct the response.

Because we did not authorize the invasion of Iraq.

We did not authorize the invasion of Iran.

We did not authorize the invasion of North Korea.

We did not authorize the bombing of civilians in Afghanistan.

We did not authorize permanent detainees in Guantanamo Bay.

We did not authorize the withdrawal from the Geneva Convention.

We did not authorize military tribunals suspending due process and habeas corpus.

We did not authorize assassination squads.

We did not authorize the resurrection of COINTELPRO.

We did not authorize the repeal of the Bill of Rights.

We did not authorize the revocation of the constitution.

We did not authorize national identity cards.

We did not authorize the eye of Big Brother to peer from cameras throughout our cities.

We did not authorize an eye for an eye.

Nor did we ask that the blood of innocent people, who perished on September 11, be avenged with the blood of innocent villagers in Afghanistan.

We did not authorize the administration to wage war anytime, anywhere, anyhow it pleases.

We did not authorize war without end.

We did not authorize a permanent war economy.

Yet we are upon the threshold of a permanent war economy. The President has requested a \$45.6 billion increase in military spending. All defense-related programs will cost close to \$400 billion. Consider that the Department of Defense has never passed an independent audit. Consider that the Inspector General has notified Congress that the Pentagon cannot properly account for \$1.2 trillion in transactions. Consider that in recent years the Dept. of Defense could not match \$22 billion worth of expenditures to the items it purchased, wrote off, as lost, billions of dollars worth of in-transit inventory and stored nearly \$30 billion worth of spare parts it did not need.

Yet the defense budget grows with more money for weapons systems to fight a cold war which ended, weapon systems in search of new enemies to create new wars. This has nothing to do with fighting terror. This has everything to do with fueling a military industrial machine with the treasure of our nation, risking the future of our nation, risking

