Chertoff: "Radical Ideologies" Threaten Internet

By [Kurt Nimmo](#)

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According to Ministry of Homeland Security don Michael Chertoff, "disaffected people living in the US may develop radical ideologies and potentially violent skills over the Internet, something that can present the next major security threat to the nation and to the world," reports [Reuters](#).

"We now have a capability of someone to radicalize themselves over the Internet," he told a meeting of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police. "They can train themselves over the Internet. They never have to necessarily go to [a CIA-ISI created] training camp or speak with anybody else and that diffusion of a combination of hatred and technical skills in things like bomb-making is a dangerous combination," Chertoff said. "Those are the kind of terrorists that we may not be able to detect with spies and satellites."

In order to combat these supposed miscreants, the Ministry will "deploy 20 field agents this fiscal year into 'intelligence fusion centers,' where they [will] work with local police agencies." So-called "fusion centers" are "collaborative efforts to combine and analyze anti-terrorism information from multiple sources" and "have becoming increasingly popular as part of homeland security," writes [Alice Lipowicz](#) for the IT website, Washington Technology. "A number of states, including Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts and New York, currently operate so-called fusion centers, and many more states, such as Missouri, are considering doing so" and are designed to share "information in the criminal justice community," although "[c]ivil libertarians have been critical of the fusion centers because they fear a lack of government accountability about protecting privacy and civil rights in the centers' operation, especially with regard to use of personal data and use of surveillance images," an obvious concern in light of the massive NSA snoop program.

In regard to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, Chertoff told "a packed audience at Harvard Law School's Ames Courtoom" yesterday that the "consequences" (i.e., the dismantlement of the Bill of Rights) "have to be measured with real world decisions when deciding on matters that deal with life or death.... Terrorism in real life doesn't wait until you are done reviewing the evidence," in other words, our rulers will no longer respect the Fourth Amendment and "probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation" and will dispense with court-issued warrants "describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Chertoff went on to criticize the "tools" offered by the Constitution because, of course, everything changed after nine eleven. "Before 9/11, the tools that existed had not been fashioned for a war on terror, but on criminal prosecution," in other words, extraconstitutional "tools," such as illegal wiretapping and massive snooping, including neighborhood "fusion centers," at variance with more than eight hundred years of common

law, are required. "According to Chertoff, Al Qaeda shares similar characteristics with conventional wartime enemies because both have clearly defined political aims, attempt to acquire territory, and are able to inflict damage of wide scope—'three fundamental elements of the current struggle that put it in war,' Chertoff said," reports the Harvard Crimson. Never mind that few can find bona fide "al-Qaeda" terrorists, plots alleged to exist invariably turn out to be bogus or intelligence contrived frame-ups, and not one American citizen has died as a result of a terrorist attack since September 11, 2001 (and, in fact, the government is unable and unwilling to conclusively prove that attack was an "al-Qaeda" terrorist attack).

As the Bush White House averred a few weeks ago, the neocons "will seek ultimately to deny the Internet to the terrorists as an effective safehaven for their propaganda, proselytizing, recruitment, fund-raising, training, and operational planning," as the internet is a "cyber safehaven" (sort of like a cave in Afghanistan). "Our enemies use the Internet to develop and disseminate propaganda, recruit new members, raise and transfer funds, train members on weapons use and tactics, and plan operations. Terrorist organizations can use virtual safehavens based anywhere in the world, regardless of where their members or operatives are located. Use of the Internet, however, creates opportunities for us to exploit. To counter terrorist use of the Internet as a virtual sanctuary, we will discredit terrorist propaganda by promoting truthful and peaceful messages."

It should be noted that Chertoff did not preface his comments about "disaffected people" harboring "radical ideologies" with the phrase "al-Qaeda," as obviously the government considers far more than your run-of-the-mill al-Qaedaite as a "terrorist" hiding out in a "virtual sanctuary." For as NBC revealed last December, "the U.S. military has stepped up intelligence collection inside this country since 9/11, which now includes the monitoring of peaceful anti-war and counter-military recruitment groups."

During the Vietnam War, Christopher Pyle, a former Army intelligence officer, "blew the whistle on the Defense Department for monitoring and infiltrating anti-war and civil rights protests when he published an article in the Washington Monthly in January 1970," NBC notes. A secret 400-page Defense Department document obtained by NBC News "tell me that military intelligence is back conducting investigations and maintaining records on civilian political activity. The military made promises that it would not do this again," Pyle told NBC.

As the Church Committee (the United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 1975) revealed, the CIA, regardless of its charter against domestic activity, created a database on 1.5 million Americans, while the FBI created files on over a million citizens; the FBI carried out five hundred thousand investigations of so-called subversives from 1960 to 1974, without a single court conviction; computers in the NSA monitored every cable sent overseas, or received, by Americans from 1947 to 1975 (and still does, with remarkably increased efficiency); Army intelligence units conducted investigations against one hundred thousand American citizens during the Vietnam War era; the FBI COINTELPRO targeted civil rights activists and Vietnam War dissidents; the IRS allowed tax information to be misused by intelligence agencies for political purposes; intelligence agencies carried out burglaries in the homes and offices of activists; and the CIA infiltrated religious, media, and academic organizations (see America's Secret War: The CIA in a Democratic Society, by Loch K. Johnson, Oxford University Press,1989).

"Given the power granted to the office of the presidency and the unaccountability of the intelligence agencies, widespread illegal domestic operations are certain. We as a people should remember history and not repeat it," writes Verne Lyon, a former CIA undercover operative.

However, as a people, we not only have a bad case of amnesia, we are also easily frightened by phantoms. No doubt many will be alarmed by Chertoff's nameless, and thus all-purpose, "disaffected" virtual terrorists who follow ill-defined "radical ideologies" on the internet.

It was no accident Chertoff left "al-Qaeda" out of the equation.

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