

Smarter Sentencing

NEW YORK TIMES Editorial: You know a transformational moment has arrived when the attorney general of the United States makes a highly anticipated speech on a politically combustible topic and there is virtually no opposition to be heard.

That describes the general reaction to Eric Holder Jr.'s announcement on Monday that he was ordering "a fundamentally new approach" in the federal prosecution of many lower-level drug offenders. What once would have elicited cries of "soft on crime" now drew mostly nods of agreement. As Mr. Holder said, it's "well past time" to take concrete

steps to end the nation's four-decade incarceration binge — the result of harsh sentencing laws enacted in response to increased violent crime in the late 1960s and 1970s...

In Mr. Holder's words, "too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long, and for no truly good law enforcement reason."

Many criminal-justice experts have long felt the same way. What made Mr. Holder's speech timely and important was that it reflected a fundamental shift in thinking about crime and punishment at the highest levels of government...

Edward Snowden: A positive outcome

When word first broke about Edward Snowden's illegal revelations of what many perceive as excessive national security infringements on privacy rights, **NewsLanc** quipped that they "*Should give Snowden a medal and then shoot him.*"

We also opined that while the Obama Administration might be publicly seeking Snowden's return, it would in fact be glad to have some country take him off its hands, provided there would be an understanding that there would be no more security leaks.

So President Barack Obama may symbolically be declining to have a private meeting with President Vladimir Putin over the Russian providing sanctuary for Snowden, but these two leaders probably have a tacit understanding that we don't really mind at all.

As for **NewsLanc**, we withdraw our suggestion that Snowden receive a medal since we aren't able to shoot him. While in general we disapprove of security leaks, in this case he does have our gratitude. The country is better off for his revelations.

Private lottery not exactly in demand

WE.CONNECT.DOTS: By Dick Morris

Other than current governor Republican Tom Corbett and former governor Democrat Ed Rendell, who wants to privatize the Pennsylvania lottery?

The only other “enthusiasts” appear to be businesses and consultants who would gain by such an action. Rendell consults with Britain’s Camelot Global Services LLC, the sole vendor that, in Corbett’s opinion, could competently replace state employees and run the lottery.

Corbett is so convinced that Camelot Global can run it better than anyone else he tried to hand the Brits a no-bid contract whereby the firm would handle about \$100 billion in sales over the next two decades...

At best, Corbett is looking for a boost at next year’s governor election where he could say he did it to raise more funds for senior citizens’ programs. To be so helpful to the elderly, Corbett was prepared to ignore a legislature controlled by his own party. He attempted to bypass

the state constitution, so claims

Kathleen Kane, first Democrat to get elected Attorney General, just last year.

Kane refused to sign the contract. Corbett decided to come up with a procedure more acceptable to other government partners. He remains wedded to Camelot, however. In July Corbett’s staff negotiated the seventh extension of Camelot’s offer.

Even in Texas, Tea Party lawmakers claim government lotteries are a tax on the poor...

Someone may have also reminded them that lotteries contribute to our enormous shift of wealth. New millionaires are created, but certainly at the expense of millions of other people. The Texas lottery was re-authorized this year...

Corbett’s hopes for a privatized lottery dimmed last month when it was announced PA lottery sales and profits had set a new record, for the second year in a row

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