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SUPREME COURT ATTACKS PROPERTY RIGHTS

On Wednesday, the United States Supreme Court ruled that a city or town can take your home - or church - to allow a private developer to build a shopping mall or office complex. I believe it was the French economist Frederic Bastiat who said, "No man's life or property is safe while the legislature is in session." Today it's the courts that are the principal threat to life, liberty and property.

Under the doctrine of eminent domain, government has always had the power to take private holdings (for fair compensation) for public works - schools, roads, etc. In a 5-4 decision, the court has expanded eminent domain to include private projects which local government believes will generate more tax revenue than current use of the land.

The case involved homeowners in New London, Connecticut. They included a married couple in their 80s who had lived in their house for more than 50 years. The city decided it wanted to take their home and other dwellings so an office complex could be built on the site. A sharply-divided Supreme Court approved the confiscation.

Significantly, the court's three conservatives - Thomas, Scalia and Rehnquist (joined by swing vote O'Connor) - sided with the home owners. The court's five activists - Stevens, Souter, Ginsburg, Kennedy and Breyer - all authorized this gross injustice.

Some libertarians mistakenly believe you can have property rights without traditional morality. The New London case lays to rest that theory. The same Court that has time and again turned its back on the Ten Commandments, has just told local governments: "Thou shalt steal...if it will increase tax revenue."

SUPREME COURT'S IMAGE ERODING

Public regard for the nation's highest court is in steady decline. Given the court's mangling of the Constitution, this skepticism is a healthy development.

According to the Pew Research Center, today, only 57% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the Supreme Court. That's down 11 points from January 2001, when the court issued its controversial ruling in Bush v. Gore, which some argued determined the outcome of the 2000 presidential election.

At the same time, with the possibility of a number of vacancies this year, 47% of the public say the selection of the next Supreme Court justice is "very important to them personally."

That more and more Americans are losing confidence in the High Court is hardly surprising. In recent years alone, the Court has created a constitutional right to homosexual sodomy (a right it said did not exist 17 years earlier), rejected a ban on partial-birth abortion, outlawed non-denominational prayers at public school graduations, and declared that the voters of a state could not prevent municipalities from granting special rights to homosexuals. Next week, the Court

will determine whether or not to allow public display of the Ten Commandments (when camouflaged by secular documents).

We still have a lot of educating to do before the public understands that not only do justices have feet made of clay, but they do not have the final say on the Constitution's meaning. Some believe that better judges are the solution. But, absent accountability, good judges often go bad. We must - and we will - hold judges accountable. Only then will our lives, property and freedom be safe from an increasingly tyrannical judiciary

AIR FORCE ACADEMY INSENSITIVE TO CHRISTIANS

A recently released report found "insensitivity" at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. This doubtless will be used to create an even more hostile environment for Christian cadets.

Based on a complaint by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and with the assistance of the very liberal Yale Divinity School, the Academy conducted an internal investigation of allegations of discrimination against non-Christians.

While the report concluded that there was no "overt discrimination," it found multiple examples of what it termed "insensitivity". These include: some cadets putting flyers at place settings in the dining hall urging fellow cadets to see Mel Gibson's "The Passion," the singing of "God Bless America" at a showing attended by cadets, and a football coach putting up a banner in the locker room proclaiming that he was on "Jesus' team."

The report will be an excuse to further secularize the principal institution for training future Air Force officers. What does the Academy think will sustain our men in combat, if not what once was called the "faith of our fathers"?

Not far from the Academy is Pikes Peak. Standing at the summit in 1892, Katharine Lee Bates was inspired to write "America The Beautiful," whose lyrics

include: "America! America! May God thy gold refine. Till all success be nobleness and every gain divine." Could Bates' song be sung at the Air Force Academy today?

It wasn't long ago that religion was considered a public good, and government encouraged efforts to evangelize. Increasingly, today, religious expression (including witnessing) is considered insensitive at best, and unconstitutional at worst. God grant us revival!

The House Armed Services Committee is holding a hearing on the report on Tuesday, July 28. To register your opinion, contact the chairman, Rep. Duncan Hunter, at his district office (619) 579-3001, or FAX his DC office at (202) 225-0235. The full report can be read online at

http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf.

Help us fight the War on Faith - Get involved by following the action items above and by forwarding this alert to your friends and family. Your financial contributions are always appreciated. [Click here to contribute](#). Dr. Rick Scarborough is the president of [Vision America](#) and acting chairman for the [Judeo-Christian Council for Constitutional Restoration](#). To book speaking engagements, contact the office at 936-560-3900.