

Hate Speech and Anders Breivik

The despicable terrorist attack in Norway has raised the question of whether free speech can lead to murder, and if so whether more should be done to restrict hate speech on the Internet and elsewhere. Once again, terrorism is threatening not only the security of citizens, but also their most cherished freedoms, and those most essential to addressing moral and social challenges.

The head of the Social Democratic party in Germany, Sigmar Gabriel, stated that “xenophobia and nationalism in the region fostered the attacks in Norway” and that “the center of society has to make clear that there is no room for this with us, even for sanitized versions.” Thorbjørn Jagland, former prime minister of Norway and current chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, warned politicians – citing specifically Britain’s David Cameron – “to be very careful how we are discussing these issues, what words are used . . . the words we are using are very important because it can lead to much more.”

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