



Spartanburg Herald-Journal

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It's just plain wrong

Your Thursday editorial "Profiling necessary" stated, "The relationship between safety and liberty is a balancing act." In fact, we shouldn't have to choose between freedom and security. Our government should implement security measures that respect civil liberties and the rule of law and make us as safe as possible. Profiling on the basis of race, religion or nationality does neither; it is misguided and ineffective national security policy.

There is no "terrorist profile," contrary to what your editorial implied. Muslims are black, white, Asian, Hispanic (think Jose Padilla), etc., and many Arabs and Arab-Americans are Christian. Furthermore, if we target specific countries, the terrorists will just recruit attackers from other countries not on the list. Profiling can actually undermine our security by lessening community support for government counterterrorism efforts. Terrorists can exploit this injustice to compel further acts of terrorism.

Such profiling diverts resources from more effective measures, not to mention that it's just plain wrong. Security resources should be targeted on individuals whom the government has a factual basis to suspect, which would be more effective and less threatening to our civil liberties than broad, untargeted suspicion. Violating the U.S. Constitution and international law, which protect against racial and religious discrimination, will not make us safer, and it will jeopardize our claim to be the "land of liberty."

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