

Balancing National Security and Civil Liberties

Essential Question: How does the balance between ensuring national security and protecting civil liberties shift after a terrorist attack?

National security: This is a collective term for the defense and foreign relations of a country, as well as the protection of the interests of a country.

Civil liberties: These are the rights guaranteed by the laws of a country, as in the U.S. by the Bill of Rights.



President George W. Bush Addresses the Nation, September 11, 2001:

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothetation.htm>



Where do these pictures take place?

What is happening in these pictures?

How do these pictures relate to what happened on September 11th?

The U.S. Congress created the Transportation Security Administration in November 2001. Airports around the country implemented rigorous security screening procedures for passengers and luggage in an effort to prevent future attacks.

What does this response by the U.S. government tell you about the concerns of the country immediately after 9/11?

The USA Patriot Act of 2001 was passed on October 12, 2001, a month after the 9/11 attacks—it took only two days for the act to pass the House and Senate. The purpose of the act is to deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world by enhancing law enforcement investigatory tools, but specific parts are required to be reauthorized periodically by Congress. Some people believe it does not go far enough to enhance national security while others believe it goes too far by violating civil liberties.

How does this balance between national security and civil liberties manifest itself today?

Can you think of another time in history when national security and civil liberties have come into conflict?