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What To Do With Terrorists

Michael Sean Winters | Nov. 20, 2009 NCR Today

The decision by Attorney General Eric Holder to bring Khalid Sheik Mohammed to justice in a New York courtroom has occasioned all manner of comments, most of them absurd. Finally, today, an op-ed in the Washington Post [1]attains the sublime. Jim Comey and Jack Goldsmith, both former Bush administration officials point out better than I can why Holder?s decision is defensible.

The most salient arguments they make are that the military tribunals are no panacea and the civilian courts have already handled these kinds of cases. Under the military tribunals erected by President Bush, a grand total of three prosecutions have been achieved in eight years. Conversely, Zacarias Moussaoui, a co-conspirator with Khalid Sheik Mohammed, was successfully prosecuted in a federal court as were other terrorists from the infamous ?shoe bomber? Richard Reid to the ?American Taliban? John Walker Lindh.

If you flip the page of the Post you come to two different styles of commentary. It is hard not conclude that Charles Krauthammer is no longer the thoughtful writer of insightful essays. He is no a GOP hack. Eugene Robinson?s commentary is better but also clearly partisan. One of the most refreshing aspects of Comey?s and Goldsmith?s piece is that it shows there are still some people who have not been so infected with partisanship that their judgment is clouded. These former Bush officials are not afraid to defend the decision of an Obama appointee. Their article is worth a read, and a whole lot more.

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[1] http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/19/AR2009111903470.html?hpid=opinionsbox1