

**Americans for Limited Government FOIA Request to
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Regarding "Rightwing Extremism" Report**

- FOIA Request filed April 17, 2009.
- The Department partially fulfilled the request on August 5, 2009, providing responsive materials corresponding to points 2 and 3 of the request. (All data, studies, reports, or other documents regarding data and other information reviewed regarding specific groups used to formulate the report.)
- ALG asked for this information to see what background materials were reviewed by the Department to come to their conclusions.
- The information from DHS is telling in that it shows a complete lack of substantive analysis that went into this particular report, and no distinction between credible and incredible threats.
- Instead of reviewing hard data and raw intelligence the Department apparently had someone surf the internet looking for news stories. The Department in their memo then took anecdotes from these news stories and, using inductive reasoning, extrapolated that the anecdotes were indicators of a larger problem. The obvious flaw with this type of analysis is that anyone could surf the internet for a couple hours and depending where one went to find news stories to support literally any conclusion.
- Among the websites used by the Department as "extremist chatter" is a news portal known for outlandish and fictional news items, www.whatdoesitmean.com. While the material is highly unusual, it is hardly an authoritative source upon which to base an official threat assessment from the federal government.
- The Department used its conclusions to smear a very large percentage of the U.S. population who believe in conservative ideals such as keeping the federal government within the bounds set by the U.S. Constitution. Those who believe in such ideals are labeled extremists. And veterans were labeled as recruiting targets of extremists.
- The Department used a fatally flawed methodology to arrive at its conclusions. The DHS should be using credible intelligence sources, hard data, and real statistics rather than surfing the net to see what news stories happen to turn up to support a pre-determined conclusion.