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The Detention Power

Stephen I. Vladeck†

It would indeed be ironic if, in the name of national defense, we would sanction the subversion of one of those liberties... which makes the defense of the Nation worthwhile.

INTRODUCTION

Concerns over the proper separation of powers—the delicate interplay between the roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government—have inundated the legal landscape in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and rightly so. Never is the correct balance of competing governmental interests more imperiled than during times of trouble, and there is little doubt that, more formal legal terminology aside, the past couple of years have been just that.

That the Constitution confers considerable power upon the government to take decisive action during such troubled times is, by now, a foregone conclusion. But just how much?...
conclusion and an unquestionable fact.\textsuperscript{5} One of these powers is what might be called the “detention” power—the authority to incarcerate or otherwise restrain individuals without a preexisting statutory basis—e.g., criminal laws or civil commitment statutes.\textsuperscript{6} This detention power is of enormous significance, for it allows the government to deprive individuals of their most sacred liberty—their freedom—without affording what we have come to think of as “normal” procedural protections or judicial review. On its face, invocation of the detention power is tantamount to an assertion that the exigency of the situation justifies the abrogation of due process.

In the aftermath of September 11, the Bush Administration has advanced just such a claim—that the exigency justifies the detention\textsuperscript{7}—in its military confinement of hundreds of “enemy combatants,”\textsuperscript{8} including, as of fall 2003, two U.S. citizens held at Navy brigs within the United States, one non-citizen also detained at a South Carolina Navy Brig, and hundreds of non-citizens detained at the U.S. Naval Station at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Invoking “the president’s ... commander-in-chief responsibilities under the Constitution” as “[t]he president’s authority to detain enemy combatants, including U.S. citizens,”\textsuperscript{9} the Administration has held these “enemy combatants” incommunicado, without charges, without counsel, and without due process, for, in most cases, well over two years.\textsuperscript{10}


\textsuperscript{6} I should be clear, from the outset, that by the “detention” power, I do not mean the actual authority to detain individuals initially, be they combatants on the battlefield or suspected terrorists within the United States. The detention power that this Note is concerned with is the power to detain beyond those periods normally allowed by the Constitution, other statutes, or international law. See, e.g., 18 U.S.C. §§ 3161, 3164 (2000) (mandating, as part of the Speedy Trial Act, time limits on detention without charges in the federal criminal system). For lawful combatants whose belligerency is not in doubt, international law generally allows their detention as prisoners of war until the end of hostilities. See infra Section II.B (discussing the authority to detain enemy citizen prisoners of war).

\textsuperscript{7} The exigency of the “war on terror” has been invoked as the grounds for a whole host of policy changes. For detailed accountings of these, see FIONA DOHERTY ET AL., LAWYERS COMM. FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, ASSESSING THE NEW NORMAL: LIBERTY AND SECURITY FOR THE POST-SEPTEMBER 11 UNITED STATES (2003), http://www.lchr.org/pubs/descriptions/Assessing/AssessingtheNewNormal.pdf.

\textsuperscript{8} A separate issue in these cases, as we will see, is the extent to which “enemy combatant” is a term with its own dubious meaning. See infra note 92; see also infra text accompanying note 190.


\textsuperscript{10} Whereas the detentions received little initial attention from the academy, many recent works, mostly student-written, have focused on specific aspects of the two cases. See, e.g., Jordan Paust, Judicial Power To Determine the Status and Rights of Persons Detained Without Trial, 44 HARV. INT’L L.J. 503 (2003); Irma Alicia Cabrera Ramirez, Comment, Unequal Treatment of United States Citizens: Eroding the Constitutional Safeguards, 33 GOLDEN GATE U. L. REV. 207 (2003); Nickolas A. Kacprowski, Note, Stacking the Deck Against Suspected Terrorists: The Dwindling Procedural Limits on the Government’s Power To Indefinitely Detain United States Citizens as Enemy Combatants, 26 SEATTLE U. L. REV. 651 (2003); Thomas J. Lepri, Note, Safeguarding the Enemy Within: The Need for Procedural Protections for U.S. Citizens Detained as Enemy Combatants Under Ex parte Quirin, 71 FORDHAM L. REV. 2565 (2003); Samantha A. Pitts-Kiefer, Note, Jose Padilla: Enemy Combatant or Common Criminal?, 48 VILL. L. REV. 875 (2003); Alejandra Rodriguez, Comment, Is the War on Terrorism Compromising Civil Liberties? A Discussion of Hamdi and Padilla, 39 CAL. W. L. REV. 379
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This Note argues that such an inherent, constitutional executive detention power, particularly as invoked against U.S. citizens, simply does not exist. Rather, even in emergencies, the various forms of the detention power—irrespective of the detaining authority—have always belonged to Congress, to delegate or to restrain as it sees fit. To support this claim, this Note constructs a historical narrative of the detention power in the United States, beginning with the Founding, and the various forms the detention power takes, or may be argued to take, in the Constitution. As the narrative demonstrates, from the earliest moments of the Republic, it was understood that the power to authorize detentions, even during wartime, was a power emphatically vested in Congress, not the President. The actual act of detention was the responsibility of the executive branch, but only when Congress had, in some form, previously authorized the detention itself. Up until the Civil War, the debate centered on the Suspension Clause of the Constitution, which precludes suspension of the writ of habeas corpus "unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it," whereas, during World War II, the power took several different forms. Most notorious was the internment of tens of thousands of Americans of Japanese descent, but equally important were the detention and trial of Nazi saboteurs (including two U.S. citizens), the imposition of martial law in Hawaii, and the confinement of U.S. citizen enemy prisoners of war.

As I argue, one of the heretofore overlooked common threads underlying


11. Though there is certainly no moral imperative that requires such a distinction based on citizenship, there are significant statutory and constitutional differences between the government's power as to the detention of its own citizens and its power to detain non-citizens, especially those outside the territorial United States. Even within the United States, the Alien Enemy Act of 1798, 50 U.S.C. §§ 21-24, allows the President to deport alien enemies during wartime without due process or judicial review. See infra note 40 (discussing the Alien Enemy Act). Further, non-citizens identified as terrorists may be detained for a short period—no more than seven days—without charges under certain, statutorily-prescribed conditions. See Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required To Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-56, § 412, 115 Stat. 272, 350-52 (codified at 8 U.S.C.A. § 1226a (West 2003)); see also Shirin Samar, Note, Patriot or Unconstitutional? The Mandatory Detention of Aliens Under the USA Patriot Act, 55 STAN L. REV. 1419 (2003) (providing an overview and an assessment of the mandatory detention provisions). See generally DAVID COLE, ENEMY ALIENS: DOUBLE STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM (2003) (surveying the non-citizen issues).

Because of these fundamental differences, this Note focuses on the detention power as it applies to the detention of U.S. citizens only, though many of the conclusions can be juxtaposed onto the cases of the Guantánamo detainees. Thus far, however, each habeas petition filed on their behalf has been dismissed on jurisdictional grounds. See, e.g., Al Odah v. United States, 321 F.3d 1134 (D.C. Cir. 2003), cert. granted, 124 S. Ct. 534 (2003) (Nos. 03-334, 03-343). The case of Ali Saleh Kahlah Al-Marri, the non-citizen detained in South Carolina, raises many of the same policy issues, even if the legal issues are distinct. See Al-Marri v. Bush, 274 F. Supp. 2d 1003 (C.D. Ill. 2003).

all of these various categories of detention was the role, in each case, of Congress. Courts may have historically looked to the legislature as an afterthought, desperate to somehow justify their wartime deference to the executive, but it is immensely significant that they looked in that direction at all, rather than deferring, as they easily could have, to a broad conception of unilateral executive power. A proper understanding of this historical relationship further helps to understand the importance of the Emergency Detention Act of 1950, its repeal in 1971, and the contemporaneous codification of 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a), which mandates that “[n]o citizen shall be imprisoned or otherwise detained by the United States except pursuant to an Act of Congress.” As this Note argues, § 4001(a) marked a fundamental turning point in the history of the detention power, for, to whatever extent the constitutional role of Congress was implicitly mandated prior to 1971, § 4001(a) fundamentally and undeniably reaffirms the constitutional dynamic envisioned by the Framers.

With that in mind, in Part IV, the Note turns to the present U.S. citizen “enemy combatant” cases, Hamdi and Padilla. This Note is not primarily about these two cases, nor does it attempt to be. Even as it goes to press, further proceedings are pending in each before the Supreme Court and the Second Circuit, respectively. And yet, it would be impossible to understand the importance of the argument set forth in Parts I, II, and III without understanding the full scope of the claims advanced by the Bush Administration in these instant cases.

Thus far, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (in Hamdi) and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (in Padilla) have upheld the facial legality of the detentions, and have focused much—if not most—of their attention on other issues. In Hamdi, questions about the so-called “battlefield” distinction dominate, along with concerns over the proper evidentiary standard, whether Hamdi has actually admitted that he was captured in a zone of active combat, who should have standing to press Hamdi’s claims in court, and so on. In Padilla, much of the legal wrangling thus far has focused on procedural issues, including proper venue, jurisdiction, and, most controversially, access to counsel.

14. My earlier piece on the subject focused more directly, albeit in a more limited fashion, on the specific arguments at issue in those two cases, as do many of the other pieces thus far discussing either case. See sources cited supra note 10.
15. See Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi IV), 337 F.3d 335 (4th Cir. 2003), petition for cert. filed, No. 03-6696 (U.S. Oct. 1, 2003); Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi III), 316 F.3d 450 (4th Cir. 2003), rev’d 243 F. Supp. 2d 527 (E.D. Va. 2002); Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi II), 296 F.3d 278 (4th Cir. 2002); Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi I), 294 F.3d 598 (4th Cir. 2002).
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Yet, underlying everything in these cases are two fundamental questions that have been too quickly dismissed: Who has the power to authorize the detention of these two U.S. citizens, and has that power been properly exercised? Whether the detentions satisfy various constitutional requirements—such as due process—are, at their core, questions of application. Whether the detentions are constitutional on their face is a separate question altogether, one that deserves more attention, and, indeed, one that should be answered at the threshold. If there is no such thing as an executive constitutional detention power, then the existence of unambiguous congressional authorization is a manifest necessity. To satisfy this burden, the government has invoked two different statutes, neither of which, as I show, demonstrates congressional acquiescence in the detentions.

Instead, because of § 4001(a), Congress’s failure to specifically invoke the detention power to authorize the extra-judicial confinement of U.S. citizen “enemy combatants” is tantamount to a rejection of the Bush Administration’s independent authority thereto. To be clear, I do not mean to suggest that there is no constitutional detention power, and that § 4001(a) creates statutory authority out of thin air. Instead, this Note seeks to demonstrate that the Constitution clearly creates a detention power, but vests it in Congress, and that no subsequent statutory or jurisprudential development casts this allocation in any serious doubt. Indeed, what is at stake in these cases is not the interaction between § 4001(a) and the executive’s constitutional authority, but rather the executive’s usurpation of an authority that has always belonged to Congress. Though the executive is, and always has been, the detaining authority, the detention power itself belongs to Congress, and to Congress alone.

Finally, in the Conclusion, I consider the proper place of the judiciary in such troubled times. As Part IV demonstrates, the courts have thus far been loath to interfere with the actions of the executive branch in conducting the so-called “war on terror.” Yet, is this the role that the courts are supposed to play? Is this a role that we want them to play?

It is hard to overstate the significance of the issues implicated here, even if some of the principals have urged the opposite. At stake are two of our most basic constitutional precepts: the proper separation of powers between the


17. See, e.g., Padilla II, 243 F. Supp. 2d at 57 (Mukasey, C.J.) (“Those to whom images of catastrophe come... easily might take comfort in recalling that it is a year and a half since September 11, 2001, and Padilla’s is not only the first, but also the only case of its kind. There is every reason not only to hope, but also to expect that this case will be just another of the isolated cases, like Quirin, that deal with isolated events and have limited application.”). This statement is all the more ironic because it is an expansive reading of Quirin that is one of the major issues in these cases. See infra Section II.A; cf. David Cole, The New McCarthyism: Repeating History in the War on Terrorism, 38 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 1, 28 (2003) (“Those who claim that the United States has avoided the mistakes of the past in its current war on terrorism have failed to look beneath the surface.”).
executive and the legislature, and the individual right to not be deprived of personal liberty without due process of law. Though much of the history this Note traces tangentially implicates the latter, the underlying imperative is undoubtedly the former—the importance of the proper separation of powers after September 11. As James Madison warned,

No political truth is certainly of greater intrinsic value, or is stamped with the authority of more enlightened patrons of liberty, than that... the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.\(^\text{18}\)

Obviously, the extra-judicial detention of two U.S. citizens does not a tyrannical regime make, yet this does not mean that there is no cause for concern. Though “... the world has changed since Sept[ember] 11, ... the values this country was founded on have not. Fear is no guide to the Constitution. We must fight the enemies of freedom abroad without yielding to those at home.”\(^\text{19}\)

I. THE DETENTION POWER THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR

Without question, the Framers, in drafting the Constitution, clearly provided the federal government with the power to detain its own citizens without due process, without a right to counsel, and even without access to the courts, in certain, limited times of national emergency.\(^\text{20}\) As the primary manifestation of this intent, the Suspension Clause of the Constitution, conceived of as a defense against a tyrannical government,\(^\text{21}\) explicitly precludes suspension of the writ of habeas corpus “unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.”\(^\text{22}\) When such conditions existed, the writ could be suspended, but only when the Union was in dire straits.\(^\text{23}\) Thus, the question that dominated the first century of detention-
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related jurisprudence was not whether such a power existed, but rather in which branch such power was properly vested, even though the Suspension Clause is part of Article I—those provisions pertaining to Congress.24

A. The Suspension Clause and the Detention Power in the Early Republic

Neither Congress nor the courts had much of an opportunity, prior to the onset of the U.S. Civil War, to speak to the nature of the detention power. Two early cases, however, Ex parte Bollman25 and Brown v. United States,26 are quite illustrative, as the Marshall Court twice affirmed the importance of Congress in the detention scheme.

Bollman arose out of the fabled “Burr Conspiracy,” when Vice President Aaron Burr, at the end of President Thomas Jefferson’s first term in office, left the government and started an uprising in the western states and territories.27 In December 1806, James Wilkinson, the American military commander in New Orleans, arrested Samuel Swartwout and Dr. Erick Bollman, two of Burr’s alleged co-conspirators.28 Wilkinson subsequently ignored two writs of habeas corpus, one from a territorial court in New Orleans and one from a federal judge in Charleston, South Carolina, and transported the prisoners to Washington to stand trial for treason. Eventually, after attempts to pass a bill suspending the writ failed,29 the government applied to the D.C. circuit court for an arrest warrant, to which a divided panel agreed.30 The prisoners in turn filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in the Supreme Court, challenging the legality of their arrest and confinement pending indictment.

Bollman, the first major Supreme Court decision to consider the

concurring) (seizing on the Suspension Clause as the only express constitutional grant of emergency power to the executive). As one early member of Congress put it, suspension was meant to be limited to “instances in which the judges themselves were a part of the rebellion.” DAVID P. CURRIE, THE CONSTITUTION IN CONGRESS: THE JEFFERSONIANS, 1801-1829, at 132 (2001) (citing 16 ANNALS OF CONG. 414 (1807) (statement of Rep. Nelson)).

24. The role of Congress was indeed explicit in early drafts of the provision. See Developments in the Law—Federal Habeas Corpus, 83 HARV. L. REV. 1038, 1264 (1970) (“[i]t is fairly clear that the suspension clause itself was addressed exclusively to Congress: the original motion for a habeas clause mentioned Congress expressly, as did some subsequent proposals; there is no indication in the debates that the omission of reference to Congress in the clause finally adopted was intended to broaden its applicability.” (footnotes omitted)); see also DUKER, supra note 20, at 131-32.

25. 8 U.S. (4 Cranch) 75 (1807).


27. See generally THOMAS PERKINS ABERNATHY, THE BURR CONSPIRACY (1954) (surveying the history). President Jefferson had considered a partial suspension of the writ in some cases arising from the incident, but, believing that only Congress could do so, he backed down when the House rejected a suspension bill that had passed in the Senate. See Rex A. Collings, Jr., Habeas Corpus for Convicts—Constitutional Right or Legislative Grace?, 40 CAL. L. REV. 335, 340 (1952) (discussing the background of the proposed Jefferson suspension); see also CURRIE, supra note 23, at 131-33 (same).

28. See Eric M. Freedman, Milestones in Habeas Corpus (pt. 1), 51 ALA. L. REV. 531, 559 (2000). Indeed, Wilkinson “was himself heavily and discreditably involved in the alleged events.” Id.

29. See id. at 559-61 (discussing the background); see also Collings, supra note 27, at 340.

constitutional dynamic of the writ of habeas corpus, was primarily concerned
with the Supreme Court’s jurisdiction to issue the writ, especially after it had
limited its original jurisdiction in *Marbury v. Madison*, along with the
separate—but no less important—question of whether federal courts could
issue writs against state proceedings where no underlying federal claim existed,
and vice versa. Though Chief Justice Marshall’s treatment of both issues has
met with significant criticism, one pronouncement from *Bollman* has not. One
of the arguments raised at bar had been whether the writ had been suspended,
especially during the pendency of the litigation below. Responding to this
assertion at the end of his opinion for the Court, Marshall concluded that “If at
any time the public safety should require the suspension of the powers vested
by this act in the courts of the United States, it is for the legislature to say so.
That question depends on political considerations, on which the legislature is to
decide.” Thus, Chief Justice Marshall emphatically placed the Suspension
Power in the hands of Congress, even if he did so in dicta.

Whereas *Bollman* reached the issue of which branch possessed the
Suspension Power, another early Marshall Court decision also invoked the role
of Congress in sanctioning executive seizures of persons and property. At issue
in *Brown v. United States* was whether the U.S. government could condemn
British property captured as a result of an embargo authorized by Congress
during the War of 1812 that was not intended to act on foreign property. As
Chief Justice Marshall, again writing for the Court, set out, “[t]he questions to
be decided by the Court are: 1st. May enemy’s property, found on land at the
commencement of hostilities, be seized and condemned as a necessary
consequence of the declaration of war? 2d. Is there any legislative act which
authorizes such seizure and condemnation?”

Marshall proceeded to answer both questions in the negative. To the first
question, he concluded:

That the declaration of war has only the effect of placing the two nations in a state
of hostility, of producing a state of war, of giving those rights which war confers;
but not of operating, by its own force, any of those results, such as a transfer of
property, which are usually produced by ulterior measures of government, is fairly
deducible from the enumeration of powers which accompanies that of declaring
war. ‘Congress shall have power’—‘to declare war, grant letters of marque and
reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water.’

31. 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 137 (1803).
32. See, e.g., FREEDMAN, supra note 21, at 20-28.
33. See, e.g., *Bollman*, 8 U.S. (4 Cranch) at 91-92.
34. Id. at 101 (emphasis added).
35. In his 1833 *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States*, Justice Story espoused a
similar view. See 3 JOSEPH STORY, COMMENTARIES ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES
§ 1336 (photo. reprint 1991) (Boston, Hilliard, Gray & Co. 1833).
36. 12 U.S. (8 Cranch) 110 (1814).
37. Id. at 123.
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... If [the latter power] extends to rules respecting enemy property found within the territory, then we perceive an express grant to congress of the power in question as an independent substantive power, not included in that of declaring war. 38

Thus, “the declaration of war does not, of itself, authorize proceedings against the persons or property of the enemy found, at the time, within the territory.” 39 In one of the critical passages of the opinion, Marshall next went on to cite various acts of Congress for support, showing how Congress had additionally authorized, in the Alien Enemy Act of 1798, 40 the detention and deportation of alien enemies within the United States during wartime, and how, in 1812, it also authorized the President to make “arrangements for the safe keeping, support, and exchange of prisoners of war.” 41 If these were independent war powers of the President that came part and parcel with the congressional declaration of war, Marshall asked, why would Congress have acted to independently authorize or delegate them? 42 Thus, as Marshall wrote, the right of the sovereign in wartime “to take the persons and confiscate the property of the enemy” is “an independent substantive power” of Congress, and not the executive. 43 Any argument that Brown was limited to wartime condemnation of property, and not to the detention of combatants, was precluded by the Brown Court itself. “War gives an equal right over persons and property,” Chief Justice Marshall concluded, and thus the constitutional limitations on seizures of either must be the same. 44

Brown, one of a number of interesting military authority cases arising out of the War of 1812, 45 thus stands for two propositions of undeniable

38. Id. at 125-26 (emphasis added).
39. Id. at 126 (emphasis added). This argument thus expanded on the Court’s earlier holding in Little v. Barreme, 6 U.S. (2 Cranch) 170, 178-79 (1804), that the President lacked authority in excess of that provided by Congress to make maritime captures during a conflict with France.
41. See Act of July 6, 1812, ch. 128, 2 Stat. 777 (repealed 1817).
42. Brown, 12 U.S. (8 Cranch) at 128-29. Similarly, the Militia Act of 1792, ch. 33, 1 Stat. 271 (as amended by the Act of Feb. 28, 1795, ch. 36, 1 Stat. 424) authorized the President to use such of the militias of the several states to repel invasions or otherwise suppress rebellions as he saw fit, and today’s version, codified at 10 U.S.C. § 332, also authorizes the use of the federal armed forces. See 10 U.S.C. § 332. If the executive’s constitutional war power included as inherent powers such of those described above, then, first, Congress would never have needed to delegate such in the first instance, and second, all of these statutes—the Militia Act, the Alien Enemy Act, and the 1812 Prisoner of War Act, among others—would be unconstitutional. Yet none have ever been struck down, though the 1812 Prisoner of War Act was repealed in 1817 after the war was over. See Act of Mar. 3, 1817, ch. 34, 3 Stat. 358; see also infra note 62 (discussing the constitutional validity of the Militia Act).
43. Brown, 12 U.S. (8 Cranch) at 122, 126 (emphasis added).
44. Id. at 126.
45. A series of New York State cases arising out of the war dealt more squarely with questions of military authority over civilians, particularly those accused of espionage. See Smith v. Shaw, 12 Johns. 257 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1815); McConnell v. Hampton, 12 Johns. 234 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1815); In re Stacy, 10 Johns. 328 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1813). Indeed, Smith (and a series of other contemporary cases) rejected
significance: First, declarations of war do not, in and of themselves, independently authorize anything, except the use of military force and the general understanding that there exists a state of war. Second, those powers granted by Congress to the executive during wartime, including the power to "authorize proceedings against the person and the property of the enemy," are triggered by declarations of war, but nothing more—Congress only activates wartime authority in declaring war, it does not expand it. Thus, the power to detain, under Brown, would have to be independently delegated by Congress, in one form or another.

B. The Suspension Power and the Civil War

Notwithstanding Bollman and Brown, the question of the executive's unilateral authority to detain U.S. citizens during times of emergency arose most dramatically during the Civil War, in a series of cases challenging President Abraham Lincoln's—and not Congress's—suspension of the writ of habeas corpus at the outset of hostilities. After the initial suspension, Lincoln subsequently extended the suspension geographically, a measure that was eventually ratified by Congress in a broad, all-encompassing endorsement of the beleaguered President's earlier actions. Nevertheless, Ex parte

the military's authority to detain and try civilians for spying because it found no statutory authorization. See generally Ingrid Brunk Wuerth, The President's Power To Detain "Enemy Combatants": Modern Lessons from Mr. Madison's Forgotten War, 98 NW. U. L. REV. (forthcoming 2004) (manuscript at 17-23, on file with author).

46. Subsequent cases would clarify that there could exist a state of war prior to a congressional declaration thereto, and that the authority to determine when a war had begun properly belonged to the executive. Barring a preexisting determination, however, a congressional declaration was authoritative. See, e.g., The Prize Cases, 67 U.S. (2 Black) 635 (1863). Additionally, in 1850, the Court held, continuing the Brown understanding, that a congressional declaration of war did not include a delegation of its rulemaking authority. See Fleming v. Page, 50 U.S. (9 How.) 603, 615 (1850).


48. The suspension issue only truly arose one other time before the war—at the very end of the War of 1812, when then-General Andrew Jackson suspended the writ in New Orleans. The New Orleans saga, an interesting historical footnote but tangential to the argument herein, is excellently surveyed in George M. Dennison, Martial Law: The Development of a Theory of Emergency Powers, 1776-1861, 18 AM. J. LEGAL HIST. 52, 61-65 (1974); and Abraham D. Sofaer, Emergency Power and the Hero of New Orleans, 2 CARDOZO L. REV. 233, 243-52 (1981).


50. The suspension became nationwide in August of 1862, when Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton issued an order "by direction of the President" suspending the writ for those resisting the draft and for "persons arrested for disloyal practices." See REHNQUIST, supra note 49, at 59-60.

51. Act of Mar. 3, 1863, ch. 81, § 1, 12 Stat. 755, 755 ("[D]uring the present rebellion, the President of the United States, whenever, in his judgment, the public safety may require it, is authorized to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in any case throughout the United States, or any part thereof."). The Supreme Court subsequently (though indirectly) sustained the 1863 Act in Mitchell v. Clark, 110 U.S. 633 (1884).
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Merryman, the first of a series of cases to arise out of Lincoln’s unilateral suspension, witnessed a harsh rebuke of the action by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, who ruled that the President had no independent authority to suspend the writ, particularly because the Suspension Clause was located in Article I of the Constitution, not Article II. As Taney wrote, “I had supposed it to be one of those points in constitutional law upon which there was no difference of opinion ... that the privilege of the writ could not be suspended, except by act of congress.” Yet, Lincoln completely ignored Taney’s stern ruling, famously noting before Congress, one month later, that Taney’s decision would allow “all the laws, but one, to go unexecuted, and the government itself go to pieces, lest that one be violated.”

On its face, Merryman was emblematic of a resistance to unilateral executive authority to suspend the writ. However, the writ remained suspended solely by executive order until Congress finally acted in March of 1863, by which point thousands of U.S. citizens had been arrested and detained without charges. Indeed, to this day, the debate over which branch may properly suspend the writ is, at least officially, unresolved, though most legal scholars—and, indeed, most courts—have long since considered the question settled.

52. 17 F. Cas. 144 (C.C.D. Md. 1861) (No. 9487) (Taney, C.J.).
54. Merryman, 17 F. Cas. at 148; see also Ex parte Benedict, 3 F. Cas. 159, 165 (N.D.N.Y. 1862) (No. 1292) (“[T]he power of suspension is a legislative and not an executive power, and must be exercised, or its exercise authorized, by congress.”); Johnson v. Duncan, 3 Mart. (o.s.) 530 (La. 1815).
55. This, as one recent scholar noted, is the true importance of Merryman. See Paulsen, supra note 53, at 92 (“But the more important question framed by Merryman concerns not the interpretation of the writ suspension provision, but whether the Executive is bound to enforce a judicial decree that he believes is founded on an incorrect reading of the law.”). Paulsen is too generous. The real question, which has not been answered yet, is: If a sitting president defies a judicial order in the name of emergency, what—if any—remedies do the courts have to enforce their mandates?
57. See CLINTON ROSSITER & RICHARD P. LONGAKER, THE SUPREME COURT AND THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF 25 (expanded ed. 1976) (“It would seem equally futile to argue over the present location of this power, for it is a question on which fact and theory cannot be expected to concur. Today, as ninety years ago, the answer to it is not to be found in law but in circumstance.”).
59. See, e.g., McCall v. McDowell, 15 F. Cas. 1235 (C.C.D. Cal. 1867) (No. 8673); Benedict, 3 F. Cas. 159; In re Dunn, 8 F. Cas. 93 (S.D.N.Y. 1863) (No. 4171); In re Fagan, 8 F. Cas. 947 (D. Mass. 1863) (No. 4604); Ex parte McDonald, 143 P. 947 (Mont. 1914). As Professor Duker highlights, “[t]he Supreme Court has never dealt directly with the issue”; however, in Ex parte Milligan, the Court—in examining the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act of 1863—“stated that ‘[t]he President was authorized by it to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus ...’” Thus, in sustaining the suspension of habeas before it in Milligan, the Court looked to Congress’s authority, and not the executive’s, over the government’s arguments to the contrary. DUKER, supra note 20, at 177 n.188 (citation omitted).
C. An Emergency Exception? Insurrection and Martial Law During the Early Republic and the Civil War

Another question that both Bollman and Merryman left unresolved was whether the same constitutional mandates vis-à-vis suspension of the writ of habeas corpus applied in the context of martial law, in areas where there were no lawful civilian authorities. Indeed, the question of whether the imposition of martial law provides an exception to our understanding of the detention power is a critically important one, for if it does not, then it is difficult to conceive of more exigent circumstances that would.

Martial law, under the Constitution, is reflected in the Militia Clauses (in addition to the Suspension Clause), which collectively authorize Congress:

To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions; [2nd]

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress. 60

Acting under this power, Congress passed the Militia Act of 1792, which created a uniform national militia, and amended such in 1795 to authorize the President, “whenever the United States shall be invaded, or be in imminent danger of invasion from any foreign nation or Indian tribe,” to call forth the militia. 61 Thus, the Third Congress delegated to the President the authority to respond to sudden invasions or other insurrections, a power that the executive did not otherwise derive from the Constitution itself. 62

Since the passage of the 1795 Act, it has generally been read as congressional authorization for the imposition of martial law under the circumstances provided for by the Constitution. 63 The question of significance here, first raised during the Civil War (but returned to during World War II), was whether the imposition of martial law ipso facto authorized the suspension of habeas, and, consequently, the invocation of the detention power.

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60. U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cls. 15-16.
61. Act of Feb. 28, 1795, ch. 36, § 1, 1 Stat. 424, 424 (codified as amended at 10 U.S.C. § 332 (2000)). The authority to call forth the militia of the several states was expanded to include the authority to call forth the federal armed forces in 1861. See Act of July 29, 1861, ch. 25, § 1, 12 Stat. 281, 281. Thus, the power to use federal troops to suppress insurrections also derives from the 1795 Militia Act.
63. See, e.g., Luther v. Borden, 48 U.S. (7 How.) 1, 42-45 (1849) (“By this act, the power of deciding whether the exigency had arisen upon which the government of the United States is bound to interfere, is given to the President.”) (emphasis added)).
The Detention Power

In Ex parte Field, the Civil War case first expounding this theory, the conflict centered on President Lincoln's imposition of martial law in "loyal" states nowhere near the front lines, such as Vermont, and whether that included, by necessity, a suspension of habeas. After exhaustively recounting the precedents, District Judge David A. Smalley concluded that the President had lawfully imposed martial law on Vermont, and that "[i]t must be evident to all, that martial law and the privilege of [the] writ [of habeas corpus] are wholly incompatible with each other." Thus, the imposition of martial law necessarily included the suspension of habeas.

To distinguish Merryman and a similarly reasoned case, Ex parte Benedict, Judge Smalley relied both on the extent to which martial law had been declared nationwide in Field, but had not yet at the time of the former cases, and also, critically, on the importance of the 1795 Militia Act. Congress, via the Militia Act, delegated broad power to the executive to impose martial law during emergencies, and that power necessarily included the Suspension Power. Judge Smalley did not explicitly state the most obvious conclusion of his argument, but implicitly, it was undeniable: Congress itself, via the 1795 Act, authorized the suspension of habeas at the outset of the Civil War. Thus, Merryman and Benedict wrongly presupposed the absence of congressional action to suspend the writ. Regardless of the resolution of the Field question, it is of undeniable significance that Field, like Benedict and Merryman before it, presupposed that the detention power always emanated from Congress, whether it had been delegated or not.

64. 9 F. Cas. 1 (C.C.D. Vt. 1862) (No. 4761).
65. Id. at 8.
66. Id.
67. See FARBER, supra note 5, at 162-63. For an example of another Civil War-era court adopting a form of this argument, see In re Kemp, 16 Wis. 382 (1863). Curiously, in denouncing the unilateralism of Lincoln's acts, most scholars have traditionally overlooked the martial law/emergency argument. See, e.g., Eli Palomares, Note, Illegal Confinement: Presidential Authority To Suspend the Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus During Times of Emergency, 12 S. Cal. Interdisc. L.J. 101 (2002).
68. The relationship between martial law and habeas would largely be left alone in the aftermath of the Civil War, but in 1909, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes largely embraced—albeit implicitly—Judge Smalley's theory in Moyer v. Peabody, 212 U.S. 78 (1909). In Moyer, the issue was whether the extra-judicial detention, for two and one-half months, of a citizen under order of the Governor of Colorado was lawful under the Colorado and federal Constitutions. Justice Holmes, writing for the Court, rejected the contention that such detention violated the Fourteenth Amendment. As he wrote, "what is due process of law depends on circumstances." Id. at 84. Because the Colorado Constitution authorized the governor to declare martial law, it naturally conveyed the right to detain individuals for the duration of the emergency. See also FARBER, supra note 5, at 162-63.
69. Indeed, even the Prize Cases, a series of Civil War admiralty cases that have been read to suggest a broader form of executive constitutional power than that endorsed here, relied on the 1795 Militia Act as authority for President Lincoln's imposition of a blockade—and seizure of ships attempting to run it—at the beginning of hostilities. Compare Padilla ex rel. Newman v. Bush, 233 F. Supp. 2d 564, 589 (S.D.N.Y. 2002) ("I read the Prize Cases to stand for the proposition that the President has independent authority to repel aggressive acts by third parties even without specific congressional authorization, and courts may not review the level of force selected." (quoting Campbell v. Clinton, 203 F.3d 19, 27 (D.C. Cir. 2000) (Silberman, J., concurring))), with The Prize Cases, 67 U.S.
D. Past as Prologue: Milligan and Military Tribunals

Compared to the suspension of habeas, however, the trial of civilians before military tribunals was “certainly the most dubious and judicially assailable” of President Lincoln’s questionable actions against civil liberties during the Civil War.\footnote{70} These trials formed the factual background to two Civil War cases, \textit{Ex parte Vallandigham}\footnote{71} and \textit{Ex parte Milligan},\footnote{72} the latter of which is of importance to the argument here for two different reasons: First, at issue in \textit{Milligan} was not the President’s authority to carry out military tribunals authorized by Congress, but rather his independent authority to create them in the first place. Second, \textit{Milligan} remains today the boldest and most definitive statement on the availability of martial law in peaceful areas, despite the extent to which later cases may have limited its other holdings.

At its core, \textit{Milligan} rejected the President’s authority to act unilaterally during wartime to detain and try civilians by military commissions in areas where the civil courts were open and functioning properly, as in Indianapolis, where Lamdin P. Milligan was detained and tried.\footnote{73} Neither the Habeas Corpus Act of 1863 nor any other Act of Congress had authorized the commissions at issue in \textit{Milligan}, and, though the Court split 5-4 on the question of whether Congress was also constitutionally barred from authorizing such commissions,\footnote{74} all nine Justices agreed that President Lincoln certainly could not create them unilaterally, since neither the Constitution nor Congress had granted him the power to do so.

Additionally, the \textit{Milligan} Court clarified an issue that had been raised first
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in *Luther v. Borden*, but never settled: What were the limits, both geographic and temporal, on the imposition of martial law during an emergency? As Justice Davis wrote,

> [T]here are occasions when martial rule can be properly applied. If, in foreign invasion or civil war, the courts are actually closed, and it is impossible to administer criminal justice according to law, *then*, on the theatre of active military operations, where war really prevails, there is a necessity to furnish a substitute for the civil authority, thus overthrown, to preserve the safety of the army and society; and as no power is left but the military, it is allowed to govern by martial rule until the laws can have their free course. As necessity creates the rule, so it limits its duration; for, if this government is continued *after* the courts are reinstated, it is a gross usurpation of power. Martial rule can never exist where the courts are open, and in the proper and unobstructed exercise of their jurisdiction. It is also confined to the locality of actual war.\(^\text{75}\)

Thus, whereas *Milligan*, in the present debate, is of undeniable importance for its stance on the constitutional validity (or lack thereof) of military commissions to try civilians,\(^\text{76}\) it is equally important for imposing the above constraint on the declaration of martial law. The *Field* argument—that martial law ipso facto includes a suspension of habeas—is thus informed by the *Milligan* response, for suspension under the Militia Act could only be in areas where the courts were not “open... and unobstructed.” Further, though the distinction between military tribunals for civilians and combatants would be at the heart of the Supreme Court’s subsequent decision in *Ex parte Quirin*,\(^\text{77}\) *Milligan* clearly “hold[s] congressional authorization to be at least a necessary requirement for such tribunals. This general principle of *Milligan*—a principle never repudiated in subsequent cases—leaves the President little unilateral freedom to craft an order to detain people on his own suspicion for indefinite warehousing.”\(^\text{78}\)

II. THE DETENTION POWER DURING WORLD WAR II: NAZI SABOTEURS, INTERNEES, HAWAIIAN MARTIAL LAW, AND THE ROLE OF CONGRESS

A. *Ex parte Quirin, Enemy Citizens, and Military Tribunals*

*Milligan* returned to the forefront in 1942 with *Ex parte Quirin*, the so-called “Nazi Saboteurs” case, which has been cited as the major precedent for two of the more controversial policies pursued by the Bush Administration in the aftermath of September 11—the authority to create military tribunals to try

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76. *Id.* at 121.
77. 317 U.S. 1 (1942).
78. Neal K. Katyal & Laurence H. Tribe, *Waging War, Deciding Guilt: Trying the Military Tribunals*, 111 YALE L.J. 1259, 1279-80 (2002). This reading of *Milligan*, though not often highlighted, is fairly well established. Indeed, even Rossiter—who has criticized *Milligan* as overreaching on a number of different points, including the notion that not even *Congress* had the authority to authorize the commissions—agreed with this understanding. *See Rossiter & Longaker, supra* note 57, at 36.
suspected terrorists, and the authority to detain “unlawful” or “enemy” combatants. In Quirin, eight Nazi soldiers had landed in the United States with the intent to sabotage key components of the American war industry. George Dasch, one of the cadre, turned himself in to authorities, and then proceeded to help the FBI capture the other seven. President Roosevelt subsequently promulgated an executive order authorizing trial by military commissions for the saboteurs, who, during those proceedings, filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in the D.C. district court, which was summarily dismissed. Quickly, the case worked its way to the Supreme Court, which, sitting in Special Term, found the commissions constitutional.

In reaching this conclusion, the Court was faced with the necessity of distinguishing the factual circumstances before it from those present in Milligan. This distinction turned on two critical facts: First, the petitioners in Quirin, unlike those in Milligan, were actively engaged in combat against the United States, and as such, were not civilians, but were combatants, “unlawful,” in this case, because they were engaged in spying and sabotage. Second, as opposed to Milligan, where the military commissions had been created unilaterally by President Lincoln, in Quirin, there was at least some congressional authorization—via the Articles of War.

Thus, though the Court endorsed President Roosevelt’s authority to capture and detain “enemy belligerents” and to try “unlawful” belligerents before a military commission, the endorsement was pinned almost entirely on the extent to which Roosevelt was enforcing laws already passed by Congress.

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79. See, e.g., Mike Allen, Bush Defends Order for Military Tribunals, WASH. POST, Nov. 20, 2001, at A14 (quoting a statement from President Bush that “I would remind those who don’t understand the decision I made that Franklin Roosevelt made the same decision in World War II. Those were extraordinary times, as well.”).


81. Ex parte Quirin, 47 F. Supp. 431 (D.D.C. 1942). For what are easily the two most comprehensive modern discussions of Quirin written before September 11, see Michal R. Belknap, The Supreme Court Goes to War: The Meaning and Implications of the Nazi Saboteur Case, 89 MIL. L. REV. 59 (1980); and David J. Danelski, The Saboteurs’ Case, 1 J. SUP. CT. HIST. 61 (1996). Not surprisingly, Quirin has also been an inordinately popular subject of post-September 11 scholarship. For the most in-depth contribution thereto, see LOUIS FISHER, NAZI SABOTEURS ON TRIAL: A MILITARY TRIBUNAL AND AMERICAN LAW (2003). See also Katyal & Tribe, supra note 78, at 1280-83 (providing a narrower discussion of the 1942 case).

82. See Quirin, 317 U.S. at 45-46.

83. Id. at 35 (“[T]hose who during time of war pass surreptitiously from enemy territory into our own, discarding their uniforms upon entry, for the commission of hostile acts involving destruction of life or property, have the status of unlawful combatants punishable as such by military commission.”).

84. Id. at 29 (“It is unnecessary for present purposes to determine to what extent the President as Commander in Chief has constitutional power to create military commissions without the support of Congressional legislation. For here Congress has authorized trial of offenses against the law of war before such commissions.”). Milligan established the limits on the President’s unilateral authority, and Quirin did not alter that pronouncement.

85. Id. at 28 (“By his Order creating the present Commission he has undertaken to exercise the
The Detention Power

Critically, the Court read the President’s Commander-in-Chief power exhaustively as

the power to wage war which Congress has declared, and to carry into effect all
laws passed by Congress for the conduct of war and for the government and
regulation of the Armed Forces, and all laws defining and punishing offenses
against the law of nations, including those which pertain to the conduct of war. 86

Thus, *Quirin*, a decision manifestly predicated on congressional authorization, 87 read the President’s power to detain and try combatants, be they unlawful or otherwise, not in the Commander-in-Chief Clause of the Constitution, but in his power to enforce the Articles of War, a statutory

authority conferred upon him by Congress.”). The Articles of War in force during World War II were enacted by Congress in 1920. *See* Act of June 4, 1920, ch. 227, 41 Stat. 759, 787-812. Whereas Articles 81 and 82 clearly applied to the petitioners in *Quirin*, the Court was also on fairly solid ground in concluding that Congress, via Article 15, had otherwise authorized military tribunals for violations of the laws of war. *See* *Quirin*, 317 U.S. at 30 (“Congress has the choice of crystallizing in permanent form and minute detail every offense against the law of war, or of adopting the system of common law applied by military tribunals so far as it should be recognized and deemed applicable by the courts. It chose the latter course.”).

The problem with the opinion, and the quandary that has continued to plague scholars up until today, is the extent to which the military commission ordered by President Roosevelt differed substantially from the requirements the 1920 Articles laid out. In several significant ways, the tribunal that tried the *Quirin* petitioners did not include the safeguards mandated by the 1920 Articles, including independent review of convictions and the requirement of a unanimous verdict for the death penalty. *See* FISHER, supra note 81, at 129-34. Thus, to find the tribunal to be a legitimate exercise of the executive’s authority in enforcing the laws Congress passed was a legal fiction, and a disturbing one at that. What is critical, however, is that the Court invented such a fiction rather than uphold the constitutionality of the trial based solely on the executive’s constitutional authority. Such authority did not exist, and the Court, its many other missteps in *Quirin* notwithstanding, clearly did not otherwise suggest that it did.

86. *Quirin*, 317 U.S. at 26; *see also* United States *ex rel.* Toth v. Quarles, 350 U.S. 11, 14 (1955) (endorsing a limited reading of the Clause); United States v. Sweeney, 157 U.S. 281, 284 (1895) (same). Such a reading is also consistent with one of the original interpretations of the Clause. *See* THE FEDERALIST No. 69, at 418 (Alexander Hamilton) (Clinton Rossiter ed., 1961) (“It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first General and Admiral of the Confederacy.”); *see also* JOHN HART ELY, WAR AND RESPONSIBILITY: CONSTITUTIONAL LESSONS OF VIETNAM AND ITS AFTERMATH 5 (1993) (“Proponents of broad executive authority . . . often rely on the constitutional designation of the President as ‘Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States,’ but the record is entirely clear that all this was meant to convey was command of the armed forces once Congress had authorized a war . . . .”). Ely further notes that [w]holly missing in either the Philadelphia debates or The Federalist, or in the ratification debates, is any broader construction of the term. The Federalists did not construe it broadly in an effort to build the power of the executive, and neither did the Antifederalists as part of their attack on the inordinate executive power allegedly created by the document they were seeking to defeat.

*Id.* at 142 n.22 (citations omitted). *But cf.* EDWARD S. CORWIN ET AL., THE PRESIDENT: OFFICE AND POWERS, 1787-1984, at 262-97 (5th rev. ed. 1984) (discussing the evolution of the Commander-in-Chief power from the original understanding to the so-called “stewardship” theory during total wars, such as World War II).

87. In two different World War II-era cases, the Supreme Court embraced this reading. *See In re* Yamashita, 327 U.S. 1, 20 (1946) (“By thus recognizing military commissions in order to preserve their traditional jurisdiction over enemy combatants unimpaired by the Articles of War, Congress gave sanction, as we held in *Ex parte Quirin*, to any use of the military commission contemplated by the common law of war.”); *see also* Madsen v. Kinsella, 343 U.S. 341, 355 (1952) (recognizing this holding from *Quirin* and quoting the discussion from *Yamashita*). This is one of the deeper underpinnings of Katyal and Tribe’s argument. *See* Katyal & Tribe, supra note 78, at 1266-68; *see also* supra note 85 (discussing the reliance on the Articles of War).
authorization. The Quirin Court did not say that the President lacked such power independently; rather, it refused even to reach that question, finding a sufficient basis in the actions of Congress. Nevertheless, this understanding of the 1942 decision, previously overlooked, is essential.

Quirin also set another key precedent by obliterating any distinction between unlawful combatants who were German nationals and those who were U.S. citizens. Yet, despite its apparent validity as authority for denying U.S. citizens at arms against the United States any additional rights compared to non-citizen combatants, its approval of military commissions to try offenses against the laws of war, and its other suggested shortcomings, Quirin, a paradoxical and controversial case through and through, quite simply does not stand for propositions as broad as those for which it has been cited in the aftermath of September 11—especially the argument that the President has inherent and unilateral constitutional authority to detain and try enemy combatants during wartime. For everything Quirin was, it was not, under any tenable reading, an endorsement of an executive detention power.

B. Enemy Citizen Prisoners of War

Quirin's obfuscation of the line between U.S. citizen and non-citizen enemies had limited—but significant—repercussions in two other World War
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II-era cases. The latter, *Colepaugh v. Looney*, upheld a later version of military tribunals for a second group of Nazi saboteurs, though the government, perhaps wary of the *Quirin* debacle, followed the procedures set forth in the 1920 Articles much more closely the second time around.

The earlier case presented a slightly different issue: What about prisoners of war? Gaetano Territo was an American citizen captured while fighting for the Italian Army in Italy in 1943. Territo, unlike the petitioners in *Quirin*, had committed no violation against the laws of war, and was, by all accounts, a "lawful" combatant, and thus a POW entitled to the protections afforded by the 1929 Geneva Conventions. Territo filed a habeas petition in the Southern District of California, challenging his detention as a POW on the grounds that he was a citizen. The court summarily dismissed the petition, and Territo appealed to the Ninth Circuit.

On appeal, the Ninth Circuit rejected Territo's argument by reference both to *Quirin* and to the 1929 Geneva Conventions themselves. Yet, the Territo court never identified the actual source of the authority for detaining U.S. citizens as prisoners of war. If anything, the only authority cited as support for detaining Territo as a POW were the Geneva Conventions, which the court invoked repeatedly. Thus, Territo might otherwise suggest the argument that Congress authorized the detention of POWs when the Senate ratified the 1929 Geneva Convention, and that the Supremacy Clause thus made the Convention the "Law of the Land," similar, if not equivalent, to an Act of Congress. This contention is quite unsatisfying, however, as the ratification of a treaty is not a congressional act—it is strictly the province of the Senate, without the requirements of bicameralism or presentment.

But if the Geneva Convention did not itself authorize the detention of U.S. citizens as POWs, what did? The Ninth Circuit did not say, and no commentator has ever tried to reconcile this distinction—between *Quirin*'s reliance on the Articles of War and the lack of a similar proviso in *Territo*. *Brown*, in 1814, had located the power to detain POWs in an 1812 Act of Congress, but that Act was repealed in 1817. If anything, Territo stands for the proposition that POWs are lawfully detained somehow, even if no court has ever suggested the actual source of authority thereto. This opens up the possibility—which the Ninth Circuit did not itself suggest—that the executive's power to detain POWs actually may come from the Constitution.

94. 235 F.2d 429 (10th Cir. 1956) (upholding the second round of military commissions).
95. See FISHER, supra note 81, at 138-44.
96. Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, July 27, 1929, 118 L.N.T.S. 343. These protections included the right not to be tried; thus, Territo could not be indicted for treason or levying war against the United States, even though he was very likely guilty of both offenses.
97. *In re Territo*, 156 F.2d 142 (9th Cir. 1946).
98. Id. at 146-47 & n.5.
99. See supra notes 40-44 and accompanying text (discussing *Brown* and the two Acts).
once Congress has actually declared war (and triggered the Geneva
Conventions), subject to the due process requirements of the Fifth Amendment.
Whether the source of such authority is the Commander-in-Chief Clause or the
executive’s broad discretion over foreign affairs is a different question
altogether (though it would seem to be the latter, based on the original
understanding of the former), but it certainly is defensible that the authority
to detain combatants as POWs may possibly be a power inherently belonging
to the executive. If nothing else, it is an issue that, at least prior to the
enactment of 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a) in 1971, would fall into Justice Jackson’s
“zone of twilight” from Steel Seizure.

Territo was ultimately unclear on this point, and I do not mean to otherwise
infer clarity where none exists. Instead, what is important about Territo is that
the actual source of the executive’s power to detain U.S. citizens captured on
the battlefield as enemy prisoners of war remains an open question today, a
question that may eventually be unavoidable, but that, at least in the present
cases, is not otherwise implicated.

C. Martial Law in Hawaii

As opposed to Territo, where the source of the detention authority was
unclear at best, the detention of citizens in Hawaii during World War II was a
different story. Hawaii, a U.S. territory until 1959, was governed by the
Organic Act—a statute passed in 1900 when it first came under U.S. control.
The Organic Act included a provision allowing the imposition of martial law
under certain emergencies. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, just such an
emergency was declared, and control of the territory was surrendered to the
military. Soon thereafter, the civilian courts were closed, replaced with provost
courts for petty crimes and military tribunals for more serious offenses.

100. See supra note 86 and accompanying text (discussing the Commander-in-Chief Clause).
101. This might otherwise provoke a debate over why there is a distinction between lawful and
unlawful combatants, save for one critical point: Under the Constitution, it is up to Congress to “define
and punish . . . Offenses against the Law of Nations.” U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 10. The Offenses
Clause has sparked heated academic debate in recent years over its import to the role of international
law in U.S. courts. Compare, e.g., Beth Stephens, Federalism and Foreign Affairs: Congress’s Power to
Defense of Federalism, 112 YALE L.J. 109 (2002). Nevertheless, since what makes a combatant
“unlawful” is some kind of offense against the law of nations, which must, by necessity, subsume the
laws of war, this distinction seems constitutionally appropriate, if even necessary. Under Territo, U.S.
citizens who take up arms against the United States as lawful combatants during wartime are properly
detained until the end of hostilities as POWs. Under Quirin, U.S. citizens who violate the laws of war in
fighting against the United States are detained and tried pursuant to statutes. Thus, neither of these types
of detention implicate the authority that this Note rejects. For further discussion, see supra note 6.

102. See infra note 143 and accompanying text.
104. See id. § 67, 31 Stat. at 153.
105. See Fisher, supra note 81, at 145-46. See generally J. Garner Anthony, Hawaii Under
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Though the Ninth Circuit upheld the suspension of habeas under the terms of the Organic Act in 1942,\(^{106}\) by the end of the year, it was clear that the emergency had subsided, and the Hawaiian civil government was at least partially restored via a February 8, 1943 proclamation from the local government. On October 24, 1944, President Roosevelt issued a proclamation restoring habeas and terminating the state of martial law.\(^{107}\) Lloyd Duncan, a civilian, had twice been arrested and punished by the Hawaiian provost court, the second time sentenced to five years at hard labor. After the restoration of civilian authority, Duncan filed a habeas petition in the Hawaii district court, which Judge Delbert E. Metzger, famous for his opposition to the military government in Hawaii,\(^{108}\) granted on the grounds that, after March 10, 1943 (the date the February 8 proclamation took effect), martial law had effectively (if not formally) ceased to exist in Hawaii, and the military no longer possessed lawful control over civilians.\(^{109}\) Though the Ninth Circuit reversed Duncan and its companion,\(^{110}\) the Supreme Court subsequently restored the effect, if not the principle, of Judge Metzger’s opinion.\(^{111}\)

The Court’s decision in Duncan v. Kahanamoku, building largely on Milligan, reaffirmed the force of the 1866 decision—even in light of Quirin—by focusing on Congress’s intent in passing the Organic Act. Yes, Congress clearly gave the Governor of Hawaii the authority to impose martial law, but not indefinitely, and such authority did not include the power to try civilians for civilian offenses in military courts.\(^{112}\) Thus, Duncan highlighted the most important of the Milligan/Quirin distinctions—civilians versus unlawful combatants. Indeed, the issue in Duncan was not whether Duncan’s detention was legal; rather, the issue was whether his trial was. The Court never reached the question of the validity of the suspension of habeas; instead, it focused on military tribunals, and the extent to which military trials could not supplant the civilian justice system for non-combatant civilians. On this, the Court, with its decision four years earlier in Quirin in mind, was unequivocal.\(^{113}\)

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\(^{106}\) Ex parte Zimmerman, 132 F.2d 442 (9th Cir. 1942).

\(^{107}\) See Duncan v. Kahanamoku, 327 U.S. 304, 312 n.5 (1946).

\(^{108}\) See Claude McColloch, Now It Can Be Told: Judge Metzger and the Military, 35 A.B.A. J. 365 (1949); see also Scheiber & Scheiber, supra note 105, at 563-88 (summarizing the proceedings).

\(^{109}\) Ex parte Duncan, 66 F. Supp. 976, 979-81 (D. Haw. 1944); see also Ex parte White, 66 F. Supp. 982 (D. Haw. 1944) (reaching a similar conclusion).

\(^{110}\) Ex parte Duncan, 146 F.2d 576 (9th Cir. 1944).


\(^{112}\) Id. at 323-24.

\(^{113}\) Id. Duncan thus further highlighted the exceptionalism of Quirin, and, as importantly, the extent to which Quirin did not overrule Milligan, even though some have argued that it did. E.g., Arthur S. Miller, Presidential Power in a Nutshell 175 (1977); Martin S. Sheffer, Does Absolute Power Corrupt Absolutely? Part I. A Theoretical Review of Presidential War Powers,
D. Internment and the Detention Power from Hirabayashi to Endo

Finally, no discussion of the detention power during World War II would be complete without a discussion of the internment of hundreds of thousands of Americans of Japanese descent in the western part of the mainland United States, easily the most notorious of the U.S. government's actions during the war—if not during the entire twentieth century. Yet, of the four major cases to reach the Supreme Court challenging the internments—Hirabayashi v. United States,114 Yasui v. United States,115 Korematsu v. United States,116 and Ex parte Endo117—only Endo invoked the detention power itself. The other three—Hirabayashi, Yasui, and Korematsu—all involved challenges to criminal convictions for violating exclusion orders, an offense Congress criminalized via statute.118 Though each case was replete with serious constitutional questions, the dispositive issue in all three, due largely to the Court's reluctance to confront the constitutional issues head-on,119 was the legality of the exclusion orders themselves and the Act of Congress criminalizing violations thereof, and not the constitutionality of (or authority for) the detention.120 Indeed, Korematsu itself distinguished the two decisions: "The Endo case, post, graphically illustrates the difference between the validity of an order to exclude and the validity of a detention order after exclusion has been effected."121 Korematsu dubiously upheld the former. Endo, however, rejected the latter, since Mitsuye Endo had not violated anything.122 The Court, in a decision released on the same day as Korematsu, ordered Endo's discharge, largely because Congress had not explicitly authorized her confinement.123 As Justice Douglas wrote for the Court,

[W]e stress the silence of the legislative history and of the Act and the Executive Orders on the power to detain to emphasize that any such authority which exists must be implied. If there is to be the greatest possible accommodation of the

24 OKLA. CITY U. L. REV. 233, 267 (1999). Quirin clearly endorsed and upheld military tribunals—in compliance with procedures established by Congress—for U.S. citizens who violated the laws of war. U.S. citizens who were prisoners of war were a different story, as Territo suggests. Duncan, then, suggested that Milligan applied to all other U.S. citizens, precluding their trial by military commission, and, implicitly (but necessarily), their military detention pending trial.

114. 320 U.S. 81 (1943).
115. 320 U.S. 115 (1943).
117. 323 U.S. 283 (1944).
119. See infra text accompanying note 226 (discussing Korematsu).
121. Korematsu, 323 U.S. at 222.
123. Endo, 323 U.S. at 300-02.
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liberties of the citizen with this war measure, any such implied power must be narrowly confined to the precise purpose of the evacuation program.\(^{124}\)

Since the detention of “admittedly loyal” citizens such as Mitsuye Endo did not fall under the “precise purpose” of the evacuation program, the Court ordered her release.\(^{125}\)

*Endo* made no noticeable impact on the internment program, even though it nominally required the release of 60,000 other “loyal” Americans of Japanese descent, because the camps had already been closed by the time the decision was issued.\(^{126}\) Additionally, though *Endo* may have been wrongly forgotten as arguably the more meaningful of the two decisions, it was hardly perfect itself, for the Court did not find that Endo’s detention actually violated the Constitution, a point that Justice Roberts, in his concurrence, as in his dissenting opinion in *Korematsu*, criticized the majority for not reaching.\(^{127}\)

Its shortcomings notwithstanding, *Endo* simultaneously suggests an undeniable reluctance on the part of the Court to explicitly approve the policy of interning Japanese Americans, and, more significantly, a reinforcement of the idea that the detention of U.S. citizens, even during the most exigent circumstances, generally requires preexisting authorization, even if such acquiescence is implicit. Further, the Court’s pronouncement that, in light of *implied* authorization, the power to detain must be narrowly confined to the precise purpose of the evacuation program, suggests an appropriate level of judicial scrutiny for evaluating detention schemes when Congress has not explicitly approved them, at least prior to the enactment of 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a).

Indeed, for all that *Korematsu* and its sister cases are scorned for, none ever explicitly upheld *any* form of extra-legislative detention. Congress criminalized violations of military exclusion orders, and it was the constitutionality of the 1942 statute that was at issue in *Hirabayashi, Yasui*, and *Korematsu*. This is not to suggest that the Court was on any firmer ground in upholding the convictions in each of the three earlier cases; it was just on *different* ground. When the Court was finally confronted with the previously sidestepped issue of the facial legality of the detentions, it balked—albeit in a decision that probably could have been worded more harshly, and that history has otherwise forgotten.

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124. Id. at 301-02.

125. Id. at 302-04; see also Grossman, *supra* note 120, at 662 (discussing the decision in *Endo*); Gudridge, *supra* note 122, at 1947-53 (same).

126. See Peter H. Irons, *Justice at War* 345 (1983). The impact of *Endo* behind the scenes, as Irons notes, was quite formidable. Indeed, it is at least possible that, because of the Court’s decision, the Roosevelt Administration acted when it did, prompting Patrick Gudridge to quip: “[p]erhaps it’s Felix Frankfurter’s fault” that no one remembers *Endo*. See Gudridge, *supra* note 122, at 1934-35.

127. *Endo*, 323 U.S. at 309 (Roberts, J., concurring in the judgment); see also Dennis J. Hutchinson, “The Achilles Heel” of the Constitution: Justice Jackson and the Japanese Exclusion Cases, 2002 Sup. Ct. Rev. 455, 476-87 (reprinting Justice Jackson’s draft concurring opinion in *Endo*, and surveying Jackson’s overall discontent and anger over how the Court handled the cases).
Endo did indeed close the camps, and in doing so, it reaffirmed the importance of congressional authorization in any detention scheme. Yet again, when U.S. citizens were detained without charge, the validity of the detention turned on the actions of Congress, or the lack thereof.

III. THE DETENTION POWER AFTER WORLD WAR II: THE EMERGENCY DETENTION ACT, 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a), AND CIVIL COMMITMENT

A. Steel Seizure and the Emergency Detention Act of 1950

What followed, in the early 1950s, were two significant precedents—one legislative and one judicial—that further helped to clarify the scope of the president's power to detain his own citizens: the September 23, 1950 override of President Harry S Truman's veto of the Internal Security Act of 1950, which included, as Title II, the Emergency Detention Act, and the Supreme Court's landmark decision on the scope and limits of presidential power during national emergencies two years later in the Steel Seizure case.

The Internal Security Act, at the time of its enactment, "constitute[d] the most comprehensive legislation which the United States has ever adopted to deal with a threat to its internal security." It was also the reconciliation of two very different approaches to protecting national security. Senator McCarran's version of the bill focused on the registration of organizations and persons "deemed to endanger American security." By contrast, West Virginia Senator Harley M. Kilgore, a staunch opponent of registration, "offered a substitute measure providing for the detention of potential spies and subversives whenever Congress and the President deemed the national safety to be sufficiently imperiled." After an extended period of legislative debate, McCarran's proposal ended up forming the bulk of Title I of the Internal

132. S. 4037, 81st Cong., 2d Sess. (1950); see also Note, supra note 131, at 606 n.3 (discussing the origin of the registration provisions).
133. Note, supra note 131, at 606 (citing S. 4130. 81st Cong., 2d Sess. (1950)).
134. For the legislative history behind the passage of the Internal Security Act, along with the external events impacting the debates, see WILLIAM W. KELLER, THE LIBERALS AND J. EDGAR HOOVER: RISE AND FALL OF A DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE STATE 36-55 (1989).
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Security Act, and Kilgore's proposal, in a somewhat different form, was the basis for Title II—the Emergency Detention Act (EDA).

At the core of the EDA was the power of the Attorney General, once the President proclaimed an “Internal Security Emergency,” to apprehend anyone whom he believed to be dangerous. Though the overwhelming bulk of the Act dealt with the procedures to be followed once an emergency had been declared and detention had begun, the critical provisions—outlining what constituted an “Internal Security Emergency” and delimiting the powers of the executive branch when one was declared—were right at the beginning, including, most importantly, section 102(a):

[I]f . . . the President shall find that the proclamation of an emergency pursuant to this section is essential to the preservation, protection and defense of the Constitution, and to the common defense and safety of the territory and people of the United States, the President is authorized to make public proclamation of the existence of an “Internal Security Emergency.”

Thus, beginning in 1950, the President was given limited congressional authorization to pursue a program of preventive, administrative detention against anyone within the United States. Yet, a broader provision, authorizing preventive detention in the event of an “imminent invasion” or a congressional declaration of an “Internal Security Emergency,” was rejected “because of fear that the Constitution prohibits detention under the war powers except in the event of active hostilities presenting a clear threat to national security.” The Emergency Detention Act nowhere dealt with whether or not the President, acting alone, has an inherent constitutional authority to detain U.S. citizens under certain circumstances during wartime, yet, its mere existence suggests a conclusion all its own: If such power is inherently constitutional, why was the Act necessary in the first place? In other words, if the President, prior to the enactment of the Emergency Detention Act, could, in certain emergencies, unilaterally detain U.S. citizens on his own constitutional authority, why would Congress need to independently authorize such detentions?

With that in mind, the role of the Steel Seizure decision in the present

135. This could be done only upon invasion, declaration of war by Congress, or insurrection within the United States “in aid of a foreign enemy.” EDA § 102(a), 64 Stat. at 1021.
136. Id. §§ 103-04, 64 Stat. at 1021-22.
137. Id. § 102(a), 64 Stat. at 1021 (emphasis added).
138. Note, supra note 131, at 651 (emphasis added) (citing 96 CONG. REC. 14781, 14813 (1950)).
139. See Note, supra note 131, at 651 n.427 (noting that the EDA leaves unresolved the question of whether the president could unilaterally authorize and pursue such detentions).
140. But see Arthur E. Sutherland, Jr., Freedom and Internal Security, 64 HARV. L. REV. 383, 410 (1951) (characterizing the EDA as a restraint); Note, supra note 132, at 659 (same).
analysis becomes readily apparent. *Steel Seizure*, or at least Justice Jackson’s concurring opinion in the case, “outlined the three now-canonical categories that guide modern analysis of separation of powers.” As Justice Jackson wrote, “When the President acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress, his authority is at its maximum, for it includes all that he possesses in his own right plus all that Congress can delegate.” Jackson’s second category, the so-called “zone of twilight,” set forth the argument that congressional inertia, indifference or quiescence may sometimes, at least as a practical matter, enable, if not invite, measures on independent presidential responsibility. In this area, any actual test of power is likely to depend on the imperatives of events and contemporary imponderables rather than on abstract theories of law.

Finally, Jackson’s third category, and the one of particular relevance here, dealt with presidential actions “incompatible with the expressed or implied will of Congress, [where] his power is at its lowest ebb.” As Jackson concluded, “then [the President] can rely only upon his own constitutional powers minus any constitutional powers of Congress over the matter. Courts can sustain exclusive Presidential control in such a case only by disabling the Congress from acting upon the subject.”

**B. Abner Mikva’s “Little Statute” and the Repeal of the EDA**

With Justice Jackson’s pronouncements in *Steel Seizure* in mind, the 1971 repeal of the EDA becomes all the more crucial to an understanding of the source of the detention power. Indeed, though no U.S. citizen was ever detained under the auspices of the EDA, the Act was viewed as “an instrumentality for apprehending and detaining citizens who hold unpopular beliefs and views.” Further, and perhaps most poignantly, “groups of Japanese-American citizens regard[ed] the legislation as permitting a recurrence of the round ups which resulted in the detention of Americans of Japanese ancestry in 1941 and subsequently during World War II.”

Former Judge Abner Mikva, a U.S. congressman in 1971, summarized the

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143. *Id.* at 637. To support this proposition, Justice Jackson cited *Merryman, Milligan, Bollman*, and the debate over the authority to properly suspend the writ of habeas corpus. *Id.* at 637 n.3; see also *supra* text accompanying note 57.

144. *Steel Seizure*, 343 U.S. at 637.

145. *Id.* at 637-38.


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background of the repeal of the EDA in a speech before the Chicago Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society on June 15, 2003. As Mikva noted, his “little statute”

came about as a result of a 1970 visit I had made to Hyde Park High School, then a part of my congressional district. . . . [O]ne of the students asked me what I was going to do about the detention camps where they were going to send all the black kids in case of riots. I assured him that there were no such camps, and he showed me a picture of one . . . . The camps had [indeed] been authorized, and property was acquired, but camps were never opened. It also turned out that the Japanese American Citizens League, sensitive to what had happened in World War II, had been trying to get [the EDA] repealed. Each session, Congressman Matsunaga had put in a bill to repeal it, which was duly sent to the House Un-American Activities Committee where it didn’t even get a decent burial. One of my bright staffers suggested that instead of repealing the Emergency Detention Law, we put in a new provision in the criminal code, which said that “no citizen should be imprisoned or otherwise detained by the United States except pursuant to an Act of Congress.” When I asked the parliamentarian where such a bill would get assigned, he smiled broadly, and said that it would go to the Judiciary Committee—of which I was a member.

The rest was history. In its report accompanying the Matsunaga-Mikva bill, the Ninety-Second Congress’s House Judiciary Committee also concluded that the EDA, if ever used, “would seem to violate the Fifth Amendment by providing imprisonment not as a penalty for the commission of an offense, but on mere suspicion that an offense may occur in the future.” Yet, the Committee did not stop there. In the seminal passage, the Report concluded:

[It is not enough merely to repeal the Detention Act. . . . Repeal alone might leave citizens subject to arbitrary executive detention, with no clear demarcation of the limits of executive authority. It has been suggested that repeal alone would leave us where we were prior to 1950. The Committee believes that imprisonment or other detention of citizens should be limited to situations in which a statutory authorization, an Act of Congress, exists. This will assure that no detention camps can be established without at least the acquiescence of the Congress.

Thus, in addition to repealing the Emergency Detention Act, the 1971 Act, an Act “[t]o amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the establishment of detention camps, and for other purposes,” also created, as per Mikva’s

151. Id. at 5, reprinted in 1971 U.S.C.C.A.N. at 1438 (emphasis added). Originally, the proposed bill required that all detentions be pursuant to the “incarceration” provisions of Title 18, the criminal code. The language was changed to any “Act of Congress” only after the government objected that provisions elsewhere in the U.S. Code—including in Title 10, the laws pertaining to the military—authorized the detention of citizens. See 4001 Hearings, supra note 138, at 72-80; see also Wuerth, supra note 45 (manuscript at 29 n.133). Thus, not only can there be no doubt that § 4001 applies to military detention as well, but it is also clear that Congress only had specific authorizations in mind.
plan, 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a), which dictated that “[n]o citizen shall be imprisoned or otherwise detained by the United States except pursuant to an Act of Congress.” \footnote{153} The nature of the required authorization, implicit in the statute, was clear from the legislative history and the background—Congress had to \textit{affirmatively} authorize the extra-judicial detention of U.S. citizens. As Richard Longaker put it:

\begin{quote}
Although there is no bar to Congress authorizing detention in the future, the legislative purpose is quite clear: Congress did not want to reserve detention for itself, it wanted to do away with it. Congress was preparing only for the unthinkable when it preempted the field. \footnote{154}
\end{quote}

Any analysis of the scope or the extent of the application of § 4001(a) is significantly informed by \textit{Howe v. Smith}, \footnote{155} in which the Supreme Court affirmed an expansive reading of the provision as “proscribing detention of any kind by the United States, absent a congressional grant of authority to detain.” \footnote{156} Thus, in \textit{Howe}, the only case to date to bring it before the Supreme Court (albeit in a very different context), § 4001(a) was read expansively to apply to all federal detentions of U.S. citizens, and, as importantly, to require a congressional \textit{grant} of authority, a clear legislative authorization, for the detention. After \textit{Howe}, U.S. citizens are either detained under a congressional grant of authority, or they are detained illegally. \textit{Howe}, a case completely forgotten about prior to September 11, further reaffirms the understanding of the President’s power to detain as not deriving from the Constitution, but from Congress. Otherwise, § 4001(a) would have raised significant constitutional questions, a claim pursued neither in \textit{Howe} nor in any of the instant cases.

\textbf{C. The Detention Power Before September 11}

In sum, prior to September 11, if the executive sought to detain U.S. citizens as anything other than prisoners of war (and, indeed, quite possibly as POWs as well), such detention required unambiguous congressional authorization. Under \textit{Brown}, no declaration of war or other authorization for military action could implicitly authorize such; under \textit{Bollman} and \textit{Merryman}, the executive lacked the independent power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus (though the Militia Act probably delegated such authority in areas under martial law); and, perhaps most importantly, under \textit{Quirin}, the power to detain and try “enemy combatants,” whatever they may be, was held as deriving from Congress’s constitutional authority, belonging to the executive only to the extent to which he took care to ensure that the laws were faithfully executed—

\footnote{153. 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a) (2000). As was noted immediately after its passage, § 4001(a) would not interfere with the Suspension Clause since only Congress could suspend the writ. See \textit{Developments in the Law—The National Security Interest and Civil Liberties}, 85 HARV. L. REV. 1130, 1313-17 (1972).

154. Longaker, supra note 129, at 406


156. \textit{id}. at 479 n.3. For a more detailed discussion, see Vladeck, supra note 10, at 962-63.
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the President could only act pursuant to preexisting legislative authorization. Prior to September 11, the power to detain was clearly the province of the legislature, a power over which Congress had dramatically and forcefully reasserted its domain in 1971. The law was clear and the precedents unambiguous.

IV. THE DETENTION POWER AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

A. Yasser Esam Hamdi, Jose Padilla, and U.S. Citizen “Enemy Combatants”

A few months after September 11, Yasser Esam Hamdi, a Louisiana-born U.S. citizen, was picked up by the Northern Alliance somewhere in Afghanistan. Allegedly carrying an AK-47 assault rifle at the time of his capture, Hamdi was subsequently turned over to U.S. authorities, who transferred him to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, the holding place for non-citizen “enemy combatants,” in January 2002. Between January and April, the government determined that Hamdi was indeed a U.S. citizen, and transferred him stateside to a Navy brig, where he has remained ever since.157 Hamdi filed a habeas petition in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia on June 11, 2002,158 a petition that was formally dismissed by the Fourth Circuit on January 8, 2003,159 after several rounds of interlocutory appeals.160 On July 9, the court voted 8-4 to deny rehearing en banc.161

On May 8, 2002, by which point Hamdi had been in U.S. custody for nearly six months, Jose Padilla was arrested by the FBI on a material witness warrant issued by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York as he got off a plane at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport. On May 15, Padilla appeared before Southern District Chief Judge Michael B. Mukasey—who had issued the material witness warrant—at which time he was appointed counsel. Padilla again appeared in court one week later, where he moved to vacate the material witness warrant. After briefs were submitted on June 7, the question was set down for argument on June 11. On June 9, however, President Bush signed an order declaring Padilla to be an “enemy combatant,” at which time he was transferred to military custody and moved to the floating Navy Brig at Goose Creek, South Carolina, where he has remained since.162

159. Hamdi III, 316 F.3d 450.
160. See Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi II), 296 F.3d 278 (4th Cir. 2002); Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi I), 294 F.3d 598 (4th Cir. 2002).
161. Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi IV), 337 F.3d 335 (4th Cir. 2003).
162. For the factual background, see Padilla ex rel. Newman v. Bush (Padilla I), 233 F. Supp. 2d 564, 569-73 (S.D.N.Y. 2002). See also Paula Span, Enemy Combatants Vanishes Into a "Legal Black
On June 11, the previously scheduled date to argue the motion to vacate, Donna Newman—Padilla’s court-appointed counsel—filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus. Judge Mukasey released an opinion and order on December 4 finding that he did properly have jurisdiction over Padilla, that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was a proper respondent, that the detention was facially lawful, and that Padilla should have access to counsel in order to fully adjudicate the remaining questions vis-à-vis the government’s basis for detaining him. On January 9, 2003, the day after the Fourth Circuit’s decision in Hamdi III, the government filed a motion for reconsideration of the ruling on Padilla’s access to counsel. Judge Mukasey granted the motion, but then adhered to his original opinion in an order issued on March 11, and, on April 9, certified the case for interlocutory appeal to the Second Circuit.

Though the two cases raise myriad and complex procedural and substantive issues, the Southern District in Padilla I and the Fourth Circuit in Hamdi III each made short work out of the requirements of § 4001(a) by invoking the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and 10 U.S.C. § 956(5), an appropriations provision for military detention.

At the core of the Fourth Circuit’s January 8 decision in Hamdi III was the conclusion that “the Commander in Chief has constitutionally detained Hamdi pursuant to the war powers entrusted to him by the United States Constitution.” After noting Quirin’s general statement about the president’s powers under the Commander-in-Chief Clause, the opinion then concludes that “[t]hese powers include the authority to detain those captured in armed struggle,” yet the only precedent the court cites to support that conclusion is one of its own earlier decisions in Hamdi.

This is a recurring theme in the January 8 opinion, which repeatedly cites the Fourth Circuit’s two earlier rulings in Hamdi, especially Hamdi II, as the primary support for a number of its contentions. Indeed, the opinion cites only one Supreme Court precedent, and a shaky one at that, to support the broad judicial deference claim that underscores most of the court’s argument, a claim otherwise based entirely on Hamdi II.

164. See Padilla I, 233 F. Supp. 2d 564.
168. Id. at 463.
169. Id. (citing Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi II), 296 F.3d 278, 281-82 (4th Cir. 2002)).
170. Hamdi III, 316 F.3d at 463 ("Thus the Supreme Court has lauded '[t]he operation of a healthy deference to legislative and executive judgments in the area of military affairs.'" (quoting Rostker v.
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After presenting the judicial deference argument, the court considered, and summarily rejected, the § 4001(a) argument by concluding that both statutes satisfied the 1971 provision’s requirement.\(^{171}\) For the AUMF, the court noted that "capturing and detaining enemy combatants is an inherent part of warfare; the ‘necessary and appropriate force’ referenced in the congressional resolution necessarily includes the capture and detention of any and all hostile forces arrayed against our troops."\(^{172}\)

In addition to the AUMF, the Fourth Circuit also concluded that 10 U.S.C. § 956(5), which authorizes the use of appropriated funds for "the maintenance, pay, and allowances of prisoners of war [and] other persons in the custody of the [military] whose status is determined... to be similar to prisoners of war,"\(^{173}\) also authorizes the detention. As the panel wrote, "[i]t is difficult if not impossible to understand how Congress could make appropriations for the detention of persons ‘similar to prisoners of war’ without also authorizing their detention in the first instance."\(^{174}\)

The court, however, was quick to highlight the difference between *Hamdi* and *Padilla*, and the limited scope of its holding in the former:

> We have no occasion... to address the designation as an enemy combatant of an American citizen captured on American soil or the role that counsel might play in such a proceeding. We shall, in fact, go no further in this case than the specific context before us—that of the undisputed detention of a citizen during a combat operation undertaken in a foreign country and a determination by the executive that the citizen was allied with enemy forces.

In their opinions concurring in the denial of rehearing en banc in *Hamdi IV*, Judges Traxler and Wilkinson only reaffirmed the above argument. As Judge Wilkinson wrote, "[t]o compare this battlefield capture to the domestic arrest in *Padilla v. Bush* is to compare apples and oranges."\(^{176}\)

The four opinions concuring and dissenting from the Fourth Circuit’s denial of rehearing en banc only further suggest the extent to which the underlying authority for the detentions was not a significant issue for the *Hamdi* court. Instead, the opinions focused on whether Hamdi’s capture was

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171. *Hamdi III*, 316 F.3d at 467-68.
172. *id.* at 467.
174. *Hamdi III*, 316 F.3d at 467-68.
175. *id.* at 465 (citation omitted).
176. *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* (*Hamdi IV*), 337 F.3d 335, 344 (4th Cir. 2003) (Wilkinson, J., concurring in denial of rehearing en banc); see also *id.* at 352 (Traxler, J., concurring in denial of rehearing en banc) (“Our decision... addresses only the appropriate level of deference to be observed when the President exercised his power to detain an American citizen found within the boundaries of Afghanistan during our military efforts to overthrow its governing regime.”).
clearly "in the zone of active combat," or if that was even an open question, assuming that there was no question as to the President's underlying authority to detain U.S. citizens captured on the battlefield.

Similarly, in Padilla, Judge Mukasey, unwilling to accept the argument relied upon by the government in its briefs—that § 4001(a) does not apply to enemy combatants such as Padilla—instead accepted the government's weaker assertion, that, even applying § 4001(a), Padilla's detention was authorized by statute, relying, as the Fourth Circuit had in Hamdi III, on the AUMF. In the opinion's most critical passage, Judge Mukasey read the AUMF to "authorize[] action against not only those connected to the subject organizations who are directly responsible for the September 11 attacks, but also against those who would engage in 'future acts of international terrorism' as part of 'such ... organizations.'" Like the Fourth Circuit judges concurring and dissenting from the denial of rehearing en banc in Hamdi IV, Mukasey was not subsequently confronted with the underlying authority for Padilla's detention. Instead, on reconsideration, the questions focused entirely on Padilla's access to counsel.

Thus, the Fourth Circuit, with very little rigorous analysis, affirmed the underlying legality of Hamdi's detention by passing reference to both statutes proffered by the government for just such a purpose. Similarly, the Southern District, though conducting a slightly more thorough examination of the statutes themselves, still found sufficient authorization in one—the AUMF. A closer look at both statutes, however, along with the arguments invoking them, proves both courts distressingly wrong.


The AUMF was passed on September 18, 2001, just one week after the September 11 attacks. In vague terms, it authorized the President:

177. See generally Hamdi IV, 337 F.3d at 341-45 (Wilkinson, J., concurring in the denial of rehearing en banc); id. at 345-57 (Traxler, J., concurring in the denial of rehearing en banc); id. at 357-68 (Luttig, J., dissenting from denial of rehearing en banc); id. at 368-76 (Motz, J., dissenting from denial of rehearing en banc).


179. See Padilla, 233 F. Supp. 2d at 598 ("Although the government struggles unsuccessfully to avoid application of the statute, the government is on firmer ground when it argues that even if § 4001(a) applies, its terms have been complied with.").

180. Id. at 598-99 (citations omitted). Mukasey did not consider the § 956(5) argument, but he did not need to. Following from his discussion of the AUMF, Congress had authorized Padilla's detention, and § 4001(a) was satisfied.


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[T]o use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons.¹⁸³

Despite the quick turnaround between the attacks and the AUMF, and although the language of the AUMF, as passed, was somewhat ambiguous, it was far less of a carte blanche than what the Bush Administration had originally asked for, since the Senate removed from the final version of the Act the phrase “and to deter and pre-empt any future acts of terrorism or aggression against the United States,” which originally came between “September 11, 2001” and “or harbored.”¹⁸⁴ Further, as the text plainly shows, the AUMF said nothing about the detention of anyone in connection with the use of military force, let alone the detention of U.S. citizens, such as Padilla, arrested stateside by civilian authorities. Additionally, there is the semantic argument—that “the language of the Authorization suggests that it applies to future acts only to the extent that the capture of those responsible for the September 11th attacks would prevent future attacks by those persons.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, if § 4001(a) requires an unambiguous congressional grant of authority to detain U.S. citizens, it is hard—if not impossible—to see how the AUMF is such a legislative measure.

Second, even if § 4001(a) could be satisfied by implicit congressional authorization, there is Brown v. United States, the Supreme Court’s 1814 holding that congressional declarations of war are not, as a general matter, independent legislative grants of substantive authority.¹⁸⁶ Under Brown, an executive’s power during a declared war is either inherent in the Constitution, is delegated by a separate Act of Congress, or does not exist—it cannot come from the declaration of war itself. Thus, it should only follow that use of force authorizations, though not strictly “declarations of war,” should be read with a similar presumption, especially in light of Ex parte Endo.¹⁸⁷ Yet, as Parts I, II, and III have clearly established, with one possible exception for prisoners of war, no inherent executive power to detain U.S. citizens during wartime has ever been sustained, let alone the detention of U.S. citizen “enemy combatants,” whatever that category of persons may actually be.

This is not to suggest that the President may lawfully detain Hamdi and

¹⁸³. Id. § 2(a).
¹⁸⁴. See 147 CONG. REC. S9950-51 (daily ed., Oct. 1, 2001) (statement of Sen. Byrd) (providing the text of the Administration’s proposal); see also id. at S9949 (“[T]he use of force authority granted to the President extends only to the perpetrators of the September 11 attack. It was not the intent of Congress to give the President unbridled authority . . . to wage war against terrorism writ large without the advice and consent of Congress. That intent was made clear when Senators modified the text of the resolution proposed by the White House to limit the grant of authority to the September 11 attack.”).
¹⁸⁵. Vladeck, supra note 10, at 967 n.40.
¹⁸⁶. See supra notes 36-46 and accompanying text (discussing Brown).
¹⁸⁷. See supra Section II.D (highlighting Endo’s take on legislative authorization during wartime).
Padilla as POWs on his own constitutional authority. Because of Territo, however, this question is not as easily resolved as the question of whether he can detain them on any other basis. If Hamdi actually was captured in the "zone of active combat," and if he was fighting for the Taliban, then he probably could be lawfully detained as a prisoner of war until the cessation of hostilities, so long as the detention conformed to the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.\(^8\)

This, however, is far cry from the Fourth Circuit's assertion, in Hamdi III, that "[t]here is no indication that § 4001(a) was intended to overrule the longstanding rule that an armed and hostile American citizen captured on the battlefield during wartime may be treated like the enemy combatant that he is."\(^8\)\(^9\) As argued above, to whatever extent such a "longstanding rule" exists, it derives from Quirin, it does not inherently authorize indefinite detention without trial, and it still requires legislative authorization, which is clearly lacking here. Further, the category "enemy combatant" has, except for Quirin and two other World War II-era cases, no history.\(^9\) The argument that "capturing and detaining enemy combatants is an inherent part of warfare" distorts the truth. Capturing and detaining belligerents is, and always has been, an inherent part of warfare. However, even during the Second World War, when the precedents on which the Fourth Circuit's decision relied were created, belligerents were lawful, in which case they were detained as prisoners of war, or unlawful, and thus subject to mandatory trial by congressionally authorized military commissions for crimes proscribed by Congress. "There was no middle ground for 'enemy combatants' to be held indefinitely without a judicial remedy."\(^1\)

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\(^8\) See Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Aug. 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3316, 75 U.N.T.S. 135 [hereinafter 1949 Geneva Convention]; see also supra note 101 (discussing the POW distinction). Detaining Padilla as a POW would raise a separate range of issues, since he was most decidedly not captured in a "zone of active combat," since he was initially arrested by the FBI, and since he was not actively fighting against the United States at the time of his capture. Cf. NIGEL S. RODLEY, THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW (2d ed. 1999) (surveying the legal requirements of the treatment of all prisoners—military and otherwise—under international law).


\(^1\) Vladeck, supra note 10, at 967; see also Ex parte Quirin, 317 U.S. 1, 31 (1942); GOLDMAN & TITTEMORE, supra note 190, at 23-39 (discussing the historical distinction between lawful and unlawful combatants in international law). But see Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi IV), 337 F.3d 335, 341 n.1 (4th Cir. 2003) (Wilkinson, J., concurring in denial of rehearing en banc) ("The government does not concede that Hamdi is a prisoner of war; but rather asserts that he is an unlawful combatant. For purposes of the present case, the distinction is irrelevant because the decision to detain until the end of hostilities belongs to the executive in either case.").

True, the decision to detain belongs to the executive, but not if there is no underlying authority—no
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Because neither Padilla nor Hamdi are detained as POWs, the AUMF cannot, as a matter of law under Brown, independently authorize their detentions. Thus, the AUMF does not satisfy § 4001(a).


Of course, both Brown and § 4001(a) are still satisfied if authorization for the detentions of Hamdi and Padilla can be found in 10 U.S.C. § 956(5), the other statute invoked by the government as authorizing the detentions. Inasmuch as the case for the AUMF satisfying § 4001(a) fails to persuade, however, the arguments in support of 10 U.S.C. § 956(5) are completely irreconcilable with both a long-accepted canon of statutory interpretation and with the provision’s history itself.

As to the statutory interpretation, to read 10 U.S.C. § 956(5) the way the Fourth Circuit suggests would lead to an absurd result, since it would effectively overrule 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a) and its requirement of an explicit grant of authority, yet no mention of § 4001(a) is made in the Act enacting 10 U.S.C. § 956, nor in the legislative history accompanying it. Since repeals by implication are generally disfavored, and “the policy applies with even greater force when the claimed repeal rests solely on an Appropriations Act,” it is dubious at best to read 10 U.S.C. § 956(5), which, in its plain language, merely appropriates funds for the detention of POWs and persons similar to such, and which does not explicitly authorize the detention of anyone, as implicitly authorizing the detention of U.S. citizens in satisfaction of the auspices of § 4001(a).

Yet, it is the history of § 956(5) that provides an even more forceful argument for why the provision could never satisfy § 4001(a). The government,
in both *Hamdi* and *Padilla*, has argued that § 956(5) was codified in 1984, and should thus be read with the presumption that Congress knew about § 4001(a) when it passed the provision. Indeed, the language in 10 U.S.C. § 956(5) appropriating funds for “expenses incident to the maintenance, pay, and allowances of prisoners of war, other persons in the custody of the Army, Navy, or Air Force whose status is determined . . . to be similar to prisoners of war, and persons detained in the custody of the Army, Navy, or Air Force pursuant to Presidential proclamation” was codified by the Department of Defense Authorization Act of 1985. However, similar language had been included in the annual Defense Department appropriations act every year, dating back well before the 1971 enactment of § 4001(a), all the way to the Second World War.

Specifically, most of the language in § 956(5), including that authorizing the use of funds for “persons detained . . . pursuant to Presidential proclamation” was first codified in an emergency supplemental appropriations act passed by the Seventy-Seventh Congress on December 17, 1941, just ten days after Pearl Harbor. The Act, which supplemented the 1942 Military Appropriation Act, authorized the Secretary of War

[T]o utilize any appropriation available for the Military Establishment, under such regulations as he may prescribe, for all expenses incident to the maintenance, pay, and allowances of prisoners of war, other persons in Army custody whose status is determined . . . to be similar to prisoners of war, and persons detained in Army custody pursuant to Presidential proclamation.

Such appropriations were necessary because, just five days earlier, President Roosevelt had issued Executive Order 8972, in which he “authorize[d] and direct[ed] the Secretar[ies] of War [and the Navy] . . . to establish and maintain military guards and patrols, and to take other appropriate measures, to protect from injury or destruction national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities.”

The December 12 Executive Order was superseded, two months later, by the now-infamous Executive Order 9066, which authorized the creation of “military areas” from which “any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be

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197. 10 U.S.C. § 956(5).
198. See supra note 193 and accompanying text.
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subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion.” Executive Order 9066, which was ratified by Congress on March 21, 1942, became the basis for the Japanese-American internment camps. Though a number of Japanese Americans were convicted for violating exclusion orders, a measure that the 1942 Act criminalized, most were detained under the orders themselves, and were thus “persons detained in Army custody pursuant to Presidential proclamation,” funds for which were available under the December 17 Act, the predecessor to § 956(5).

It is unlikely—and nothing in the Congressional Record supports the notion—that this provision was enacted with internment in mind. Nevertheless, it is certainly ironic that the provision that was eventually used to appropriate funds for the detention of Japanese-American internees during World War II is today being cited as satisfying § 4001(a), a statute passed to explicitly repudiate the internment camps and to require unambiguous congressional authorization for the detention of all U.S. citizens. If anything, the history of § 956(5) is written in the very tears § 4001(a) was meant to wipe away.

To argue that § 956(5) authorizes the detention of U.S. citizens as enemy combatants is thus not only to argue that it authorizes the detention of anyone detained pursuant to a presidential proclamation, but also to argue that it rendered § 4001(a) moot, ab initio, for it is a contention that Congress, in enacting § 956(5)—and in codifying it in 1984—delegated its entire detention authority to the President. If this is not an absurd result, what is? If § 956(5) does authorize the detention of U.S. citizens as “enemy combatants,” as the Fourth Circuit plainly held it does, then the slope for others who might be detained is not just slippery; it is downright vertical.

Thus, no compelling argument exists that either the AUMF or 10 U.S.C.

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205. See Grossman, supra note 120, at 651-52.
206. See, e.g., Korematsu v. United States, 323 U.S. 214 (1944); Hirabayashi v. United States, 320 U.S. 81 (1943); see also Gudridge, supra note 122, at 1947 & n.73 (discussing the distinction between the exclusion cases and Ex parte Endo, 323 U.S. 283 (1944), and citing the numbers of persons believed to fit under either scheme).
207. See supra notes 146-156 and accompanying text (discussing the background of § 4001(a) and the importance of repudiating the internment camps).
208. Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi III), 316 F.3d 450, 467-68 (4th Cir. 2003). It is no small wonder, based on the Fourth Circuit’s summary disposition of this critical question, that Judge Motz was so critical in her dissent from the denial of rehearing en banc:

I fear that the panel may also have opened the door to the indefinite detention, without access to a lawyer or the courts, of any...citizen, even one captured on American soil, who the Executive designates an "enemy combatant," as long as the Executive asserts that the area in which the citizen was detained was an "active combat zone," and the detainee, deprived of access to courts and counsel, cannot dispute this fact.

Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (Hamdi IV), 337 F.3d 335, 373 n.5 (4th Cir. 2003) (Motz, J., dissenting from denial of rehearing en banc). Indeed, the holding is even broader than what Judge Motz portrays.
§ 956(5) satisfy the requirements of § 4001(a). Even if § 4001(a) does not require explicit congressional authorization (which the legislative history seems to suggest it does), neither statute serves to implicitly authorize the detentions either. Hamdi and Padilla are both detained in violation of § 4001(a), and all of the secondary questions that the courts have thus far been preoccupied with—e.g., where Hamdi was captured; whether his next friend should have standing; whether Padilla should have access to counsel; whether the Southern District should have jurisdiction over his habeas petition; and so on—should never have been reached in the first place. This is not to suggest that these issues are unimportant or easily resolved,\textsuperscript{209} rather, though this Note has focused much more on the baseline legality of the detentions than on the due process afforded to the detainees, I have not meant to imply that the latter is any less important than the former. Certainly, if Congress had authorized the detentions of Hamdi and Padilla, the inquiry would not end there, but would rather turn to the process by which they, as U.S. citizens, were designated “enemy combatants,” and the availability of judicial review to challenge that determination. Because Congress has not so acted, however, these questions need not be reached.

E. On the Importance of Congress

Congressional authorization, of course, is not all that is necessary for the detention of U.S. citizens—such authorization must comport with the various protections afforded by the Constitution, whether explicitly or by construction.\textsuperscript{210} Still, as Alexander Bickel argues, “Singly, either the President or Congress can fall into bad errors . . . . So they can together too, but that is somewhat less likely, and in any event, together they are all we’ve got.”\textsuperscript{211}

That Congress has demonstrated a willingness to grant broad authority to the executive branch to fight the “war on terror” is self-evident from a host of post-September 11 enactments, the most wide-ranging of which is, of course,
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the USA PATRIOT Act. USA PATRIOT, the source of significant criticism from civil libertarians, is itself instructive, for it authorizes the executive branch to detain aliens suspected of terrorist ties for up to seven days without charges,\(^{212}\) with no similar provision for U.S. citizens. An earlier statute had already made it a crime to provide material support to terrorist organizations,\(^{213}\) a charge the government has used against a number of other terrorism suspects in the aftermath of September 11.\(^{214}\) Additionally, the government has detained a number of individuals under a robust reading of the material witness statute, 18 U.S.C. § 3144, that was recently sustained by the Second Circuit,\(^{215}\) and that is an explicit congressional authorization in any event. Other congressional action in the aftermath of September 11 only further underscores the role Congress has thus far played in the “war on terror.”\(^{216}\)

Indeed, it is not as if Congress has been reluctant to arm the executive with a host of weapons to fight the “war.” If anything, it has been too suppliant, deferring to the executive’s insistence that such powers are necessary to prevent future attacks.\(^{217}\) This belies the larger point, however, that Congress, in the aftermath of September 11, has not shown the least reluctance to play its constitutional role; certainly, it is not the case that the executive branch is here confronted with a hostile or indifferent legislature refusing to act. If the executive seeks authority to detain U.S. citizen “enemy combatants” as part of the war on terror, Congress must first independently act to authorize such.\(^{218}\)

\(^{212}\) See supra note 11 (outlining USA PATRIOT’s detention provisions).


\(^{214}\) For an overview of these cases, see Cole, supra note 17, at 8-15.


\(^{217}\) This is hardly a new problem. See ELY, supra note 86, at ix (“[D]ecisions [to go to war] have been made throughout the Cold War period by the executive, without significant congressional participation (or judicial willingness to insist on such participation). It is common to style this shift a usurpation, but that oversimplifies to the point of misstatement. It’s true our Cold War presidents generally wanted it that way, but Congress (and the courts) ceded the ground without a fight. . . . [T]he legislative surrender was a self-interested one: Accountability is pretty frightening stuff.”); see also Editorial, The Moussaoui Law, WASH. POST, Aug. 4, 2003, at A14 (“Congress has sat on the sidelines far too long as important decisions were made concerning the legal response to 9/11.”).

\(^{218}\) One example of what such authorization might look like is the Detention of Enemy Combatants Act, H.R. 1029, 108th Cong. (2003). Originally introduced in the 107th Congress by California Congressman Adam Schiff, the bill would authorize the detention of U.S. citizen “enemy combatants” in the war on terror under certain, prescribed conditions, and with a whole host of
Especially in the current climate, it is not a major political obstacle, but it is a constitutionally mandated one.

**CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF COURTS IN THE “WAR ON TERROR”**

Much has been made, in the three decades since the end of the Vietnam War, of the extent to which that conflict altered the constitutional relationship between legislative and presidential war power, or, at the very least, highlighted a shift that had already begun to take place.219 Yet, as much as Vietnam crystallized the debate over the separation of war-making powers between the executive and Congress, it also saw a reaffirmation of the separation of detention powers between the two branches. It is no coincidence that the present incarnation of 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a) was enacted in the midst of the conflict in Southeast Asia, for it was undoubtedly meant to apply as broadly and forcefully in wartime as in peacetime.220

A number of scholars have challenged various Administration policies and initiatives in the aftermath of September 11 on the grounds that the “war against terror” is not a war, for constitutional purposes, or, at the very least, it is not a war that invokes the war powers allocated to the president by the Constitution.221 In the detention realm, however, such a distinction is wholly unnecessary. Though the Constitution may not be what Justice Davis described in *Milligan* as “a law for rulers and people, equally in war and peace,”222 it is clear beyond any doubt that § 4001(a) is, especially when the 1971 enactment is properly understood as Congress’s reclamation and reassertion of a power it alone possessed dating back to the Founding.

Assessing and asserting the force and vitality of § 4001(a), however, is only...
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the beginning, for inasmuch as it may bar unilateral executive action, such a bar is completely meaningless absent judicial enforcement. Here, we run headlong into what Professor Harold Koh has called “the problem of judicial tolerance”—the fact that, especially since Vietnam, “[t]he president almost always seems to win in foreign affairs” because the courts have tended to defer to the political branches when it comes to questions of war and national security.223 But why should this matter in the detention realm, where the foreign affairs power is nowhere implicated, and where the traditional source of the authority is Congress, and not the President?

Indeed, this is the enigma of the detention of “enemy combatants” after September 11—the fact that the statutes and the judicial precedents are entirely on one side, the government is entirely on the other, and the courts are stuck squarely in the middle, attracted by precedent, yet swayed just as much by politics. This is also the reason why the detention of just two people in the aftermath of September 11 represents such a fundamental apex in the role of the judiciary in the “war on terror” and in the ever-ongoing debate over the proper separation of powers. Both the Fourth Circuit’s opinions in *Hamdi III* (as well as the concurrences in *Hamdi IV*) and the Southern District’s opinion in *Padilla* can be read as manifestations, at their core, of this “problem of judicial tolerance.” Judge Wilkinson’s opinion for the Fourth Circuit is replete with references to—and, indeed, is largely based on the idea of—the “proper” deference owed to the executive in times of conflict, especially with regard to the questionable decision to characterize Hamdi as an “enemy combatant.”224 Judge Mukasey’s opinion in *Padilla*, which otherwise rejects many of the government’s less significant arguments, defers, in its most critical passage, to the interpretation of the AUMF favored by the Administration, despite evidence in the legislative history that Congress explicitly meant to foreclose such a reading.

Yet, this is not just what Professor Koh called the “problem of judicial tolerance,” for tolerance implicitly (and, for Professor Koh, explicitly) suggests passivity. Instead, these decisions are better characterized as highlighting the problem of judicial abdication, for in deferring to what is essentially unilateral


224. This is a major problem with *Hamdi III* and *Hamdi IV*—the extent to which both the panel opinion in the former and the concurring opinions in the latter repeatedly invoke the need for deference, and yet still reach dubious resolutions on the merits. The Washington Post put it best: “Some circles can’t be squared, and the courts must at some point choose between deference to the president’s war powers and protecting the liberty of Americans. Here’s hoping the Supreme Court makes a better choice.” Editorial, Dissent on Detention, WASH. POST, July 20, 2003, at B6.
executive action, the judiciary is failing to serve its most fundamental constitutional purpose as a check on such power. As Justice Black opened his dissent in Johnson v. Eisentrager, "[n]ot only is United States citizenship a 'high privilege,' it is a priceless treasure. . . . This ideal gave birth to the constitutional provision for an independent judiciary with authority to check abuses of executive power and to issue writs of habeas corpus liberating persons illegally imprisoned."225

The danger, as Justice Jackson so presciently warned in Korematsu, is judicial validation of a policy that is otherwise constitutionally repugnant.226 That is the danger here.227 It is slightly more complicated in the case of Yasser Esam Hamdi, but at least insofar as Jose Padilla is concerned, the detention of a U.S. citizen, arrested by domestic authorities within the United States without charge, transferred from civilian to military custody (where he has since been indefinitely confined without access to counsel) solely on the basis of a presidential determination which the government argues is not subject to judicial review, when no statute of Congress has authorized such unilateral executive action, is as deeply chilling to the rights conferred on all U.S. citizens by the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment as any case to come before the federal judiciary in our generation, if not ever.228

Those who support the government's position argue that such actions are necessary in order to successfully prosecute the "war on terror" and to prevent future terrorist attacks like those of September 11. As Attorney General John Ashcroft told the Senate Judiciary Committee in December of 2001, "to those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America's enemies, and pause to America's friends."229 I think that is backwards. It is the sacrifice of freedoms in the name of security that gives pause to our friends—we need look no further for evidence of this than the outrage that the Guantánamo detentions have caused in Great Britain, and the protests that have been leveled at Tony Blair, easily our closest ally in the "war on terror."230

226. Korematsu v. United States, 323 U.S. 214, 246 (1944) (Jackson, J., dissenting) ("[O]nce a judicial opinion rationalizes [an executive action] to show that it conforms to the Constitution, or rather rationalizes the Constitution to show that the Constitution sanctions such an [action], the Court for all time has validated the principle . . . [which] then lies about like a loaded weapon ready for the hand of any authority that can bring forward a plausible claim of an urgent need.").
228. Indeed, perhaps only Dred Scott and the World War II internment cases have implicated similarly fundamental liberty interests.
230. See, e.g., Nicholas Watt and Vikram Dodd, MPs 'Fury at Secret US Trials of 'Terror' Britons,
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The power to detain U.S. citizens is very much embedded within the Constitution. The power to do so unilaterally, however, is not. The government may have the authority to detain Hamdi and Padilla as “enemy combatants,” but President Bush, acting on his own, simply doesn’t. To date, the Fourth Circuit has used the “zone of active combat” distinction as a means around the otherwise unambiguous precedents; the Southern District of New York relied on its interpretation of an ambiguous and vague congressional Resolution authorizing the war in Afghanistan that certainly did not mean to authorize the detention of U.S. citizens arrested in Chicago. Neither conclusion is convincing, not just because the legal arguments are so overwhelmingly contraindicated, but because the judiciary has an obligation, in such cases, to check the power of a President acting outside the Constitution, and to restore the constitutional role Congress reclaimed for itself in enacting § 4001(a).231

There is nothing ideological or unduly melodramatic about such a concern for the separation of powers in the present context. The voluminous precedents read the same regardless of the reader; what really matters—and what this Note hopes to ensure—is that they are read at all.

Ancient Right unnoticed as the breath we draw—

Leave to live by no man’s leave, underneath the law.232

GUARDIAN, July 8, 2003, at 2; see also Harold Hongju Koh, Foreword, On American Exceptionalism, 55 STAN. L. REV. 1479 (2003) (surveying the criticism of America for its abandonment of international law and for its unilateralism); cf. Cole, supra note 17 at 29 (“A little more than one year after the United States suffered one of the worst attacks on civilian life in modern history, one might expect to find widespread sympathy and support for the United States around the world. But instead, reports of anti-Americanism suggest that hostility to the United States has grown substantially since September 11.”).


231. The warning of Chief Judge William Cranch, dissenting from the D.C. Circuit Court’s decision in United States v. Bollman, is very appropriate:

In times like these, when the public mind is agitated, when wars, and rumors of wars, plots, conspiracies and treasons excite alarm, it is the duty of a court to be peculiarly watchful lest the public feeling should reach the seat of justice, and thereby precedents be established which may become the ready tools of faction in times more disastrous. The worst of precedents may be established from the best of motives. We ought to be upon our guard lest our zeal for the public interest lead us to overstep the bounds of the law and the constitution; for although we may thereby bring one criminal to punishment, we may furnish the means by which a[ ] hundred innocent persons may suffer. The constitution was made for times of commotion. In the calm of peace and prosperity there is seldom great injustice. Dangerous precedents occur in dangerous times. It then becomes the duty of the judiciary calmly to poise the scales of justice, unmoved by the arm of power, undisturbed by the clamor of the multitude.

24 F. Cas. 1189, 1192 (C.C.D.D.C. 1807) (No. 14,622) (Cranch, C.J., dissenting); see also In re McDonald, 16 F. Cas. 17, 19 (C.C.E.D. Mo. 1861) (No. 8751) (borrowing the Bollman language to justify the importance of judicial intervention in Missouri on the eve of the Civil War).

232. RUDYARD KIPLING, The Old Issue, in RUDYARD KIPLING’S VERSE 294, 295 (Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1940); see also Hutchinson, supra note 127, at 483-84 & n.91 (reprinting Justice Jackson’s draft concurrence in Endo, which contained the couplet, and explaining its historical origins). Justice Jackson invoked the passage again in his Steel Seizure concurrence on the limits of executive power. See Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer, 343 U.S. 579, 654 (1952) (Jackson, J., concurring).