

NATIONAL SECURITY: DEMOCRATIC POLICIES ARE WORKING

As the House prepares to consider the FY2010 Intelligence Authorization bill tomorrow, a string of events show how the Obama Administration and Democrats have been successful in combating terrorism at home and throughout the world. While Republicans have attempted to use the politics of fear to score political points rather than focus on increasing our nation's security, recent events demonstrate how our intelligence community and criminal justice system have worked together to thwart attacks, gain important intelligence, and ensure that captured terrorists can never hurt America again.

With U.S. Aid, Pakistan's Armed Forces Capture Taliban Militants

This week, we've seen two examples of how U.S. policies have led to increased cooperation from Pakistan to arrest top Taliban leaders who are a threat to our security. Pakistan announced that authorities had captured Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban's second-in-command and operation chief. Mullah Abdul Kabir, a member of the Taliban's senior leadership and a leading military commander, was also captured in Pakistan. These arrests represent a strategic momentum shift in our fight against extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Pakistani authorities, aided by U.S. intelligence, have apprehended more Afghan Taliban chiefs following the capture of the movement's No. 2 figure - arrests that together represent the biggest blow to the insurgents since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001." [Associated Press, 2/19/10]

"Pakistani security forces have long supported or turned a blind eye to Afghan Taliban members seeking sanctuary in Pakistan. The recent arrests seem to mark a change in that attitude.... U.S. officials welcome the change as a turning point and evidence of improved U.S.-Pakistani cooperation." [Washington Post, 2/23/10]

Najibullah Zazi Pleads Guilty In New York Subway Bomb Plot

This week, Najibullah Zazi pled guilty in federal court to three charges in connection to his plot to set off homemade explosives in the New York City subway. Through the coordination of law enforcement and intelligence, the plot was thwarted and now Zazi is cooperating and providing information to military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

"The [Obama] administration, and countless unnamed government workers, deserve credit for actively averting the atrocity that Mr. Zazi and his cohorts might have caused." [Washington Post, 2/24/10]

"A conviction in a Brooklyn criminal court would seem to provide convincing evidence that terrorists can be successfully tried in U.S. civilian courts.... A key reason for Zazi's cooperation is that civilian courts have leverage not readily available to the military tribunals that Republican critics of the Obama administration would prefer." [Scripps News, 2/23/10]

"[A]s with Umar Abdulmutallab, the government found where it could apply leverage and did so. As a result, Zazi has been providing intelligence -- and he will still spend the rest of his life in prison. Again, the only reason Republicans are insisting on using military courts in all circumstances is because they 'sound' tougher. In practice, civilian courts hand out harsher sentences and are better equipped to handle terrorism cases. They also provide better incentives

for providing accurate information on the part of the defendants.” [Adam Serwer, American Prospect, 2/23/10]

“Today’s guilty plea by Najibullah Zazi to terrorism charges in federal court provides fresh ammunition for Obama administration officials to argue that traditional law-enforcement methods can be just as effective, if not more, in questioning terror suspects than subjecting them to ‘enhanced interrogation techniques.’” [Michael Isikoff, Newsweek, 2/22/10]

Christmas Day Bomb Suspect Abdulmutallab Provides Intelligence

Last week, the Justice Department announced that it had received intelligence information from Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to detonate an explosive device on board a Northwest Airlines flight in December. This information comes after he was read his Miranda rights, as has been done with other terrorists that have been successfully convicted by federal courts, including Richard Reid (the “Shoebomber”).

“Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the man accused of trying to blow up a jet airplane on Christmas Day, has been providing FBI interrogators with useful intelligence about his training and contacts since last week, Obama administration sources said Tuesday.” [Washington Post, 2/3/10]