



Free
Congress

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FREE CONGRESS: ESTABLISHES ONLINE PETITION

The Free Congress Foundation's Coalition for Constitutional Liberties is establishing a website with an online petition in support of our civil liberties and constitutional rights. It can be found at <http://www.DefendYourFreedom.com>

As has been the case with every conflict since the Civil War, the long-range pressures of this war will be to greatly expand the powers of the federal government and to restrict our freedoms. This puts President Bush and Congress as well as our governors and state legislators to a crucial test. Can our lawmakers wage a war against international terrorism in the name of protecting freedom and at the same time make sure that very freedom is not diminished at home by the measures of our own government?

Free Congress Foundation thinks America is strong enough to protect our freedoms and to defeat the terrorists. That is why Free Congress is proudly joining the new coalition, In Defense of Freedom. We do so with the desire to help President Bush and our nation's lawmakers to chart the right course that ensures the terrorists and the governments that harbor them will receive their just due while making sure what has always been special about America remains as strong as ever.

The pressures will be strong to relax our commitment to liberty in the name of "national security." We agree wholeheartedly with the coalition's assertion that "all decisions [made by our government affecting civil liberties should be] taken in a manner consistent with our Constitution."

Just as it would be wrong to let the terrorists have their way, so it would it be to ease wiretapping laws, institute more surveillance programs, increase profiling programs and surveillance cameras and e-mail searches, in the belief that this will lead to a safer America. Due process must be respected.

Already, the Federal government is expressing interest in broadening its own surveillance capacities. In the rush to produce "action" there is even the possibility that Congress will mandate anti-encryption technology. However, the 2000 Wiretap Report issued by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in assessing the wiretap operations conducted from January 1, 2000 to December 1, 2000 discovered that no investigations had been thwarted by the use of encryption technology.

The most knowledgeable members of the international intelligence community insist that too much emphasis has been placed in recent years on electronic surveillance and wiretapping at the expense of "human intelligence" that is able to infiltrate terrorist networks and the governments supporting them.

It was Alexander Hamilton who noted that nations will often "become willing to run the risk of being less free" after having experienced the acts of destruction from war. However, America has always realized that our freedom came at a price. It was our ability to take the risk of being free that made us a great country. Only the continued commitment can ensure we will remain great.