The Patriot’s Pondering

Dear Senator Vitter,

Montesquieu, a renowned enlightenment thinker, once stated, “There is no crueler tyranny than that which is perpetuated under the shield of law and in the name of justice.” According to this context, hiding behind a façade of righteousness does not justify unwarranted actions. Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen with ties to terrorist networks, was assassinated by an American drone strike in Yemen. Additionally, al-Awlaki’s son, also an American citizen, was killed in the strike, and was marked off as collateral damage. We must ask ourselves whether murdering innocents is necessitous in order to ensure security and if this strike was truly for the greater good. This circumstance is full of complex variables to ponder, and therefore, there is no perfect solution. However, the rights stated in the Constitution must be guaranteed to all citizens, and the United States’ drone policy should reflect that idea.

One of the objectives in the preamble of the Constitution is securing liberty for all citizens, and notice how it does not say “some” or “only if”. The execution via drone presents an ideological conflict, and there are numerous factors to take into account. Morally speaking, we must regard that the means in which we attain goals do matter. Executing a United States citizen, despite the magnitude of the crime committed, undermines the very foundation on which the Constitution was established. In denying Anwar al-Awlaki the right to trial by jury, despite being linked directly to notorious terrorist organizations, there is a poor reflection upon our government. According to Rosseau, another enlightenment thinker, the government enters a social contract in which government officials are servants to the public. In convicting and assassinating a citizen without a trial, we have committed a hypocritical and inequitable act, hence it is worrisome for another American citizen to contemplate suddenly being accuses of heinous crimes and executed without trial.

I implore you to thoroughly investigate the legality of the drone strikes. Please also consider sending recommendations to the CIA to alter the drone policy to better reflect the ideologies expressed in the Constitution since it does not fulfill America’s “born equal, right to life” philosophy. Not only is denying an American citizen their right an outrage, it also creates poor relations with other countries, particularly those in the Middle-East, since their people were casualties, as well as provoke more terrorist groups.

Whether they are minor thieves or reprehensible terrorists like al-Awlaki, all American citizens are guaranteed their rights, and the United States’ drone usage policy should reflect this ideal. While al-Awlaki may have been an impending threat to national security, and the drone strike definitely hindered any plans he may have created to attack the United States, the decision to kill him without a trial still is a blatant violation of the Constitution. In order to ensure that our drone strike policy does reflect the elemental American tenets set forth in the Constitution, I beseech you to investigate the legality of these drone strikes, and send recommendations to the CIA to alter drone policy so that it adheres more closely to Constitutional values.

Sincerely,

A True Patriot