

# America: The Power to Assassinate a Compliant and Submissive People

By [Jacob G. Hornberger](#)

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*President Obama's nomination of John Brennan is being held up over Brennan's refusal to state whether the president's power to assassinate Americans (and others) extends to American soil. The controversy is summed up in a [great article](#) by Glenn Greenwald.*

The fact that Brennan could not bring himself to immediately say that the president doesn't have the power to assassinate Americans (and others) right here within the United States is revealing. He undoubtedly knows that the president does claim to wield such power and that the president just doesn't want to alarm Americans by informing them that he now wields the power to assassinate anyone he wants, including Americans here in the United States.

I can't see how there's any room for doubt here. Ever since President Bush claimed extraordinary powers after the 9/11 attacks, we here at The Future of Freedom Foundation have been pointing out that the powers were not limited to foreigners or to foreign lands. When U.S. forces, both military and CIA, were kidnapping people, torturing them, and incarcerating them without trial, we kept emphasizing that such powers were not limited to foreigners. By following the logic employed by Bush and his associates, it was clear that those extraordinary powers extended to Americans as well, both abroad and here at home.

But all too many Americans comforted themselves by thinking that those extraordinary powers applied only to foreigners and that the powers were necessary to keep them "safe." Therefore, they endorsed what was going on with much enthusiasm, simply blocking out of their minds that they were also endorsing the most revolutionary change in the relationship between the federal government and the American citizenry in U.S. history.

Then came the case of Jose Padilla. He was an American who was accused of conspiracy to commit terrorism. Rather than have him indicted and then prosecute him in federal court, the feds whisked him away to a military dungeon, where the Pentagon tortured him and threatened to keep him incarcerated for the rest of his life as an "enemy combatant" in the "war on terrorism."

We took a leading role in opposing that extraordinary exercise of military supremacy over the American citizenry. We continually pointed out that what they did to Padilla, if upheld, they could then do to all other Americans. But because Padilla was not the most

sympathetic character in the world, all too many Americans were happy over what the feds were doing to him, blocking out of their minds that the feds could now do the same thing to all other Americans.

And sure enough, the federal courts, in the fear-ridden environment of post-9/11, upheld what the president and the Pentagon did to Padilla, which means that they can now do the same to every American — and some 12 years after the 9/11 attacks!

And now we have the president's assassination program, in which the president, along with his military and CIA, now wield the power to assassinate anyone they want, no questions asked. They've already killed countless foreigners as well as at least three Americans, including a 16-year-old boy. They do it all in secret and are not required to answer any questions as to who they have assassinated or why. Their power to kill people is omnipotent.

Do they claim the power to assassinate Americans right here at home? How can there be any doubt about it? From the very beginning, they simply converted a standard federal crime — terrorism — into an act of war. They called it "the war on terrorism," and said that this war was just like World Wars I and II. They said that in war, they have the right to take captives, torture them, and execute illegal enemy combatants, and also to assassinate the enemy.

They also said that this war would go on forever or for at least the lifetimes of everyone living today, given that there were so many terrorists in the world. As part of that war, the president, the military, and the CIA would have to assume extraordinary powers, they said, ones that were inherent to the most extreme dictatorships in history.

Significantly, they repeatedly emphasized that in this war, the battlefield wasn't limited to the Middle East or surrounding regions. Instead, in this war the entire world constituted the battlefield. That, of course, included the United States.

Thus, it didn't take a rocket scientist to draw the logical conclusion — whatever extraordinary powers were being exercised against foreign "enemy combatants" in the "war on terrorism" could be applied against people right here on American soil, including Americans.

Of course, as we have also been pointing out since 9/11, the entire matter is just one great big sham and fraud. They took a federal criminal offense — terrorism — and used it a ruse to claim that America was now "at war" and then claimed extreme dictatorial powers in the process. It would be no different if the president used another federal war — the "war on drugs" — as a ruse to assume extraordinary dictatorial powers, such as the power to kidnap, torture, execute, and assassinate suspected drug users and dealers.

Our American ancestors tried their best to prevent this dictatorial nonsense. That's why they used the Constitution to bring into existence a government of limited, enumerated powers. Notice that the dictatorial powers claimed by Bush and Obama are not among those enumerated powers. To make sure that federal officials got the point, our ancestors demanded the enactment of four separate amendments to the Constitution — the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th Amendments. Those amendments stated that with respect to federal crimes, people would be guaranteed the protections of criminal indictments, due process of law, trial by jury, freedom from cruel and unusual punishments, and other protections.

And there is another important thing to note about those four amendments. Notice that the protections and guarantees apply to people in general, not just to Americans. That's because our ancestors understood that justice requires that the rules apply to everyone equally, not one set of rules for foreigners and another set of rules for Americans. Thus, under our system of justice, President Obama has no right to be assassinating anyone or torturing anyone or incarcerating anyone without due process of law and trial by jury.

And it must be emphasized: terrorism is, in fact, a federal crime. That's why they ultimately made Padilla a criminal defendant. That's why terrorism is listed in the U.S. Code as a criminal offense. That's why they have terrorism cases in federal court all the time. The truth is that there is no real war and there has never been one, any more than there has been a real war in the "war on drugs." After all, how is the enemy supposed to surrender in this "war"? Where are the transport ships bringing invading troops to America? Where are the supply lines?

And let's not forget something else of equal importance — the only reason that people are killing U.S. troops over there is because they're over there interfering with the affairs of other countries. That's what the killing is all about on both sides —not because people are trying to conquer America and enslave Americans but simply because they want the U.S. government, especially the U.S. military and CIA, out of their countries. And the more the Pentagon and the CIA continue to kill people in the process, the more they generate an endless supply of terrorists, which they then use to perpetuate their dictatorial powers. As I have [long pointed out](#), the U.S. government is the greatest terrorist-producing machine in history.

It's all been a sham, a fraud, and a ruse to enable the U.S. national-security state to adopt the same powers of dictatorship that it has long supported and trained, such as Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile, the military dictatorships in Guatemala, the Shah's dictatorship in Iran, Mubarak's dictatorship in Egypt, and many more.

But Brennan shouldn't been concerned about alarming Americans about Obama's power to assassinate them on American soil. As we have learned since 9/11, the American people are among the most compliant, cooperative, and submissive people on the planet. All the feds have to do is say that they are doing it to keep them safe, and except for libertarians and (a few liberals and conservatives), unfortunately all too many Americans continue to fall for anything and agree to anything the government wants to do to them.

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