



Suicidal hand-wringing

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When you enter a boxing ring, you agree to abide by the rules of boxing. But when you are attacked from behind in a dark alley, you would be a fool to abide by the Marquis of Queensbury rules. If you do, you can end up being a dead fool.

Even with a nuclear Iran looming on the horizon and the prospect that its nuclear weapons will end up in the hands of international terrorists that it has been sponsoring for years, many in the media and in the government that is supposed to protect us have been preoccupied with whether we are being nice enough to the terrorists in our custody.

The issue has been brought to a head by the efforts of Senators John McCain, John Warner, and Lindsey Graham to get us to apply the rules of the Geneva convention to cut-throats who respect no Geneva convention and are not covered by the Geneva convention.

If this was just a case of a handful of headstrong senators, who want us to play by the Marquis of Queensbury rules while we are being kicked in the groin and slashed with knives, that would be bad enough. But the issue of applying the Geneva convention to people who were never covered by the Geneva convention originated in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Article III, Section II of the Constitution gives Congress the power to limit the jurisdiction of federal courts, and Congress has specifically taken away the jurisdiction of the courts in cases involving the detention of illegal combatants, such as terrorists, who are not -- repeat, not -- prisoners of war covered by the Geneva convention.

The Supreme Court ignored that law. Apparently everyone must obey the law except judges. Congress has the power to impeach

judges, including Supreme Court justices, but apparently not the guts. Runaway judges are not going to stop until they get stopped.

In short, the clash between Senator McCain, et al., and the President of the United States is more than just another political clash. It is part of a far more general, and ultimately suicidal, confusion and hand-wringing in the face of mortal dangers.

The argument is made that we must respect the Geneva convention because, otherwise, our own soldiers will be at risk of mistreatment when they become prisoners of war.

Does any sane adult believe that the cutthroats we are dealing with will respect the Geneva convention? Or that our extension of Geneva convention rights to them will be seen as anything other than another sign of weakness and confusion that will encourage them in their terrorism?

No one has suggested that we disregard the Geneva convention for people covered by the Geneva convention. The question is whether a lawless court shall seize the power to commit this nation to rules never agreed to by those whom the Constitution entrusted with the power to make international treaties.

The much larger question -- the question of survival -- is whether we have the clarity and the courage to go all-out in self-defense against those who are going all-out to de-

stroy us, even at the cost of their own lives.

There are too many signs that we do not and those signs are visible not only in our political and judicial institutions but throughout American society and western civilization.

Sheltered for years from terrorist dangers that we so much feared after the September 11th attacks, many have come to act as if those dangers do not exist and that we now have the luxury of dismantling the means by which they have been held at bay this long.

In a country where all sorts of individuals and organizations tap into our personal computers and our computerized medical, financial and other records, some have gone ballistic over the fact that the federal government tries to keep track of who is being phoned by international terrorist organizations.

No amount of security precautions can protect us from all the thousands of ways in which terrorists can strike at times and places of their own choosing -- and eventually strike with nuclear weapons. Our only hope is to get advance information from those we capture as to where other terrorists are and how they operate.

Squeamishness about how this is done is not a sign of higher morality but of irresponsibility in the face of mortal dangers.

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