

Pearl Harbor and the Engineers of War

How FDR lied us into World War II

by Justin Raimondo | Dec 8, 2014 | 79 Comments

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What gets me are the lies. Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction" – Iran's (nonexistent) nuclear weapons program – the Vietnamese "attack" in the Gulf of Tonkin – Germans bayoneting Belgium babies – the sinking of the *USS Maine*: over the long and bloody history of US imperialism, these are just a few of the fabrications US policymakers have seized on to justify Washington's aggression. It's quite a record, isn't it? Not only that, but there's been little if any acknowledgment by the American political elites that they've ever lied about *anything*: it's all been thrown down the Memory Hole, along with whatever sense of shame these people ever had.

Indeed, if there is an award for sheer shamelessness then surely it must go to the court historians who preserve the myth of Pearl Harbor, insisting that the Japanese launched a "sneak attack" on the US fleet. The official version of the narrative is that the Americans, dewy-eyed innocents all, were simply minding their own business, not bothering anybody and certainly not aggressing against the predatory Japanese, who were fighting harmless "agrarian reformers" led by Mao Tse-Tung in China. Suddenly, totally without provocation, and out of the clear blue the Japs – to use the term routinely employed by the Roosevelt administration and its media minions at the time – crossed thousands of miles of Pacific Ocean to commit murder and mayhem for no good reason other than their own inherent evil.

What's amazing is that even though this nonsense has been thoroughly and repeatedly debunked over the years by historians concerned with discovering the truth – as opposed to getting tenure at some Ivy League university – the Big Lie is still not only believed by the hoi polloi but also stubbornly upheld by the "intellectuals." As to whether they actually believe it or not, that's largely irrelevant as far as they're concerned. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the archetypal pointy-headed liberal intellectual – and idolator of FDR – put it: "If he [the President] was going to induce the people to move at all, he had no choice but to trick them."

What do "the people" know? Only what our elites deign to tell them – and this was especially true in the run up to World War II. We didn't have the Internet back then, nor did we have a group of people dedicated to defending truth-tellers against the government and its journalistic camarilla – the liberal-leftie ACLU wasn't interested in defending "isolationists" against their hero FDR. Nor did they challenge the internment of Japanese-Americans. If a Snowden type had dared to come out and debunk the government's lies the ACLU would've been in the front row of the hanging party.

So we didn't learn the truth about Pearl Harbor until many years later. The facts are these: the Americans had broken the Japanese diplomatic and military codes and knew all about Tokyo's war plans. As the Japanese made their way across the Pacific the Americans tracked their every move: they knew the timing and the tactics of the Japanese attack, and yet President Franklin Roosevelt did nothing – he let the fleet sit there, a sitting duck.

Then there is the story of Takeo Yoshikawa, the 27-year-old spy sent by the Japanese to scout out Pearl Harbor. He was discovered almost immediately after he arrived in Hawaii: he was, after all, very suspicious to begin with. The Japanese never sent youngsters abroad on diplomatic missions, and yet here was Yoshikawa – going under the name Morimura – being assigned as an attaché at the Japanese consulate in Honolulu. So they followed him around and intercepted every one of his messages to Tokyo: they knew exactly what he was there for and what he was up to.

Previous efforts by the Japanese government to reach an agreement with Washington had failed due to American intransigence. When Japan's Prince Konoye offered to travel to Washington on a secret mission to prevent the conflict, FDR refused – and leaked the news to the pro-British pro-war *Herald Tribune*. Konoye's government fell shortly afterward due in part to the leak. With the pro-war faction in Tokyo in charge, FDR's longstanding efforts to get us into the war were finally bearing fruit.

All this is known: indeed, pro-Roosevelt historians make a major point of telling us how necessary it was for FDR to lie us into war – for our own good, and the good of the world, of course. After all, what do we plebeians know about running the world. Best to leave such weighty matters to our betters.

Nothing has really changed since Pearl Harbor: our officials are still lying, our "historians" are covering up the lies, and the whole rotten edifice is sitting on a foundation of lies, past and present.

Ayn Rand Warned Us

By Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

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Thanks, Jerome Barber.

AYN RAND did WARN us in 1957

"When you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing - When you see that money is flowing to those who deal, not in goods, but in favors - When you see that men get richer by graft and by pull than by work, and your laws don't protect you against them, but protect them against you -

'When you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice - You may know that your society is doomed."

Ayn Rand,
Atlas Shrugged, 1957



Ignorance and Freedom Cannot Coexist

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be."

Thomas Jefferson understood what most people ignore today: Freedom demands a price: knowledge.

Tyrants across history have weaponized ignorance for one reason: educated people argue. Ignorant people obey.

They play whack-a-mole with control: When one tactic fails, they switch to another. Ban knowledge, then deceive, then outright lie. That pattern leaves us with one choice today.



IGNORANCE IS A CAGE

You can't claim rights you can't recognize. Benjamin Rush nailed it: ignorance isn't a gap, it's a cage.

"Freedom can exist only in the society of knowledge. Without learning, men are incapable of knowing their rights."

Rush continued, noting that knowledge has to be widespread. When it's hoarded by a few, this is freedom denied to the rest. Liberty can't survive behind locked doors or under intellectual gatekeepers.

"Where learning is confined to a few people, liberty can be neither equal nor universal."

Rush quoted Cesare Beccaria to expose what tyrants fear most: people who know too much.

"When the clouds of ignorance are dispelled by the radiance of knowledge, authority trembles."

Every tyranny needs a foundation. St. George Tucker identified it: ignorance.

"The ignorance of the people is the footstool of despotism."

Thomas Paine saw the pattern: ignorant people obey. They "trust the experts" who gladly tell them what to do.

"Reason and Ignorance, the opposites of each other, influence the great bulk of mankind. Reason obeys itself; and Ignorance submits to whatever is dictated to it."

Ignorance this widespread isn't accidental, it's strategy. Samuel Adams called it what it is: a weapon to keep people blind.

"It is in the interest of tyrants to reduce the people to ignorance and vice."

KNOWLEDGE BREEDS OPPOSITION

In the early 17th Century, Sir Francis Bacon exposed why tyrants hate real education. Knowledge breeds opposition to power.

"It introduces a relaxation in government, as every man is more ready to argue than obey."

Bacon reached back to Plutarch for proof this fear is ancient. Cato the Elder saw a visiting Greek philosopher and panicked. Not a diplomat, a threat. He convinced the senate to expel him immediately.

"Whence Cato the censor—when Carneades came ambassador to Rome, and the young Romans, allured with his eloquence, flocked about him—gave counsel in open senate, to grant him his despatch immediately."

Why? Cato's fear wasn't that Carneades was wrong – it was that he made people think. And thinking people just might not like their government.

"Lest he should infect the minds of the youth, and insensibly occasion an alteration in the State."

THE MECHANISM: FEUDAL LAW

That was Ancient Rome. In 1765, John Adams wrote about what came after.

He examined over 1000 years of European history from the 5th century through the mid-16th century and identified how tyranny maintained itself across the continent through ignorance.

"They have accordingly laboured, in all ages, to wrest from the populace, as they are contemptuously called, the knowledge of their rights and wrongs, and the power to assert the former or redress the latter."

The mechanism? Feudal law – which, as Adams pointed out – was implemented everywhere.

"Adopted by almost all the princes of Europe, and wrought into the constitutions of their government."

The result? Controlled education: enough knowledge to be a useful servant, not enough to rebel.

"In this manner, the common people were held together, in herds and clans, in a state of servile dependance on their lords; bound, even by the tenure of their lands to follow them, whenever they commanded, to their wars; and in a state of total ignorance of every thing divine and human, excepting the use of arms, and the culture of their lands."

But that kind of forced, widespread ignorance couldn't last forever. As Adams pointed out, knowledge eventually spread.

"From the time of the reformation, to the first settlement of America, knowledge gradually spread in Europe, but especially in England; and in proportion as that increased and spread among the people, ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, which I use as synonymous expressions, for the cannon and feudal laws, seem to have lost their strength and weight."

WHACK-A-MOLE

The more people learned, the more tyrants had to adapt. So, as John Locke pointed out, they shifted to a propaganda-style approach where they kept the truth hidden.

"Thus learned ignorance, and this art of keeping, even inquisitive men, from true knowledge, hath been propagated in the world, and hath much perplexed whilst it pretended to inform the understanding."

And when all else fails? They'll just lie.

John Dickinson saw this exact pattern at the height of the American Revolution.

"All artful rulers, who strive to extend their power beyond its just limits, endeavor to give to their attempts as much semblance of legality as possible."

George Washington explained why the lies work: ignorance provides fertile soil for deception to grow.

"Ignorance & design, are difficult to combat. Out of these proceed illiberality, improper jealousies, and a train of evils which oftentimes, in republican governments, must be sorely felt before they can be removed. The former, that is ignorance, being a fit soil for the latter to work in."

But that's not the end of the story. Ignorance alone is deadly. Combined with cowardice, it's fatal. As St. George Tucker pointed out, with that one-two punch, liberty doesn't stand a chance.

"When ignorance is united with supineness, liberty becomes lethargic, and despotism erects her standard without opposition."

THE REAL DISGRACE

Here's the good news. Thomas Paine exposed their fatal weakness: they can never **make** us ignorant.

"Ignorance is of a peculiar nature: once dispelled, it is impossible to re-establish it. It is not originally a thing of itself, but is only the absence of knowledge; and though man may be kept ignorant, he cannot be made ignorant."

That means ignorance is ultimately a choice. The solution, however, isn't a walk in the park.

Ignorance and obedience – those are easy. Knowledge and freedom? As Abigail Adams wrote, that takes work.

"Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

Getting the job done won't be quick and it won't be easy. We're all victims of a government-run "education" system. So there's no shame in starting from scratch.

The **real** disgrace, as Benjamin Franklin put it, is choosing to stay there.

"Being ignorant is not so much a Shame, as being unwilling to learn."

Tags: Feudal Law, Founding Principles, Ignorance, Rome, Sir Francis Bacon, thomas jefferson

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New report exposes U.S. atrocities in Iraq during occupation

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TEHRAN Times

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – More evidence has emerged revealing that U.S. troops carried out horrific civilian killings in Iraq that were long concealed.

An Investigation by the BBC has revealed new evidence linking two American soldiers, who were never brought to trial, to the infamous Haditha massacre during the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

The findings, based largely on statements and testimony given soon after the killings, raise serious doubts about the integrity of the U.S. inquiry and highlight long-standing concerns about accountability within the American military.

The Haditha massacre stands as one of the darkest war crimes of the Iraq War, yet not a single American was convicted. Four U.S. soldiers were originally charged with murder, but their accounts conflicted, and over the years American military prosecutors dropped charges against three of them.

Those Marines were granted immunity, shielding them from future legal action. This new BBC probe follows an earlier investigation by The New Yorker, which detailed what Iraqis had known for decades but what U.S. officials had tried to bury.

On November 19, 2005, U.S. soldiers patrolling the town of Haditha in Anbar Province went from house to house and killed at least two dozen civilians.

According to survivors, the youngest victim was only three years old. Families were gunned down at close range. Men, women, and children were given no chance to plead for their lives. Moments earlier, four students riding in a taxi to the site of the massacre were forced out of their car and executed with their driver.

The U.S. military did not open an investigation until the Time magazine reported on the massacre months later. When the inquiry finally took place, the charges were quickly dismissed. A conviction would have further stained the image of the U.S. occupation.

Leaked photos published by The New Yorker last year showed parents lying dead while still trying to shield their children. Whole families, including babies, were slaughtered, their bodies later photographed by American troops. Without those photos, the massacre might never have reached the public.

For years, Washington has framed abuses in Iraq as the work of “a few bad apples.” But the record tells a different story. The torture and humiliation of Iraqi detainees by American soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison did not begin with Saddam Hussein’s fall, nor did it end after.

In another infamous case on March 12, 2006, in the Iraqi town of al-Mahmoudiyah, American soldiers took turns to assault 14-year-old Abeer al-Janabi, then murdered her and her parents, who were trying to protect her. Her six-year-old sister was also killed. One of the attackers later described the assault as “awesome.”

The U.S. Army initially blamed Iraqis, and only overwhelming evidence forced a trial. Even then, officials insisted the soldiers were isolated offenders.

But Iraqis ask how many “bad apples” it takes before the system itself is questioned. Why were senior American commanders never called before a jury?

Human rights groups documented widespread abuses by U.S. forces from 2003 to 2011, including indiscriminate attacks, secret detentions, torture, mock executions, and threats of rape. Former detainees described sleep deprivation, starvation, and constant fear.

While Iraqis still carry the trauma of these years, the U.S. has shifted its focus. Today, it supports a new cycle of war crimes in Gaza.

Children have been shot at close range. UN shelters have been bombed. Hospitals receive infants with no heads left to identify. Many abuses, mass arrests, medical workers stripped and taken to detention centers, torture, and rape go unrecorded or unreported.

And so, as with Iraq, much of the truth may remain buried. The full extent of the war crimes may never be known.

Napoleon's 1812 Russian Campaign: Masterclass in Pigheadedness

By John Leake

Courageous Discourse

December 4, 2025

In 1998, I was invited to join the Napoleonic Society of America by an eccentric man who had converted his large office into a shrine dedicated to the French general and emperor. A vast conference table was decked with models of Napoleon's famous victories at Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram, which the peculiar man showed me with extraordinary enthusiasm.

"What do you think about Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812?" I asked.

"A regrettable mistake," the man said, suddenly becoming sober. "He underestimated the resolve of Alexander I and the hardness of the Russian winter."

"How many of his soldiers paid the price for his underestimation?" I asked.

"No one knows exactly," he replied.

This is true. Estimates of the size of the Grande Armée that crossed the Neman River into Russia in June 1812 vary widely between 500 and 600 thousand. Six months later, only 120,000 returned, and most of these had suffered severe injuries and amputations from frostbite.

In other words, around 400,000 young soldiers from Western Europe were condemned to suffer unfathomably painful deaths to serve the monstrous vanity and ambition of a single man.

These were mostly conscripted farm boys and tradesmen from all over Napoleon's European possessions—sons, husbands, and fathers who were needed back home to take care of their parents, wives, and children. The suffering they endured before death finally took them is unimaginable to anyone who hasn't experienced it.

Letters that some wrote to their mothers and wives shortly before they died were subsequently found on their dead bodies and saved in archives. They are heartbreaking to read. One young officer recorded his anguish at watching his beloved horse die of starvation. Another boy writes to his mom that he misses her cooking, as he hasn't eaten anything but lousy quarter rations for days on end.

Given the strategic brilliance that Napoleon had displayed earlier in his career, it's an astonishing fact that **all** of his assumptions about the prospects of his Russian campaign were **dead wrong**.

Russia wasn't Austria or the principalities of Germany, but a vast, sparsely populated country that couldn't provide enough food and fodder for so many men and horses under the best of circumstances.

On top of this, Tsar Alexander I and his generals were determined to make life as hard as possible for Napoleon's army. The Russians didn't just strategically retreat—they burned all of the grain and drove all the livestock east so that Napoleon's men would have *nothing* to sustain them on the long eastward march to Moscow.

And then, in what may be the toughest sacrifice ever made, the Russians burned Moscow to the ground instead of surrendering it to Napoleon.

Alexander's message to the Emperor of the French was clear—namely, "I would rather sacrifice *everything* than surrender to you. Fuck you Napoleon Bonaparte and the horse you rode in on."

With nothing to support the army in Moscow, Napoleon had no choice but to abandon the city to retreat back to the Neman River that bordered the Duchy of Warsaw, over 1000 kilometers away.

Even then, his decision-making was incredibly wanton. Instead of quickly recognizing that his situation was untenable, he waited till October 19—just before the terrible Russian winter set in. Moscow lies at 55 degrees north of the equator, just three degrees south of Juneau, Alaska.

Heavy, cold rains fell on October 22, making the roads muddy and difficult to trudge with their remaining equipment, weapons, and stores packed into heavy carts. The first snow fell on November 3.

Napoleon's advisor, Armand de Caulaincourt, described what it was like for the woefully equipped and provisioned soldiers when night fell and temperatures dropped as low as minus 35 degrees Celsius.

The cold was so intense that bivouacking was no longer supportable. Bad luck to those who fell asleep by a campfire! Furthermore, disorganization was perceptibly gaining ground in the Guard. One constantly found men who, overcome by the cold, had been forced to drop out and had fallen to the ground, too weak or too numb to stand. They begged one to let them alone. Once these poor wretches fell asleep they were dead. If they resisted the craving for sleep, another passer-by would help them along a little farther, thus prolonging their agony for a short while, but not saving them, for in this condition the drowsiness engendered by cold is irresistibly strong.

This was payback time for the Russians, and their fabled Cossack cavalry had a ball harassing the retreating army, attacking the exhausted and starving soldiers with lances and sabers, literally hacking them to pieces.

On December 5, Napoleon abandoned his army by sled, leaving his brother-in-law, Joachim Murat in command. On December 14, what was left of the once grand army left Russian territory.

The lesson from Napoleon's 1812 campaign (and Hitler's 1941 campaign) is clear — France, Germany, and the UK should show greater respect to Russia.

Approximately 700,000 Russians (soldiers and civilians) died as a result of Napoleon's 1812 invasion. In 1941, Hitler's army is estimated to have killed or wounded six million Russian soldiers. Fourteen million Russian civilians are estimated to have died from violence, famine, and exposure after their homes were destroyed.

Hitler's Operation Barbarossa was launched from Poland and through Ukraine, with around 250,000 Ukrainian nationalist soldiers joining the German Army to attack Russia. Ukraine's Azov Battalion traces its lineage to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. Its leader, Stepan Bandera, was a notorious Nazi collaborator.

The bloody-minded fools in charge of U.S. and European foreign policy should have thought about these historical facts before they armed and trained the Ukrainian military to serve as NATO's attack dog against Russia.

Especially bizarre has been the German government's decision to repudiate the excellent and mutually beneficial German-Russian friendship cultivated by former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Vladimir Putin, and the great and useful fruit of their friendship, the Nord Stream Pipeline.

I am confident that an Austrian-style neutrality deal for Ukraine would have averted the disaster of the last four years. With Russian forces now just 75 miles east of the great Black Sea port of Odessa, it appears that the West is now on the cusp of suffering its greatest strategic defeat since December 1812.

Europe's leaders apparently learned nothing from Napoleon's disastrous 1812 campaign, and they now seem determined to pursue war with Russia. President Trump should tell them to cease their agitations and mind their own business before they get a *lot* more people killed.



France really is the purest distillate of what postmodern man actually looks like. It is not a pretty sight.

November 22, 2025

During the 27 years Karol Wojtyla reigned as Christ's Vicar on earth, an unprecedented tenure beginning in 1978 and ending with his death in 2005, he managed to accomplish a great many things, not the least being countless pastoral visits (129 to be exact) around the globe, including places which had only the most tenuous connection to Catholic-Christianity. But of all those lands and countries touched by the papal presence, there were three in particular that he needed to see more than once.

These were Poland, his native land, to which he would go nine times, in large part to help bring about the end of Soviet hegemony in Europe. This was followed by France, eldest daughter of the Church, to which he would go eight times, raising repeatedly the matter of her baptismal promises. Finally, there was the United States, of course, a nation no pope could ill-afford not to visit, which he did seven times, reminding us each time not to forget where our freedoms came from and why.

But setting aside Poland and the United States, as important as those visits were, it seems to me that the eight visits to France represent perhaps the most consequential exercise of all—in terms, that is, of trying to reorient the soul of France back to God, to that absolute attraction for whom we all lost a very long time ago thanks to the sin of Adam.

And pursuant to that end, he would unfailingly point to the sacrament of baptism as the necessary means, the perfect point of entry, as it were, in the Church's effort to reignite in the soul precisely that primal attraction which Original Sin had nearly wiped out altogether. And not only within the individual soul, as though one's relation to God were a purely private affair, but in the outward forms of life as well, which equally evince hunger and thirst for God, for that wholeness of life which only baptism can bring. Here we see the enduring relevance of that larger and more public dimension to human life which we rightly call culture.

Faith, in other words, whose very enfleshment creates culture, becomes the key ingredient in human history. "A society which has lost its religion," Christopher Dawson warns, "becomes sooner or later a society which has lost its culture." And because it is of the very essence of faith to wish to raise up all that has to do with man, including the social order, and thus elevate it all onto the plane of glory, the Church cannot remain indifferent to culture, cannot leave it in its wounded and unredeemed state.

But why did the pope think it necessary to go to France quite so often? Eight visits to a country clearly and undeniably in decline, indeed, in a kind of moral and, yes, even demographic freefall? Why all the attention? Why not simply write it off as yet another failed state, not unlike so many third-world implosions we regularly hear about on the news? Might it have something to do with her being "the eldest daughter of the Church"? And what does that tell us about her place in the economy of grace? I mean, does the honorific still apply if a nation appears to have fallen into apostasy?

But that is just the point, isn't it? France really is the purest distillate of what postmodern man actually looks like. It is not a pretty sight. A nation without God will inevitably turn on itself, divesting its people of those protections guaranteed by God. And so if the Church were to succeed in calling France back to the source of her greatness, her identity in Christ, arresting thereby her fall into infidelity, how wonderfully contagious might her return then prove to be in bringing other erstwhile Catholic nations back to God.

It is well to remind ourselves that it was on his very first visit, in May of 1980, that the Holy Father spoke of France in a way unlike any other nation, reminding her of history's high regard for her role as the eldest of all the Church's daughters. And why is that? Because, owing to her having been the very first among the peoples of Europe to embrace the Faith and the hope of Jesus Christ, she is not only entitled to wear that particular crown but she has also been most earnestly enjoined by Christ to give witness to that fact by evangelizing others.

And what use had she made of it but to spread the message of Christ far and wide, urging her pagan neighbors to go and do likewise. Did it especially please the people of France, I wonder, to have received such a warm congratulatory message from the pope and Bishop of Rome?

He would again stoke that particular flame of French pride when, in 1996, he returned to celebrate 1,500 years of her Catholic-Christian identity. On that day spent celebrating the great jubilee of the baptism of the Frankish King Clovis in the year 496, he particularly commended France for her missionary outreach to the world, for producing so rich a repository of saints and martyrs along the way.

But then, just as the pope was about to conclude his panegyric, the mood suddenly changed. “Dear France,” he began,

permit me to ask this question. We are here to celebrate the fifteenth centenary of a baptism, which you like to think of as your baptism, as the baptism of France. What have you done with your baptism? What has become of it? What have you made of your baptism?

Now there’s an icebreaker for you. And not a few of the French who were there felt the sting of it—including most especially the President of France himself, Jacques Chirac, who had been at great pains in welcoming the Holy Father in the name of a “republican and secular France,” thus erasing an entire millennium and a half of French history.

If the event of a king’s baptism, his putting on Christ both for himself and for all those disparate tribes whom divine providence entrusted him to unite and look after, is not to be dismissed as unreal and therefore unimportant, then it is a huge historical mistake not to acknowledge the connection. It shows how vastly ignorant so much of France is of her own past. Between governance and God, human culture and Christian faith, a nexus had long ago been struck, the fruit of which became Western Christian Civilization. By not knowing that fact, or by heaping scorn and derision upon it, France has made the most egregious confession of ignorance. She has uprooted the very tree in whose branches she had been sitting for centuries.

It was in August of the following year, 1997, that the pope would return to his eldest daughter, traveling this time to Paris for World Youth Day, during which he would strike a very different note. There he spoke to many thousands of eager young pilgrims.

“Do you know,” he asked them, “what the sacrament of baptism does to you?” He told them:

It means that God acknowledges you as his children and transforms your existence into a story of love with him. He conforms you to Christ so that you will be able to fulfill your personal vocation. He has come to make a pact with you and he offers you his peace. Live from now on as children of the light who know that they are reconciled by the Cross of the Savior!

CRISIS
MAGAZINE

What might the young people of France yet do with their baptismal promises? And what are we going to do with ours?

Regis Martin

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Murder for Christmas?

by Andrew P. Napolitano | Dec 5, 2025 | 0 Comments

When Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth posted a meme of Franklin the Turtle, the amiable child's cartoon character, in a helicopter using a military weapon to kill people in a small boat below him, and captioned it "For your Christmas wish list," it understandably caused an uproar.

Should the secretary of defense be mocking the people his troops have killed? Should he engage a child's cartoon character to produce this mockery? Should anyone in his right mind, who professes to understand Christianity, suggest that this killing should be on a child's Christmas wish list? Should he be killing nonviolent boatpeople?

Here is the back story.

President Donald Trump has ordered the Department of Defense to annihilate persons in speedboats in the Caribbean Sea, 1,500 miles from the United States and elsewhere. The true targets of these killings are not the boats but the persons in the boats. We know this because the president has stated so, and because in a particularly gruesome event, two survivors of an initial attack on Sept. 2, 2025, who were clinging to the broken remains of their boat hoping to be rescued, were hit with a second attack, which obliterated them.

Based on evidence he says he has and chooses not to share, Trump has designated these folks in the speedboats as "narco-terrorists" and argued that his designation offers him legal authority to kill them. But "narco-terrorist" is a political phrase, not a legal one. There is no such designation or defined term in American law. Labeling them confers no additional legal authority.

Lawyers in the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice who advise the attorney general on the meaning of the law have apparently authored a legal opinion informing her that she can tell the president what he wants to hear; that it is lawful to kill these boatpeople. This is the same office that told President George W. Bush that he could legally torture prisoners and President Barack Obama that he could legally kill unindicted Americans — including a child — overseas.

Neither the president nor the attorney general will produce this legal opinion for public scrutiny.

These killings constitute murder under federal law and under international law, and persons who use the force of government to commit murder may themselves be prosecuted for it in U.S. courts, courts of the countries from which their victims came, and in international courts. These killings constitute murder because none of the 81 dead boatpeople was engaged in any violence at the times of their deaths.

It doesn't matter, Trump has claimed, just look at the numbers of drug deaths in the U.S., they are "way down." Does the president believe that murder is justified by a diminution in drug deaths? Drug distribution is not a capital offence. If the police see a nonviolent person distributing dangerous drugs in an American city, can they summarily kill that person? Of course not.

Outside of a legally declared war in which U.S. military personnel are engaged in legally killing armed military personnel of the country with which the U.S. is at war, the

Constitution requires due process — a fair jury trial with its attendant protections — whenever the government wants to take life, liberty or property from any person.

The controversy over Trump's killings was rubbed raw recently when six members of Congress — all military or intelligence community veterans — produced a video making accurate statements in which they advised members of the military that they are required to disobey illegal orders. The six declined to back down when the president accused them of sedition and treason and threatened them with death.

Sedition is the advocacy of violence intended to overthrow the federal government. Treason is waging war against the United States or providing aid and comfort to those doing so. Neither crime is even remotely implicated by the video. The video is protected speech which accurately reflects the law.

Trump was unclear if by "death" he meant the DOJ would charge the six with a capital crime and seek the death penalty, or he'd just order the DOD to murder them.

Unfortunately, none of the six was willing to finish the debate they started and state just what illegal orders should be disobeyed. They know that an order to kill an unarmed civilian is an illegal order. It is an order to commit murder, and it ought to be disobeyed. A child can tell you this from her heart.

It gets worse.

The Washington Post reported that seven sources — seven — informed its reporters that when military personnel saw two boat survivors floating at sea, they asked the chain of command what to do. Under the law, the military had a duty to rescue the folks they tried and failed to murder.

These seven persons have corroborated that Hegseth verbally ordered that the two survivors be killed — an order he denies having given, but which the White House has confirmed, laughably calling it "self-defense." That's when Hegseth posted his macabre, revolting, anti-Christian suggestion of murder for Christmas.

What's going on here?

Both President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have taken an oath to preserve the Constitution of the United States. In their unbridled zeal to rid the country of illicit drugs — not a military responsibility — they have rejected the words and values of the Constitution and assumed to themselves powers that international law, federal laws, state laws and the natural law all expressly forbid — the knowing extrajudicial homicide of nonviolent persons.

But they are not the only culprits here. Where is the Congress to reign in a president who ignores well-settled constitutional norms and his quick-draw defense secretary who calls rules of engagement "stupid"? Where is the public outrage? Does the government not recognize any constitutional or legal limits on its powers?

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Economics is haunted by more fallacies than any other study known to man. This is no accident. The inherent difficulties of the subject would be great enough in any case, but they are multiplied a thousandfold by a factor that is insignificant in, say, physics, mathematics or medicine — the special pleading of selfish interests.

— Henry Hazlitt, *Economics In One Lesson* [1946]

The Fight Against The Ideology Of Designer Babies

December 4, 2025

THE WANDERER www.thewandererpress.com

“Genetic manipulation becomes arbitrary and unjust when it reduces life to an object, when it forgets that it is dealing with a human subject, capable of intelligence and freedom, worthy of respect whatever may be their limitations; or when it treats this person in terms of criteria not founded on the integral reality of the human person, at the risk of infringing upon his dignity. In this case, it exposes the individual to the caprice of others, thus depriving him of his autonomy” (Pope St. John Paul II, Address at the Conclusion of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly of the World Medical Association).

Scientists working for a small startup in San Francisco are pursuing something that bioethicists have been warning about for decades: creating genetically engineered children.

News of this dystopian venture comes to us courtesy of the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*). In a recent feature, the *WSJ* shone a light on the effort being pursued by a company called Preventive, located in Silicon Valley, Calif.

Editing genes in human embryos is banned in the U.S. To get around this, Preventive is instead trying to find a location where it can carry out its “research” without falling into trouble with the law, such as the United Arab Emirates.

Ethical Lines In Genetic Engineering

According to the *WSJ*, the financiers behind the effort, including Coinbase co-founder and CEO Brian Armstrong, have been toying with the idea of going about the work in secret. Preventive would only announce the birth of a “healthy genetically engineered child before the scientific and medical establishment had a chance to object — a leap meant to shock the world into acceptance.”

After the plans for secrecy were outed by the *WSJ*, Armstrong and others backing the company announced that Preventive had raised \$30 million to test gene-editing technology. They denied the plans of secrecy.

While Preventive claimed only to be pursuing research to cure preventable diseases, experts are far from convinced that this is the case.

“These people are not working on genetic diseases,” Fyodor Urnov, a director at the Innovative Genomics Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, told the *WSJ*. “They are either lying, delusional, or both. These people armed with very poorly deployed sacks of cash are working on ‘baby improvement.’”

Earlier this year, Armstrong had posted on Twitter that he envisioned the “IVF clinic of the future” as including gene-editing, which could help “accelerate evolution.” Such a clinic would also involve genetic testing of human embryos to “choose the embryo that best matches what you want, ideally from thousands or more,” as well as “artificial wombs.”

Moral vs. Immoral Gene Editing

No doubt many people will be taken in by Preventive’s claims simply to be working to rid the world of the scourge of heri-

table diseases. Such a person is not wholly wrong in the belief that gene therapies, in general, may hold promise as a positive advancement of technology (the Catholic Church supports research aimed at curing diseases and considers genetic intervention morally acceptable when it respects human dignity and does not involve the destruction of human embryos). What Preventive is pursuing, however, does not fall into this category. It is dystopian, even satanic.

The Vatican warned about the ethical implications of gene-editing technology in 2008, in the document *Dignitas Personae*. This document, published by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) (CDF), is an update to the 1987 instruction *Donum Vitae*, in which the CDF tackled some of the thorniest bioethical issues of the time.

Technology had raced ahead at lightning speed in the decades since the publication of *Donum Vitae*. Hence *Dignitas Personae*, which directly addresses the topic of gene editing at some length.

Gene Therapy

In the document, the CDF differentiates between two forms of gene therapy: 1) Somatic cell gene therapy, and 2) Germ line cell therapy.

Somatic cell therapy is a form of therapy aimed at eliminating defects in cells *other than* reproductive cells. In this case, editing the genes can eliminate disease for

a patient, but the edited genes are not passed on to the future children of the person whose genes have been edited. Such therapies can, in principle, be morally licit, said the CDF, while listing various conditions that would have to be met in order for such therapies to be acceptable.

Germ line therapy, on the other hand, presents much more challenging ethical issues. In this case, genes that are being edited can be passed on to future generations, with all the staggering implications that that entails, i.e., a scientist in a lab could change the genetic code of generations of humans permanently.

Even here, however, the Vatican does not rule out the liceity of the technology, in principle. The current problem, they note, is that germ line therapy carries far too many risks. “[B]ecause the risks connected to any genetic manipulation are considerable and as yet not fully controllable,” the CDF notes, “*in the present state of research, it is not morally permissible to act in a way that may cause possible harm to the resulting progeny.*”

In other words, it is at least theoretically possible that, should the technology develop to a degree where the risks are reduced so low that the benefits outweigh the risks, germ line therapy could be licit.

By FR. SHENAN J. BOQUET

In no way, however, does this apply to the kind of research being pursued by Preventive, i.e., involving gene-editing technologies being applied to human embryos to be used in in vitro fertilization. In other words, the scientists are *creating* human embryos, often in large quantities, and then editing them.

To bring a gene-edited human embryo to birth would involve selecting the most “desirable” embryos, implanting them in the womb of a surrogate, and then destroying the rest. “For these reasons,” concludes the CDF, “it must be stated that, in its current state, germ line cell therapy in all its forms is morally illicit.”

The Transhumanist Temptation

This conclusion is in keeping with the take that Pope St. John Paul II gave more than two decades earlier, in 1983, in the address quoted at the beginning of this article. Of note, the sainted pope noted (as I so often repeat!) that our evaluations of emerging technologies must always take into account the fundamental “dignity of man.” Gene-editing technologies that destroy human embryos, or subject them to eugenic calculations about more or less desirable genetic qualities clearly fail this test, to put it mildly.

The identity of the founders of Preventive is highly illuminating. There is, as we have seen, Armstrong, with his visions of the “IVF clinic of the future,” which is a eugenicist’s fantasy. But also funding the venture are Open AI CEO Sam Altman and his same-sex partner.

Altman’s relationship is hardly inconsequential in terms of providing insight into his motivations for supporting this technology. Same-sex couples cannot, by nature, reproduce. However, it has become extremely common for male same-sex couples to contract with a “surrogate,” who carries a child conceived through in vitro fertilization using one of the couple’s sperm.

The whole process of IVF and surrogacy is by nature suffused with a disturbingly eugenic and consumerist ethos. Often, those seeking to have a child in this way will “shop around” for an ideal egg donor, in the hope of maximizing certain “desirable” traits in the child. However, mastering gene-editing would take this to a whole new level, enabling the creation of customized human embryos.

Altman’s interest in this technology, however, is only part and parcel of his much broader program of revolutionary change. Altman must be placed among the ranks of a set of extremely powerful and wealthy entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley who are devotees of a philosophy called “transhumanism.”

Transhumanism is a philosophical and cultural movement that advocates using advanced technology to enhance and transform the human condition. Central to it is the belief that humans can — and should — use science and technology to transcend biological limitations such as aging, disease, and even mortality. A key aspect of transhumanist thought involves the merging of humans with machines, through brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence integration, or cybernetic enhancements.

In a blog post from 2017, titled “The Merge,” Altman mused when and how humans will begin to merge with machines. He suggested that this process of progressively merging with machines “probably cannot be stopped.”

In the post, Altman also hinted at what he thought the end game of gene-editing technologies would be. “Although the merge has already begun, it’s going to get a lot weirder,” he wrote. “We will be the first species ever to design our own descendants.”

Cardinal Sarah: God The Creator

Hidden behind all the grandiose rhetoric of transhumanists like Altman is the presupposition that more power is always better, and that if humans *can* do something, they should.

In his powerful book *The Day Is Now Far Spent*, Robert Cardinal Sarah tackles the issue of transhumanism head-on. “The purpose [of transhumanism] is to surpass the limits of humanity and to create a superman,” he wrote. “This theoretical project is on the way to becoming a reality. We are reaching here the end of the process of self-rejection and of hatred of human nature that characterizes modern man.”

Against modern man’s disdain for limits, Cardinal Sarah preaches the crucial importance of — indeed the *necessity* of — healthy limits. Guided by transhumanism, man “runs the serious risk of disfiguring himself irretrievably,” said the cardinal. “Faced with this prospect, any sensible person ought to tremble.”

“Here we are, alone, disarmed, and helpless, at the mercy of an ultimately nightmarish movement. We have transgressed all the limits. But we did not see that the limits were protecting us. Beyond the limit, there is nothing but the infinity of the void,” he wrote.

The solution to the transhumanist nightmare is to reestablish contact with our true nature, as *given to us* by the Creator. While it is true that we must exercise our creativity in reducing suffering and overcoming disease, it is ultimately a Promethean nightmare to seek to eradicate death or suffering altogether, at any cost. It is a fool’s errand, and, as the cardinal warned above, we will only debase or “disfigure” ourselves in the process.

For generations, human beings have learned how to find beauty and meaning *within* the limits of the human condition, in an understanding that we are creatures, called to intimacy with our Creator. Part of being a creature means embracing our creatureliness and offering up a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gratuitous gift of our being.

Cardinal Sarah writes:

“If we want to remain human, we must accept our creaturely nature and once again turn to the Creator. The world has chosen to organize itself without God, to live without God, to think about itself without God. It is in the process of making a terrible experiment: wherever God is not, hell is there. What is hell if not the privation of God? The transhumanist ideology illustrates this perfectly. Without God, nothing remains but what is not human, the post-human. More than ever the alternative is simple: God or nothing!”

We can and must seek to develop promising technologies like gene editing to the extent that they have legitimate, moral therapeutic uses. In this, we are simply exercising our capacity as co-creators with God, having been endowed by Him with the gift of reason. However, reducing human beings to products, to be “designed” according to *our* necessarily painfully shortsighted specifications, is a giant leap too far. It will create a hell on earth.

Governmental leaders and legislators *must* do everything in their power to prevent such Frankenstein experiments from taking place.

Colorado school districts won't be penalized for protecting girls' sports from gender-confused boys

In a settlement with the Colorado High School Activities Association, schools will be able to reserve female sports and locker rooms for actual girls without harm to their ability.

(LifeSiteNews) – A group of Colorado school districts reached a settlement with the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) under which they will be able to reserve female sports and locker rooms for actual girls without harm to their ability to continue participating in state athletics.

Colorado Public Radio reported that Colorado Springs-area school District 49 adopted a policy in May limiting school athletic teams, locker rooms, and travel sleeping accommodations to actual members of a team's designated sex.

Joined by several like-minded districts, they also sued the CHSAA, Colorado Civil Rights Division (CCRD), and Colorado Attorney General Phillip Weiser over state "anti-discrimination" laws and CHSAA rules asserting that gender-confused individuals must be recognized and accommodated as members of the opposite sex. The suit argued that such mandates are invalid under the prevailing federal interpretation of Title IX as referring strictly to biological sex rather than "gender identity."

Under the settlement, the schools will face no penalties or sanctions from CHSAA for their biology-based policies or for public statements recognizing the innate advantages of biological males. In return, the plaintiffs dismiss their claims against the CHSAA and will pay the body \$60,000 for legal expenses. Notably, the settlement only resolves the CHSAA's role in the dispute; the suit against the CCRD and Weiser's office remains ongoing.

CHSAA claimed the lawsuit was unnecessary because it had never penalized districts over such policies in the first place and the plaintiffs had not inquired about the situation before suing. But District 49 superintendent Peter Hilts is celebrating nonetheless.

"CHSAA deserves credit for doing the right thing," he said. "By reaching this agreement, they've recognized the need to protect fairness in competition and privacy in school facilities for our female athletes. We appreciate their willingness to engage in thoughtful dialogue and reach a resolution that puts students first."

Mandatory inclusion of gender-confused individuals in opposite-sex sports is promoted as a matter of "inclusivity," but critics note that indulging "transgender" athletes undermines the original rational basis for having sex-specific athletics in the first place, thereby depriving female athletes of recognition and professional or academic opportunities.

Critics also argue that forcing girls to share intimate facilities such as bathrooms, showers, or changing areas with members of the opposite sex violates their privacy rights, subjects them to needless emotional stress, and gives potential male predators a viable pretext to enter female bathrooms or lockers by simply claiming transgender status.

There have been numerous high-profile examples in recent years of men winning women's competitions, and research affirms that physiology gives males distinct athletic advantages that cannot be fully negated by hormone suppression.

In a 2019 paper published by the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, New Zealand researchers found that "healthy young men (do) not lose significant muscle mass (or power) when their circulating

Fri Dec 5, 2025 -

Calvin Freiburger

testosterone levels were reduced to (below International Olympic Committee guidelines) for 20 weeks,” and “indirect effects of testosterone” on factors such as bone structure, lung volume, and heart size “will not be altered by hormone therapy;” therefore, “the advantage to transwomen (biological men) afforded by the (International Olympic Committee) guidelines is an intolerable unfairness.”

Even the left-wing United Nations has acknowledged as much, via an [October 2024 report](#) by Special Rapporteur Reem Alsalem that found more than 600 female athletes around the world have lost more than 890 medals to men in 29 sports as of March 2024. “To avoid the loss of a fair opportunity, males must not compete in the female categories of sport,” the report concluded.

In America since the 1980s, more than 1,941 gold medals in female events that would have gone to female athletes have instead been claimed by men identifying as “trans women,” and along with them more than \$493,173 in prize money across more than 10,067 amateur and professional events, [according](#) to data compiled by He Cheated and reviewed by Concerned Women for America.

The American Conservative Declines Press Credentials From Department of War

by Curt Mills | Nov 27, 2025 | News | 23 Comments

The Department of Defense, or Department of War, recently invited *The American Conservative* to be further integrated into its press operations. We have politely declined.

This invitation was conditioned on TAC accepting the department’s over-the-top press restrictions, including agreeing not to publish any confidential material that our affiliated reporters might acquire.

TAC is a special publication. The “street cred” that comes with being a prominent, Washington-based publication originally founded by conservatives against the Iraq War is one of the many reasons our readers come back to our coverage. We are firmly committed to honesty and completeness in our reporting; this, too, is a reason for our readers’ loyalty.

Agreeing to preemptive publication restrictions on newsworthy material would be a betrayal of that trust.

We are not in the stenography business. We join other conservative outlets such as Washington Examiner among many others in refusing to behave otherwise, even for an administration with which we have much common ground.

H.L. Mencken writes that the press is the permanent opposition; we think that’s as good a guiding motto as any.

TAC remains committed to presenting well-informed, well-reported, carefully written news and culture journalism of the highest editorial standards. We are deeply grateful for our many friends and supporters, and it is to them, not to any press office or administration, that we owe our allegiance.

Thank you for your help as we continue to cover some of our lifetimes’ most exciting developments in American public life.

All best,

Curt Mills

Executive Director,

The American Conservative

The Knives Are Out for Hegseth

Moon of Alabama

December 5, 2025

The knives are out for the Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. The leaks from the Pentagon about him will continue until Hegseth is gone.

The officers do not want a boss who is giving illegal orders while scapegoating the generals and soldiers who follow them:

At the White House on Monday, Karoline Leavitt, the press secretary, read a statement that said Mr. Hegseth had authorized the Special Operations commander overseeing the attack, Adm. Frank M. Bradley, "to conduct these kinetic strikes."

She said that Admiral Bradley had "worked well within his authority and the law directing the engagement to ensure the boat was destroyed and the threat to the United States of America was eliminated."

Bradly gets pushed forward to take the beating while Hegseth and Trump claim innocence:

Bradley will have the chance to address outstanding issues about the strikes when he speaks with lawmakers Thursday behind closed doors. Some lawmakers have said the Trump administration appears to be making Bradley into something of a scapegoat.

"Looks like they're throwing him under the bus," said Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.), often a critic of the administration, "but these kinds of decisions go all the way to the top."

Adm. Bradley had the poor choice of following an illegal order or getting fired.

In my recent piece about U.S. strikes on boats in the Caribbean I suggested that the head of Southern Command, Adm. Alvin Holsey, was made to retire because he rejected orders to kill survivors of U.S. attacks:

On the very same day those survivors were rescued, October 16, the DoD announced that the head of its Southern Command was 'stepping down': ..

...

It now seems clear that Admiral Holsey got fired for not following Hegseth's illegal order and for ordering the rescue of the survivors of the strike.

A piece in today's *Wall Street Journal* confirms this impression:

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth shocked official Washington in mid-October when he announced that the four-star head of U.S. military operations in the Caribbean was retiring less than a year into his tenure.

But according to two Pentagon officials, Hegseth asked Adm. Alvin Holsey to step down, a de facto ouster that was the culmination of months of discord between Hegseth and the officer. It began days after President Trump's inauguration in January and intensified months later when Holsey had initial concerns about the legality of lethal strikes on alleged drug boats in the Caribbean, according to former officials aware of the discussions.

Hegseth has now claimed (archived) to have not seen no survivors when he was in the room watching the stream of a second strike happening that killed survivors of an allegedly smuggling boat:

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Tuesday that "**a couple of hours**" passed before he was made aware that a September military strike he authorized and "watched live" required an additional attack to kill two survivors, further distancing himself from an incident now facing congressional inquiry.

...

"I did not personally see survivors," he said in response to a reporter's question, "...

because that thing was on fire and was exploded, and fire, smoke, you can't see anything. You got digital, there's — this is called the fog of war."

That, however, contradicts the original reporting of the issue. The *Washington Post* [wrote \(archived\)](#) that Hegseth was watching the video stream when survivors of a strike were clearly visible and was aware of the order to kill them:

The longer the U.S. surveillance aircraft followed the boat, the more confident intelligence analysts watching from command centers became that the 11 people on board were ferrying drugs.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth gave a spoken directive, according to two people with direct knowledge of the operation. "The order was to kill everybody," one of them said.

A missile screamed off the Trinidad coast, striking the vessel and igniting a blaze from bow to stern. **For minutes**, commanders watched the boat burning on a live drone feed. As the smoke cleared, they got a jolt: Two survivors were clinging to the smoldering wreck.

The Special Operations commander overseeing the Sept. 2 attack — the opening salvo in the Trump administration's war on suspected drug traffickers in the Western Hemisphere — ordered a second strike to comply with Hegseth's instructions, two people familiar with the matter said. The two men were blown apart in the water.

The *NY Times* [reports further details \(archived\)](#):

Before the Trump administration began attacking people suspected of smuggling drugs at sea, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth approved contingency plans for what to do if an initial strike left survivors, according to multiple U.S. officials.

The military would attempt to rescue survivors who appeared to be helpless, shipwrecked and out of what the administration considered a fight. But **it would try again to kill them if they took what the United States deemed to be a hostile action, like communicating with suspected cartel members**, the officials said.

After the smoke cleared from a first strike on Sept. 2, there were two survivors, and one of them radioed for help, the U.S. officials said. Adm. Frank M. Bradley, who commanded the operation, ordered a follow-up strike and both were killed.

The reasoning is ludicrous. Survivors of a murderous strike are to be rescued. But survivors who call for help to be rescued have to be killed:

Under the plans Mr. Hegseth had approved, Admiral Bradley interpreted the purported communications between the initial survivors and colleagues as meaning that the survivors were still in the fight, rather than shipwrecked and helpless people whom it would be a war crime to target.

The whole legal construct behind these strikes is obviously nonsense:

The Pentagon's defense of its actions rests heavily on the premise that there was a "fight" in the first place. In defending the campaign of summary killings at sea as lawful, the administration has relied on Mr. Trump's disputed determination that the United States is in a formal armed conflict with drug cartels and that people suspected of smuggling drugs for them are "combatants."

A still-secret memo by the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel accepts Mr. Trump's claims about the nature of drug cartels and that there is an armed conflict. Based on that premise, it concludes that the boat strikes are lawful.

One of its key related conclusions, according to people who have read it, is that suspected cargos of drugs aboard boats are lawful military targets because cartels could otherwise sell them and **use the profits to buy military equipment to**

sustain their alleged war efforts.

The Pentagon's emphasis on the purported radio communications appears to rely on that logic. The idea appears to be that without a second strike, another boat could have come to retrieve not only the survivors but also any of the alleged shipment of cocaine that the first blast did not burn up, so calling for help was a hostile act.

The OLC memo is intentionally confusing cause and effect.

People and cartels are greedy. They sell drugs to make money. Whatever arms they may have are used in support of that primary aim. They are in business, not in an 'armed conflict'. They do not fight wars for lebensraum or ideological reasons:

A broad range of legal experts reject the legitimacy of Mr. Trump's claim that this is an armed conflict. They say that there is no armed conflict, that crews of boats suspected of smuggling drugs are civilians, not combatants, and that Mr. Trump and Mr. Hegseth have been giving illegal orders to commit murder.

Hegseth has given orders to murder civilians. If this were an 'armed conflict' Hegseth would have committed a war crime.

Or, as conservative commentator George Will scathingly remarks (archived):

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth seems to be a war criminal. Without a war. An interesting achievement.

Pete Hegseth has long argued for more brutal wars, for more unfair fights to satisfy his inner psychopath:

In books and on television, Hegseth argued for years that U.S. military leaders should relax rules for American forces, allowing them to fight unburdened by concerns of future courts-martial. More freedom to operate, he insisted, and less regulation by military lawyers would make troops more lethal and effective, and could be justified under the laws of war.

...

Hegseth's views were shaped by his own experience in the Army. He was deployed to Iraq in 2005, in the northern city of Samarra, which was a counterinsurgency hotbed. The regiment's Charlie Company, which included Hegseth, employed such aggressive tactics that it was referred to by some soldiers as the Kill Company [archived]. Four of its soldiers were later court-martialed on charges of killing unarmed Iraqis. Three of them were convicted; one case was thrown out on appeal.

Hegseth has cited a JAG briefing on "legal and proper engagement" that he says he and fellow troops received when they deployed. Hegseth says his soldiers were told they couldn't fire on an armed man unless it was clear he posed a threat.

Hegseth pulled his platoon aside and **told them to ignore the legal advice**. "I will not allow that nonsense to filter into your brains," he says he told them, according to his 2024 book "The War on Warriors." "Men, if you see an enemy who you believe is a threat, you engage and destroy the threat."

Hegseth brought such convictions to the Pentagon. In February, when he fired the top JAGs, he said they could be potential "roadblocks" to lawful orders "given by a commander in chief."

Defense Secretary Hegseth's inherent brutality is likely the reason why he got hired for his position:

Trump selected Hegseth as defense secretary partly because of his views on loosening the rules of engagement, two people familiar with the presidential transition said.

It is high time for Congress to rein both men in.

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TSA's New Confirm.ID Tax

By Adam Dick

The Ron Paul Institute

December 5, 2025

Back in March of 2014, I [wrote](#) about how the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) operates an extortion racket-style scheme via its PreCheck program that gives travelers who pay a fee and jump through a bunch of hoops including submitting to fingerprinting and a background check a chance, though no guarantee, that they can evade some harassment from the TSA itself. In the same vein, starting in February, TSA is planning to roll out a new tax and other demands, termed [Confirm.ID](#), that will be required of individuals who do not have REAL ID compliant identification documentation in order for them to travel from point A or point B.

As reported Monday in an Associated Press [article](#), a new 45 dollars fee (really a tax since it is charged by government) will be imposed by TSA on travelers who do not have REAL ID compliant identification documentation. The rollout of the United States government's REAL ID mandate, authorized by congressional legislation 20 years ago, was [delayed until last year](#) due largely to opposition from people concerned about REAL ID's threats to liberty. By paying the fee and complying with other TSA demands in its Confirm.ID process, the AP article relates, a person will be able to seek travel permission from TSA via an alternative method that may take up to half an hour to complete and, if successful, will result in approval for traveling for just 10 days. People have been concerned about the collection of biometric information coming with REAL ID. Confirm.ID may not provide a way around such requirements given that it has the [collection of biometric information](#) built into its process.

Americans already fund TSA with their tax dollars, including a "[Passenger Fee](#)" or "[September 11 Security Fee](#)" included in the total price of each airline flight ticket. But, the TSA, like many of its agents [pilfering from travelers' bags](#) put in jeopardy by the TSA enforced "security" procedures, keeps gaining new means to separate Americans from their money.

The new tax and other demands on people traveling without REAL ID is adding insult to injury given that the push for people to obtain and use REAL ID was itself [fueled by rejection of each individual's right to travel](#). The new tax is also piled on top of already significant harassment that TSA routinely dispenses. I listed off some aspects of this harassment in a July [article](#) regarding Homeland Security Department Secretary Kristi Noem trying to gain some support from people fed up with TSA through announcing a minimal rollback of TSA bullying related to if people may keep their shoes on at checkpoints. I wrote:

Additionally, the TSA demanding passengers take off shoes has been just one small part of the harassment it metes out on travelers. Noem is leaving in place the rest — waits in line, demanded production of identification documentation in violation of the right to travel anonymously, zero privacy in regard to what is in bags or pockets, confiscation of nonthreatening though *verboden* items, subjection to potential harm from never properly safety tested "full-body scanners," "pat downs" that are pretty much the same as friskings by police and that without special governmental protection would be regarded as assaults or sexual assaults, etc.

While the TSA's new tax and demands on travelers who lack REAL ID compliant identification documentation is repugnant, so too is REAL ID, as was explained by then-United States House of Representatives Member Ron Paul (R-TX) on the House floor when REAL ID legislation passed twenty years ago. You can watch Paul's speech [here](#).

Neither REAL ID nor Confirm.ID is compatible with respect for liberty. They should be thrown away along with the TSA's long list of harassment activities.