

Dilemma of constitutional democracies defending against disguised attacks from non-state sources

To protect our country against hostile attacks

such as

- cyberattacks on electric grid (power blackout) or air traffic system
- our cruise ships (or airliners) blown up
- our embassies attacked
- our citizens kidnapped
- hostile crowds attack our businesses overseas
- biotech disease attack on agricultural crops growing in our country
- biotech or chemical attacks on our cities where source identified.

from ambiguous non-state sources

Either

We refrain from retaliating against the source groups or states or using preemptive attacks

because

we are held to "public legitimate use of force" by
1) international law and custom make such strikes illegal

- 2) our friends and allies refuse to help or approve
- 3) we are dissuaded by internal political opposition
- 4) our internal laws prohibit that kind of behavior

in which case

1) attackers will have considerable freedom to attack our internal (domestic) infrastructure and our citizens and property overseas because we have no effective deterrence or punishment

2) in order to increase our preventative intelligence there will be increased surveillance of our own citizens leading to possible (probable) violations at legal and constitutional protections

Or

We attack the sources even if they are in other states that may be neutral (even preemptively)

because

If we don't retaliate we will appear weak and vulnerable to any kind of disguised attack

in which case

1) we become a state that acts outside of international norms and law

2) our allies will begin to desert us (by not supporting our actions)

3) we would increasingly have to act alone internationally to protect our interests, safety, and trade

4) and, finally, become an international hegemonic pariah which will attract increasingly more disguised hostile attacks from ambiguous sources

in either case this will

weaken our security and weaken our internal freedoms hence change the nature of our society

weaken our security in the long run making us more of a fortress state