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In light of the terrorist attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, racial profiling has emerged on a global scale once again. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, “Racial Profiling is any police or private security practice in which a person is treated as a suspect because of his or her race, ethnicity, nationality or religion.” In current times, racial profiling is directed primarily towards Arabs or Muslims as a means of curtailing terrorism and protecting national security (Farag). However, racial profiling does not effectively combat the evolving threat of terrorism; in fact, it breeds terrorism in hostile areas. The response of racial profiling renders the United States even more vulnerable through disregarding the true dangers and causing distrust and animosity among those who are profiled.

Racial profiling can be counterproductive in law enforcement because it creates the impression that only those of a certain race could be possible suspects. When police officers single out a specific race, they are more likely to disregard probable suspects of a different race. Even though people not of the race being profiled may exhibit behaviors that are highly suspicious, the police officers may not adequately investigate those suspects because they do not fit the profile. For instance, when law enforcement agencies around the country were searching for the person responsible for the Oklahoma City Bombings, Timothy McVeigh, the real criminal, was initially not considered because these agencies were searching for someone of Arab descent. In this case, the investigators became so intent on searching for someone who fit the profile that they paid more attention to nationality than they did actual criminal behavior. Luckily, after

months of searching, Timothy McVeigh was captured, regardless of the mistaken profile (Lobe). Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Many guilty criminals are undoubtedly still at large because of these misleading racial profiles. Racial profiling cannot possibly protect our nation nor prevent terrorism when it directly impedes upon the ability of law enforcement to investigate potential threats.

Under the Constitution of the United States, every person is entitled to equal treatment under the law. However, racial profiling violates this civil liberty. In fact, many international organizations consider racial profiling to be a violation of human rights. Because of racial profiling, people of a certain racial group have been discriminated against by law enforcement officials and individual citizens. Over 32 million Americans have been subjected to this obtrusive practice (Amnesty International). Such a practice is reminiscent of the Japanese internment during World War II, in which thousands of Japanese Americans were detained because they were considered a threat due to their race (Siggins). Racial profiling has not yet reached such extremes, but there is little difference in the ideology. Despite the mantra of the United States' legal system, "innocent until proven guilty," entire communities are considered suspect until proven otherwise, simply because of the color of their skin. While the United States claims to be the champion of democracy and freedom throughout the world, vital values have been easily sacrificed in the name of security. But how can the United States attempt to make the world more secure when it exhibits such a glaring contradiction? The practice of racial profiling has become a liability as human rights organizations around the world call for the United States to end this harmful policy. This

practice continues to hinder the international efforts to ensure freedom and end oppression.

Because of racial profiling, many non-white communities have been alienated from law enforcement. The people in these communities feel that they can no longer trust police officers; they are hesitant to assist law enforcement because they feel that these officials could turn against them at any moment. The most useful tool in fighting crime and terrorism is an alert public that reports any suspicious activity, and yet law enforcement is throwing this tool away for an archaic policy (Friedman). These communities are not only disenfranchised; they have also become angry because of this unfair treatment. The animosity towards the United States by the rest of the world is fueled by such discriminatory actions. In fact, racial profiling creates the kind of animosity that fosters terrorism and anti-Americanism. Those who previously viewed America as the land of the free may be tempted to reconsider their opinions. When faced with such obvious violations of civil liberties, they now view America as hypocritical and imperialist. Such views will prove devastating in the War on Terror.

In this new age, military power will no longer ensure security. The War on Terror is a battle for the hearts and minds of the people around the world. As long as there are people who continue to hate America as a nation, terrorism will flourish. Terrorism will only cease to exist when there are no longer any communities to support it. Thus, the current policy of the United States government permitting racial profiling directly hinders the War on Terror and, in general, progress towards peace throughout the world. In law enforcement agencies which hope to curtail crime, racial profiling is entirely



counterproductive because it creates a focus on nationality rather than on criminal behavior. Racial profiling conflicts with the ideals of American democracy and freedom, and violates the Constitution of the United States, the crux of civil liberties. This practice violates human rights and alienates the very people who are in the best position to report threats to peace. This is a grave injustice which should be remedied as soon as possible. The United States government should immediately ban racial profiling in all its forms. Until government officials take a public stance against this harmful policy, it will continue to infest American society.

As Benjamin Franklin once said, “Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both.” Although racial profiling was created under the premise of protecting the United States from foreign threats, it does little to accomplish this goal. In fact, the opposite is true; racial profiling directly impedes the security of our entire world. As long as the United States continues to violate civil liberties through this counterproductive practice, our world will remain unstable. However, if we as a people are able to restore justice by ending racial profiling and making amends for the problems which it has created, we can continue upon the path for peace throughout our world.

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