

04/2013

Re: Legal or Illegal

Dear Editor,

After reading many letters discussing laws and their effects on behavior it seems to me that an important point is missing from these conversations (e.g., drone strikes, torture) . We don't outlaw certain activities because that law will prevent all infractions of said law, but because they deter casual commission of those activities.

For example, we outlaw torture because if it were legal, it would be over utilized and abused. If it were actually necessary at some point in time to torture someone to get vital information to save lives (the ticking time bomb hypothetical), no patriot would hesitate to break the law to save many lives. Likewise we don't eliminate existing speed limits just because we might someday need to race to get an injured person to a hospital in time before they bled to death. We keep speeding illegal and break the law if we absolutely have to, because it's the right thing to do.

It's the same with drone strikes on (or just plain shooting of) of US citizens. It should be illegal because if not, these activities would be too freely and too easily committed. If we really needed to take someone out on US soil because of an imminent attack, what soldier or policeman wouldn't hesitate to break the law to save innocent lives? Make it illegal and it will prevent the many abuses that we see when the rules aren't clear.

John Donovan
Eugene, OR