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## THE KILLINGS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

by *Jacob G. Hornberger*  
January 29, 2013

This weekend is the Super Bowl, which means that viewers will be treated to the standard line about the troops — that they are over there protecting our rights and freedoms here at home. The sports broadcasters might even intimate that the reason we get to enjoy the football game is that the troops are over there killing people.

The notion that overseas troops are protecting our rights and freedoms is another one of the U.S. government's most successful indoctrination programs. With the exception of libertarians and a handful of liberals, most everyone in America is convinced that the killings in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and elsewhere are for the purpose of keeping us safe and secure here at home, enabling us to continue enjoy sporting events, attend church, conduct business, and enjoy our lives.

The indoctrination even extends to church ministers, people who one would expect to be somewhat more immune to political indoctrination given their primary devotion to God and religious principles. Yet, every Sunday in churches throughout the land, ministers exhort their parishioners to pray for the troops for protecting our rights and freedoms.

Rarely does one hear about a minister asking the congregation to pray for the people whom the troops have killed and are attempting to kill. The reason for that is that the mindset of the

ministers is the same as that of the sports broadcasters — that the U.S. government has to be in the right and that the people whom the troops are killing have to be in the wrong.

That is, there is no independent evaluation of whether the government is doing something wrong. That possibility simply does not enter into the mind of the indoctrinated person.

The truth is that all too many Americans, including ministers, have elevated the troops to the level of an idol or god, one that can do no wrong and one that should never be questioned when it comes to killing people overseas.

Yet, consider this hypothetical. Suppose the U.S. government invaded, say, Yemen for the purpose of establishing abortion clinics. Every day, the troops are conducting abortions within the country, killing thousands of unborn children. Every day, the troops are subjected to attacks by insurgents and terrorists who are trying to rid their country of the invader and occupier.

Can anyone imagine that church ministers would exhort their parishioners in the same way they do today: “Let us pray for the troops, especially those who are in harm’s way, and pray that they return to us safe and sound after completing their mission.”

I don’t think so. I think the ministers would instead say something like, “Let us pray that the government stop engaging in this horrific, sinful conduct and that it stop using the troops in this horrible way. Let us pray that God gives the president, the Pentagon, and the CIA the wisdom to stop what they are doing, withdraw from Yemen, and bring the troops home without killing one more person.”

Yet, when it comes to killing people with the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the drone assassinations in Pakistan and elsewhere, the mindset is completely different. With these killings, all critical thinking and exercise of conscience simply shut down in favor of complete submission to the will and judgment of the national-security state. That’s how the indoctrinated mind works.

Yesterday, I described how Switzerland is a country whose military forces are oriented only to the defense of Switzerland. The idea is that if Switzerland were ever invaded, the Swiss people would rally to the government in the defense of their country, their homes, and their rights and freedoms.

Notice that Swiss troops are not killing people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan, or anywhere else. If someone were to suggest that Switzerland needed to send troops to the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, or Asia to protect the rights and freedoms of the Swiss people, every single Swiss citizen would burst into laughter at such a ridiculous notion.

Notice something else: The Swiss are not being targeted by insurgents, terrorists, communists, or anyone else. The Swiss don’t live their lives in fear or angst over whether the terrorists or communists are coming to get them. They live secure in the knowledge that no nation would dare to invade their country for the simple reason that the Swiss would chew them up and spit

them out, owing to the ability of the well-armed Swiss citizenry to fight and their fierce determination to keep their country free and independent.

So, if U.S. troops aren't protecting the rights and freedom of the American people, then what are they killing all those people for? The answer is simple: they're killing in order to maintain the U.S. government's political and military dominance in other parts of the world.

We're talking about regime-change operations, ones in which the U.S. government claims the "right" to oust foreign regimes and replace them with other regimes. And sanctions and embargoes against other countries. And invasions and occupations. And financial assistance to political groups within other countries. And assassinations of foreign leaders or others.

That's what all the killing is about — not about protecting the rights and freedoms of the American people but rather the "right" of the U.S. government to continue doing those things to people in other countries. After all, keep in mind that the people they're targeting for killing are the ones who are resisting their imperialistic and interventionist activity.

The people they're killing are not invading the United States and trying to conquer our nation. No, all they're doing is resisting the invasions, occupations, sanctions, embargoes, assassinations, torture, humiliation, and other things that come with empire and interventionism. Don't forget, after all, that the terrorist attacks on 9/11 were motivated by the same things that the terrorist attacks on the USS Cole, the U.S. Embassies in East Africa, and the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center were motivated by: U.S. foreign policy — i.e., the things that the national-security state does to people in other parts of the world.

Notice that al-Qaeda and others are not targeting Switzerland or Swiss troops. That's because Switzerland's system is based on defense of Switzerland and the Swiss people, unlike the American system, which is based on foreign empire and interventionism.

Why can't sports broadcasters and church ministers just be honest? Why don't they just praise the troops for protecting the "right" of the U.S. Empire to continue its imperialist and interventionist role in the world? Why must they go through the fake and false charade of proclaiming that the troops and the CIA are killing people overseas to protect our rights and freedoms? It's just one more indoctrination success story.