

Some Call for Lifting of Assassination Ban

By [David G. Savage](#) and [Henry Weinstein](#)

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For the last 25 years, the United States has officially forbidden the carrying out of assassinations abroad, a policy that may not survive this week's terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

The policy, first adopted by President Ford in 1976, followed revelations that the CIA had tried and failed to kill Cuban leader [Fidel Castro](#). There also were fears the botched assassinations might have led to the slaying of President Kennedy.

Though controversial, the assassination ban has lasted through five administrations and a succession of military operations. The U.S. has dropped bombs on Libya and Iraq and fired cruise missiles at Afghanistan and Sudan, all with the hope that certain tyrants or terrorists would perish in the destruction.

But officials have stopped short of using killing squads—or hiring them—to assassinate those who are behind terrorist plots.

This week, some lawmakers have been calling for the repeal of the assassination ban as outdated in a world of international terrorism.

"This is a different type of war," said Sen. Richard C. Shelby of Alabama, the ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee. "They are going to assassinate our people and blow up our buildings unless we eradicate them first."

Rep. [Bob Barr](#) (R-Ga.) had urged President Clinton to repeal the ban after the 1998 attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Saudi exile [Osama bin Laden](#) was believed to be behind those attacks, and he survived the retaliatory cruise missile strikes ordered by Clinton.

Barr said U.S. policy should not "tie the hands" of the CIA by forbidding targeted assassinations. Rather, the authority to carry out such killings means the masterminds "can be eliminated in cases where it is simply impossible to capture them by ordinary means."

While Americans continue to show strong support for the U.S.-led war on [terrorism](#), most say victory cannot be declared in [Afghanistan](#) unless [Osama bin Laden](#) and Taliban leader Mullah Omar are captured or killed, according to the latest NEWSWEEK poll. Many Americans would support the assassination of bin Laden and other terrorists in Afghanistan and around the world, though close to half of those polled fear that such a

policy would increase the likelihood that more terrorist attacks would be launched against U.S. citizens

Though most Americans polled approved of giving U.S. military agencies the power to assassinate terrorists, many acknowledged that such a policy has not led to a decline in terrorist attacks on Israel. Just 19 percent of those polled say Israel's use of assassination and other violence in response to terrorism has actually reduced the amount of terrorism that would have otherwise been carried out. Meanwhile, 32 percent say the policy has backfired and led to more terrorism against Israelis and 37 percent say it has not made much difference either way.

For those who believe that the US would be breaking international law by killing Bin Laden, think again. He is a legitimate military target and it would be perfectly legal to kill him - as legal as it would be to kill any soldier in the course of battle. I also don't believe that Afghanistan was party to the Geneva Convention on war crimes but on that I might be mistaken.

Jeremy, USA

Since President Bush wishes to have Osama Bin Laden assassinated, and China and Russia are now standing shoulder to shoulder with the US in its fight against terrorism, who, pray, do Russia and China regard as terrorists? Expatriate Chechens? The Dalai Lama? I have a nasty suspicion that by the time everybody has submitted a list I'm going to be on there somewhere.

Bernard Pack, Wales

In August 1998 the USA bombed a medicine factory in Sudan. Is the Sudanese government now entitled to assassinate the American President and his cabinet?

M Alamin, Sudan

Persuasive Letter Rubric – US Sponsored Assassination Letter

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

	4	3	2	1
Position Statement	Strongly and clearly states a position statement. Clearly identifies the issue.	Clearly states a position statement. Some references to the issue.	Position statement is not clearly stated. Little or no references to the issue.	Position statement is not easily understood. Has no reference to the issue.
Reasons and Support	Three or more excellent points are made with good support. It is evident the writer put much thought and research into this assignment.	Three or more points are made with support, but the arguments are somewhat weak in places. The writer doesn't persuade completely.	Two points made; shows some preparation, but weak arguments.	Preparation is weak; arguments are weak or missing; and less than three points are made.
Conclusion	Summarizes position in a strong concluding statement.	Summarizes position in a concluding statement.	Concluding statement is a weak summary of position.	Concluding statement makes no reference to personal opinion.
Organization	Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well written, and varied.	Sentence and paragraph structure is generally correct.	Sentence and paragraph structure is inconsistent.	Little or no evidence of sentence or paragraph structure.
Word Choice/Tone	Choice of words that are clear, descriptive, and accurate. No slang is used. Maintains consistent persuasive tone throughout letter. Very respectful tone.	Adequate choice of words that are clear and descriptive. Demonstrates a persuasive tone in parts of the letter. Respectful tone.	Choice of some words that are clear and descriptive. Lacks consistent persuasive tone. Tone is a bit offensive.	Language and tone of letter is unclear and lacks description. Offensive language is used.
Mechanics and Grammar	Contains few, if any punctuation, spelling, or grammatical errors.	Contains several errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar that do not interfere with meaning.	Contains many punctuation, spelling, and/or grammatical errors that interfere with meaning.	Contains many punctuation, spelling, and/or grammatical errors that make the piece illegible.
Letter Structure	Accurately includes all parts of a formal letter (Sender address, date, Recipient Address, Greeting, and Closing). As well as an addressed and stamped envelope.	Includes the parts of a letter, but is missing 1-2 items.	The letter is missing 3-4 items.	The letter is missing 5 or more needed items.

Points Earned: ____/28

Comments:

Information on your Persuasive Letter

1. Audience _____ Form of letter: editorial business

2. Position statement: _____

3. Reasons of support:

A. _____

Support: _____

Support: _____

B. _____

Support: _____

Support: _____

C. _____

Support: _____

Support: _____

Mr. Schoenherr
325 Ohio Street
Huron, Ohio 44839

February 22, 2009

Representative Marcy Kaptur
2186 Rayburn Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kaptur,

Greetings, I am a social studies teacher at Huron City Schools in Huron, Ohio, as well as registered voter. My class and I have been discussing citizenship responsibility; specifically, the need for citizens to stay informed on the issues. My class and I get to discuss and engage in numerous topics regarding current events. Lately, I have been reading and watching the news about former President Bush's wiretapping program. While I realize the need to secure our nation against terrorist threats, I feel you need to pressure President Obama to immediately cease the program because of its unconstitutionality.

First, under the 4th amendment, every citizen has a right to privacy. The government is not allowed to check through our private records without our consent or probable cause. However, cases of abuse have arisen with emerging reports of the program. In one particular case, the phones and meetings of a California antiwar group were monitored and tapped. None of the members have ever committed a crime and no probable cause exists to have such a group watched under the government's eye. It makes me wonder how many other private citizens and groups were monitored without any probable cause? Such abuses of our 4th amendment must stop immediately.

Also, the program violates our Founding Framers' intent of separation of powers and checks and balances. If the executive branch wants to search through private citizens' property, they must receive a search warrant from the judicial branch. However, even members of the former Bush Administration have admitted they never sought search warrants for the wiretappings. This violates separation of powers as well as checks and balances, which makes it an unconstitutional program.

Whatever executive privileges President Bush received after the September 11th terrorists attacks, does not give the executive branch an indefinite blank check to trample upon the principles of the US Constitution. Please pressure President Obama to stop all warrantless wiretapping programs immediately and uphold the ideals of our Constitution. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. Schoenherr