

## WHO PUT THE MEDIA IN CHARGE OF OUR SECURITY?

There are some days — a lot, actually — when I wonder who put the media in charge of my family's security. I didn't, and I doubt you did either. If we had, we would have already fired them for doing an absolutely lousy job and for being unpatriotic to boot.

The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post — no surprises there — and the Wall Street Journal recently revealed the existence of a secret terrorist finance surveillance program that began shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The U.S. government had been tracking the money trail that leads back to where terrorist plots are hatched. Hijacking airplanes and crashing them into tall buildings and killing thousands of innocent Americans can be expensive. Now, our friends in the media have dried up that important source of information.

Our protectors in the press have decided that it is more important for us to know about that program — and embarrass the Bush administration, if at all possible — than to stop the source of much of the financing for terrorist activities. Bill Keller, New York Times executive editor, said, "We believe The Times" (Aside: "The" Times is Keller's way of saying there are no other "Times." There is no Financial Times, no Seattle Times, no Washington Times, no Gainesville Times, no Valdosta Daily Times. Just "The" Times. Now you see the problem.) "and others in the press have served the public interest by accurately reporting on these programs so that the public can have an informed view of them." Oh, please.

All that bunch of horse patoots has done is to drive terrorist financing further underground and make the "informed public" subject to more attacks. How that serves the public interest is beyond me, but then again, what do I know? I am just a modest and much-beloved columnist.

This same crowd also decided it was in the public interest that we and the terrorists know that the government had tapped the phones of the bad guys, so we could try to figure out who might be coming stateside next to blow the hell out of something and kill more innocent people. That, too, didn't suit the media. They ratted out the surveillance program, and now the terrorists just have to figure out a new way to put us all in jeopardy. And they will.

For their lack of concern for our personal security, "The" Times and the Washington Post were given Pulitzer Prizes in the "Give the Terrorist a Fighting Chance" category.

Two U.S. soldiers were tortured and killed in Yousefiah, part of the Triangle of Death, recently patrolled by Georgia's 48th Brigade Combat Team. Have you seen much — or any — media indignation? I haven't. Yet U.S. Marines are accused of torture in Haditha, and according to the Media Research Center (and my friend and fellow columnist, Laura Armstrong), the media have devoted three-and-a-half hours to the allegations.

The two incidents inspired Atlanta Journal-Constitution cartoonist Mike Luckovich to create a cartoon featuring a hooded figure holding an American flag while reading a book on torture etiquette to an al-Qaeda member. Get the point? We Americans are no better than al-Qaeda. To show there is no limit to bad taste, the cartoon was placed over the pictures of the two Americans who had been killed.

The reaction has been swift, negative and nationwide, although you would never know it to read the AJC. They printed a half-dozen letters of protest on one day, and it has not been mentioned again.

At the risk of biting the hand that feeds me, the media had better get its poo-poo together, and quick. I make a lot of speeches around the state — more than all the members of the state's media combined, I suspect. Every place I speak, there is a lot of resentment expressed about the media's perceived lack of balance. The media doesn't understand that the public sees through them like a cheap bed sheet. I tell the audience members not to fuss at me. I'm just a modest and much-beloved columnist. Talk to Bill Keller, of "The" Times. He seems to be the one making all the decisions.