

Is the “Terrorist Threat” Another Bush-Cheney Fabrication

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

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In the most massive racial profiling since Japanese-Americans were herded into detention camps in World War II, the Bush administration after 9/11 required 80,000 Arab and Muslim foreign nationals living here to be photographed, fingerprinted and subjected to “special registration,” *The Nation* magazine said. The publication reports an additional 8,000 foreign nationals were sought out by the FBI for interviews and more than 5,000 foreign nationals were put in “preventive detention” — a total of 93,000 people made to register, subjected to interview, or jailed.

“Yet as of September, 2007, not one of these people stands convicted of a terrorist crime,” says an article titled, “Why We’re Losing The War on Terror.” Reading the data it presents, though, and examining other reliable sources, raises the question of whether the “terrorist threat” to USA isn’t wildly exaggerated or an outright fabrication. Here’s why:

The above-cited pattern of dragnet arrests without trials or convictions is being repeated across the Middle East with like results. The Bush regime is literally framing thousands of innocent men and boys to make it appear they constitute a “terrorist” threat to America. Yes, *boys*, some as young as eight.

According to *Nation* magazine co-authors David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, and Jules Lobel, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh Law School, the Bush regime has little to show in the way of convictions of those it imprisoned in Guantanamo, which ex-Defense Secretary Rumsfeld trumpeted housed “the worst of the worst.”

“The Pentagon’s Combatant Status Review Tribunals’ own findings categorized only 8 percent of some 500 detainees held there in 2006 as fighters for Al Qaeda or the Taliban. More than half of the 775 Guantanamo detainees have now been released,” Cole and Lobel write. Americans needs to ask, since Bush boasted as far back as 2003 the U.S. had arrested 3,000 terrorist suspects, “Why didn’t the government try them?” As Jane Mayer reported in the July 3, 2006, *The New Yorker*, “Only ten of the more than 700 men who have been imprisoned at Guantanamo have been formally charged with any wrong-doing.”

Mayer also wrote, when the Pentagon planned to screen the suspects via “Article 5” hearings on the battlefields of Afghanistan, “the White House cancelled the hearings, which had been standard protocol during the previous fifty years, including in the first Gulf War.” Why? Could it be the Pentagon just wanted live, warm bodies, and innocence be damned?

Former President Jimmy Carter wrote in “Our Endangered Values”(Simon & Schuster), after visiting six of the 25 U.S. prisons, the Red Cross found “107 detainees under eighteen, some as young as eight years old.” Eight-year-old terrorists? And investigative reporter Seymour Hersh reported there were 800-900 Pakistani boys in custody aged 13 to 15. Never mind that the Red Cross, Pentagon, and Amnesty International “have gathered substantial testimony of torture of children, confirmed by soldiers who witnessed or participated in the abuse,” according to Carter. Apparently, the Bush regime is tearing elementary school

children away from their parents to build up its “terrorist” arrest data.

The British *Guardian* newspaper on March 15, 2005, carried a disturbing interview with Dr. Rafiullah Bidar, regional director of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, of Gardez — an entity funded by the U.S. Congress to investigate warlord abuses, and supposedly an American asset.

“All I do nowadays is chart complaints against the US military,” Bidar lamented. “Many thousands of people have been rounded up and detained by them. Those who have been freed say that they were held alongside foreign detainees who’ve been brought to this country to be processed. No one is charged. No one is identified. No international monitors are allowed into the US jails.” He pulled out a handful of files: “People who have been arrested say they’ve been brutalised – the tactics used are beyond belief.” Again, mass roundups, followed by no charges, and harsh confinement with torture.

The *Guardian* said terror suspects are being housed in about 25 prisons across Afghanistan, the hub of the U.S. prison network, and in dozens of facilities in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Egypt, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the British island of Diego Garcia.

Military officials estimate more than 60,000 Iraqis have been arrested and detained since the U.S. invasion and returned GI’s interviewed by *The Nation* (July 30) said “the majority of detainees they encountered were either innocent or guilty of only minor infractions.” Army Reserve Specialist Aidan Delgado, 25, of Sarasota, Fla., of the 320th Military Police Company, said, “I read these rap sheets on all the prisoners at Abu Ghraib and what they were there for. I look down this roster and see petty theft, public drunkenness, forged coalition documents.” Delgado added, “These aren’t terrorists. These aren’t our enemies. They’re just ordinary people, and we’re treating them harshly.” Even U.S. intelligence officers admitted to the Red Cross 70 to 90 percent of Abu Ghraib detainees are being held by mistake. Again, the same pattern of criminal conduct by the Bush regime.

As for domestic terrorists, the FBI admitted in 2005 that it had yet to identify a single Al Qaeda sleeper cell in the entire U.S. “And it hasn’t found any since,” write Cole and Lobel, “unless you count the Florida group arrested in 2006 whose principal step toward an alleged plot to blow up the Sears Tower was to order combat boots and whose only Al Qaeda ‘connection’ was to a federal informant pretending to be Al Qaeda.” In its most ballyhooed “terrorist” case against a U.S. citizen, Jose Padilla was convicted only for attending an Al Qaeda training camp and conspiring to support Muslim rebels in Chechnya and Bosnia before 9/11, not for any of the heinous crimes he was initially charged with planning.

Significantly, Cole and Lobel note in December, 2005, the bipartisan 9/11 Commission gave the Administration “failing or near-failing grades on many of the most basic domestic security measures, including assessing critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, securing weapons of mass destruction, screening airline passengers and cargo, sharing information between law enforcement and intelligence agencies, insuring that first responders have adequate communications,” etc.

Is this just more incompetence or is the White House deliberately lax because it knows the terrorist threat is one it has largely fabricated? In sum, the American people need to demand to know, “Why so few trials?” Are there virtually no trials because, in fact, there are no terrorists? Is the case against the thousands rotting in prisons no stronger than the phony case Bush made against “terrorist” Saddam Hussein with his WMD? Consider this final point: The last “terrorist” strike on U.S. soil was the anthrax attack on Congress in October, 2001 that killed five people — and the anthrax used was traced back to U.S. military facilities, George W. Bush, commander-in-chief.

Sherwood Ross is a Miami, FL-based publicist who has worked as a newspaper reporter, wire service columnist and radio talk show host at WOL, Washington, D.C.

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