

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

March 17, 2013

Rand Paul Filibusters

I never thought I'd say it but Rand Paul, Tea Party Activist Extraordinaire, did something right: he filibustered until he forced the Obama administration to admit that killing noncombatant American citizens on American soil was not legal.

I don't like Tea Party politicians. For the most part, they advocate policies that will make the U.S. a harsher place for everybody but the wealthy. But in this instance, Rand Paul was right. Our government has no right to use drones to fire on American citizens for any reason. I should clarify that Rand Paul was only addressing the use of drones on U.S. soil and not the use of drones to kill U.S. citizens outside of the U.S. who are advocating terrorist acts against the U.S.

In many way, Obama has been a disappointment as a president. He is better than George Bush was, or McCain or Romney would have been. That's a case of damning with faint praise. George Bush set the performance bar so low it would have been hard to underperform him. John McCain chose Sarah Palin as his running mate which conclusively established that he is incapable of rational decision making when it counts. Mitt Romney, although a nice guy and adept at making millions of dollars for himself, would have plunged us into a decades-long depression with his fiscal ideas and deprived millions of Americans of health care.

But getting back to Rand Paul, I'd like to congratulate him on having the courage to stand up for all of us and draw a line in the sand where it was needed. Americans admire decisive actions and will no doubt start to wonder whether Rand Paul will be running for president in 2016. George Bush was the master of decisive action. His only problem was that every action he took was the wrong one. If Rand Paul continues to exercise good judgment and advocate sound policies like cutting a bloated military budget, his courage in the senate may win him the Republican nomination in 2016. He may not be perfect but he would be a step up from previous Republican presidential candidates.