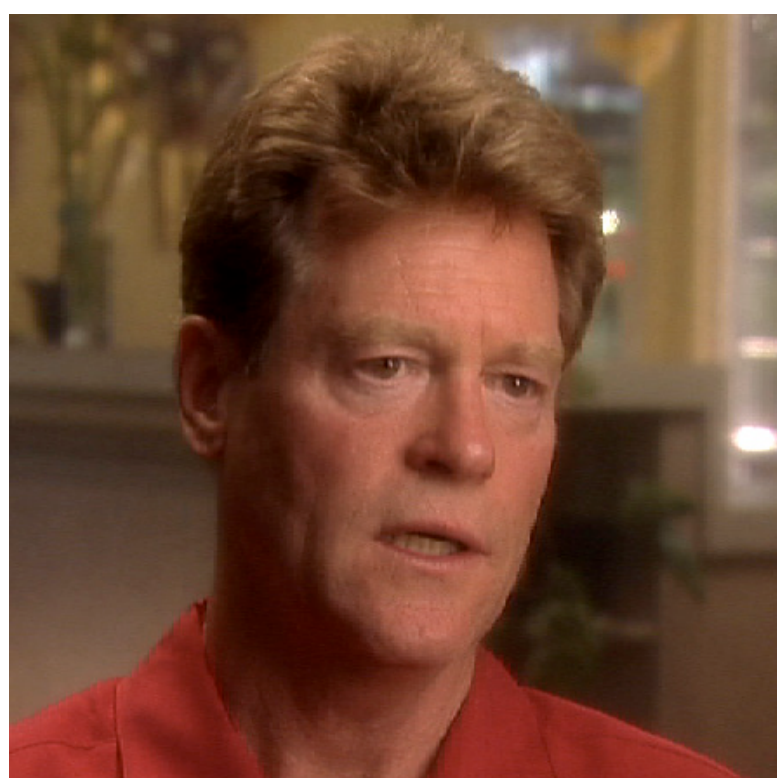


# TOWARD A HOLISTIC VIEW OF CIVIL LIBERTY

Despite differences over some Constitutional issues, certain liberals, conservatives, and libertarians have found common cultural ground around aspects of the Bill of Rights. They have likewise expressed a shared unease about the threats posed to those rights. The political left became particularly sensitized to these issues during the 1960s and 70s, when much government activity was directed at the disruption of leftist political goals. The right became similarly sensitized during the 1990s, in the aftermath of the FBI's military-style siege at Waco, Texas. More recently, common concerns have arisen over the government's counter-terrorism policies and conduct.



**“The Clinton administration was the first administration to designate a set of legislation as ‘anti-terrorism.’ And the ACLU and some conservative groups actually made some strange bedfellows in opposing that legislation, thinking it went too far.” – Beau Grosscup, University of California, Chico**

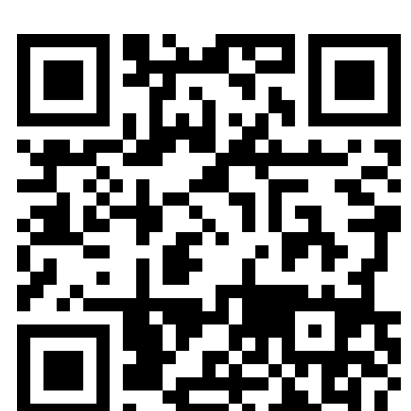
Concerns over civil liberties infringements have the potential to bridge the political divide, although this happens less frequently than it should. More commonly, a political group identifies a challenge to its freedoms, but fails to recognize that others face similar problems – particularly if those others are cultural or political foreigners.

After 9/11, the American left was quick to condemn the Bush administration's warrantless wiretapping program, while the political right largely rallied to the President's defense. The Obama administration's conflation of right-wing causes with terrorism in its DHS bulletins has been met with furor from the right, but indifference from the left.

Today, the legal architecture constructed after 9/11 continues to pose challenges to constitutional rights. While the Obama White House has scaled back some of the excesses of the Bush era, it has continued several of its policies, such as pressing for the reauthorization of controversial search and seizure provisions found in the USA PATRIOT Act.

The growth of executive power in recent years underscores the need for a united political front on civil liberties issues. Despite their other differences, those on the left and right need to ensure that governmental authority does not expand to threaten the protections found in the Constitution's first ten amendments. Those who are willing to cross the aisle in support of this concept occupy a narrow space in today's political spectrum. This conversation is about broadening that space.

**“We've done a lot of work in my organization looking at other countries that have faced domestic terrorist threats. And one thing we've seen time and again is that once the emergency subsides, government is very reluctant to give up any of these new powers.” – Elisa Massimino, Human Rights First**



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