

CRY WOLF:

Administration Defends Killing of Wolf Pups

The Biden administration has defended the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services' actions in Idaho after the agency preemptively killed eight wolf pups from Idaho's Timberline pack in response to complaints from a rancher grazing livestock on public lands.

"We are shocked that the Biden administration condones the slaughter of weeks-old wolf pups on public lands at the behest of private livestock interests," said Talasi Brooks of Western Watersheds Project. "Wolves—especially wolf pups—pose no significant threat to livestock."

Conservation groups learned that Wildlife Services started pursuing the pack in May when an agent killed the first three pups at the den site. The agency killed five more pups over the next two months. Conservation groups urged USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to stop Wildlife Services from slaughtering weeks-old wolves on public lands. In yesterday's letter, Secretary Vilsack rejected the request, responding that killing wolf pups is a "humane management option."

"The mission of Wildlife Services 'to improve the coexistence of people and wildlife', not killing defenseless puppies in their den, especially when there are so many effective nonlethal alternatives," said Suzanne Asha Stone, director of the International Wildlife Coexistence Network based in Idaho. **"We are deeply disappointed in this administration's response."**

High school students at Timberline High School in Boise were devastated when they learned that Wildlife Services killed the Timberline pack's pups. The school adopted the pack as its mascot when the school was founded in 1998.

"It's disheartening to see the USDA justifying killing our pack's innocent pups as 'humane management.' The

data from Idaho's Wood River Wolf Project study should've been enough to persuade politicians of the efficacy of nonlethal methods, yet the USDA and Biden administration continue to practice inaction," said Michel Liao, Timberline High School student. **"It's this very passivity that's allowing people to eradicate all the pups from Timberline High School's wolf pack this year on our public lands. It must stop."**

"We tell our students that science is key in wildlife management, yet scientific evidence tells us that killing or disturbing stable wolf packs leads to more livestock conflicts, not less and it undermines our native ecosystems," said Dick Jordan, Timberline High School science advisor. **"We expect more from the Biden administration and our Department of Agriculture. Killing wolf pups is not humane by any sense of the word. And doing so while Idaho is working to eradicate its wolf population is supporting the state's new war on wolves."**

Yet, the Secretary's letter yesterday confirms that Wildlife Services will continue these unscientific and inhumane activities.

"All wolf killing is predicated on a lie that wolves cause significant livestock deaths,"

said Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense. **"They don't. Wolves cause only a fraction of a percent of livestock deaths. And here Secretary Vilsack is compounding the travesty of this misnamed USDA program called 'Wildlife Services' by defending the killing of even pups. It is painfully obvious that Wildlife Services has fully embraced the cruel and self-serving demands of ranchers in Idaho. Americans should be outraged."**

"It's disturbing to see state and federal officials openly supporting the killing of wolf pups."



"There is no scientific rationale for such barbaric measures," said Andrea Zaccardi, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. **"With its new laws clearly intended to decimate our wolf population, it seems that with Idaho's war against wolves, there are no limits to the state's cruelty."**

"The Biden's Administration's response to our groups' concerns was alarming, and the action that the administration stands behind is hideous," said Katie Bilodeau with Friends of the Clearwater. **"There are non-lethal wolf-predation deterrents that scientific testing has shown to be effective. Instead, federal and state officials chose the extreme and dubious alternative of killing pups in hopes that the parents would leave. We are grieved at the inhumane violence that federal and state officials dealt towards a social, family-based species like the wolf."**

"Killing these wolf pups was inhumane, unscientific, and indefensible,"

said Joe Bushyhead with WildEarth Guardians. **"Wolves face enough persecution in Idaho already at the hands of the state. The Biden administration should not be using federal resources to make a bad situation even worse."**

westernwatersheds.org

I BLEW THE WHISTLE BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER

Twenty years later, the specter of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath continues to shape and influence U.S. and world history. Even after two decades, I am still triggered by the "what ifs" of history, with the certain knowledge that 9/11 was preventable and that the United States government utterly failed to provide for the common defense and keep its people out of harm's way.

On reflection, we must ask whether the world is a better place for the enormous response to the terror attacks that day. The latest front-page news of America's evacuation and departure from Afghanistan after almost 20 years is a case study that fully demonstrates the utter hypocrisy and hubris of American exceptionalism.

The failure of the national security state born during the early years of the Cold War to ostensibly protect people and prevent surprises paradoxically created the very conditions for the twin failures of the bright and shining lies of our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This systemic failure also unleashed the largely secret Global War on Terror, including the very dark torture regime and mass surveillance programs, and a host of other "off the books" executive actions supported by the war porn industry and powerful interests to profit and plunder from conflict.

For example, JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) and CIA paramilitary units were greatly expanded in this post 9/11 world for worldwide shadow missions, as was the role of private military security companies like Blackwater Worldwide.

9/11 was also my first day on the job as a National Security Agency senior executive hired from the outside to help meet the enormous demands of the then-nascent digital era.

When I arrived at NSA shortly after 5 a.m. on that fateful morning, little did I know what would happen in just a few short hours — although the warning light was blinking red for three years, ever since then-CIA Director George Tenet issued his memo warning about spectacular asymmetric threats posed by Al Qaeda that were largely ignored by most in the national security arena.

What I also did not know that same morning as I drove into the main NSA complex was how the U.S. would respond to the attacks. But I soon became an eyewitness to decisions at the highest levels of government, up to and including the president of the United States, with America abandoning the bedrock Law of the Land, namely the Constitution. For all intents and purposes the United States unchained itself from its founding principles — the Bill of Rights — after 9/11, and employed state secret executive fiat rules by exception and the use of emergency conditions that justified the breaking of law in the name of national security.

I watched Pandora's Box open up directly in front of me and the furies escape. I could have attempted to shut the lid, ignored what I discovered and went on acting like nothing had happened. However, I could not stand by as an eyewitness to the subversion of the very Constitution. I took an oath to defend, even when it meant defending it against my own government.

Shortly after 9/11, I heard more than mere rumblings about secret electronic eavesdropping and

data mining against Americans that bypassed the Fourth Amendment and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act — the exclusive means in the law for conducting such activity, with severe criminal sanctions when violated. Such shortcuts were not necessary. Lawful alternatives — including the very best of American ingenuity and innovation — actually existed that would have also vastly improved our intelligence capability against legitimate threats and contributed enormously in the duty to warn and keep people out of harm's way.

I became a whistleblower and ended up getting charged under the Espionage Act in 2010, facing down 35 years in prison for allegedly causing exceptionally grave damage to national security for disclosing what was later acknowledged as wholly unclassified information to a reporter. The information I shared regarded secret surveillance, massive fraud, waste, and abuse plus egregious and unconscionable 9/11 intelligence failures and the subsequent cover up regarding NSA and other agencies' culpability.

I blew the whistle on unaccountable and irresponsible government behavior that I believed to be illegal and unconstitutional. To the government, I was a traitor who committed crimes against the state. As an American, however, I could not stand by and become an accessory to the willful subversion of our freedoms.

The government's penchant for operating in secrecy and hiding behind the executive branch "state secrets" doctrine has damaged our long-term national security and national character by sacrificing the general welfare and civil liberties of people, and has given rise to an enormously persistent and profitable military industrial-intelligence-congressional complex.

It is a core precept when taking the oath to support and defend the Constitution as a government employee and providing for the common defense that you do not sell out intelligence or national security to the highest bidder, or keep our nation's decision-makers in the dark, or turn information into a political tool or leave it to self-interest or cover up to protect your own hide from embarrassment and accountability.

Such egregious behavior sends a chilling message about what the government can and will do to those who speak truth to power and turns into a direct form of political repression, the suppression of public interest information and brazen censorship.

Once exposed, these unconstitutional detours are too often justified by vague and undefined claims of 'national security,' aided and abetted by officials' shameless fear mongering while they cover up their own actions and keep them secret from the public.

We must then ask of ourselves the hardest of questions going forward, as the entrails of U.S. Empire show the utter futility of pursuing plunder and profit at the expense of human lives, when the original failure arose from the breakdown in the duty to warn and protect against harm and improve the quality of life for people instead of turning vast tracts of the world into killing fields in the pursuit of "security."

What if the whole edifice of empire projection is a huge scam and grift after spending trillions in treasure while displacing and uprooting tens of millions of people and killing millions on the altars of national security and the military industrial intelligence complex? Is the turning of the Constitutional Republic (for all its flaws and foibles) into an Empire now the overriding *raison d'être* of America today no matter the cost or loss in human life? History may not repeat itself, but if the rise and fall of the Roman Empire is any lesson at all, then history at least rhymes. I fear for the future of what's left of the Republic. What future do you want to keep?

Thomas Drake
responsibletatecraft.org

