

The Federal Coup to Overthrow the States and Nix the 10th Amendment Is Underway

By [John W. Whitehead](#)

Global Research, July 22, 2020

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Law and Justice](#),
[Police State & Civil Rights](#)

[“I don’t need invitations by the state, state mayors, or state governors, to do our job. We’re going to do that, whether they like us there or not.”](#)—Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf’s defense of the Trump Administration’s deployment of militarized federal police to address civil unrest in the states

This is a wake-up call.

What is unfolding before our very eyes—[with police agencies defying local governments in order to tap into the power of federal militarized troops in order to put down domestic unrest](#)—could very quickly snowball into an act of aggression against the states, a coup by armed, militarized agents of the federal government.

At a minimum, this is an attack on the [Tenth Amendment](#), which affirms the sovereignty of the states and the citizenry, and the right of the states to stand as a bulwark against [overreach and power grabs by the federal government](#).

If you’re still deluding yourself into believing that this thinly-veiled exercise in martial law is anything other than an attempt to bulldoze what remains of the Constitution and reinforce the iron-fisted rule of the police state, you need to stop drinking the Kool-Aid.

This is no longer about partisan politics or civil unrest or even authoritarian impulses.

This is a turning point.

Unless we take back the reins—and soon—looking back on this time years from now, historians may well point to the events of 2020 as the death blow to America’s short-lived experiment in self-government.

The government’s recent actions in Portland, Oregon—when unidentified federal agents (believed to be border police, ICE and DHS agents), wearing military fatigues with patches that just say “Police” and sporting all kinds of weapons, [descended uninvited on the city in unmarked vehicles, snatching protesters off the streets](#) and detaining them without formally arresting them or offering any explanation of why they’re being held—is just a foretaste of what’s to come.

One of those detainees was a 53-year-old disabled Navy veteran who was in downtown Portland during the protests but not a participant. Concerned about the tactics being used by government agents who had taken an oath of office to protect and defend the Constitution, Christopher David tried to speak the “secret” police. Almost immediately, he

was [assaulted by federal agents, beaten with batons and pepper sprayed](#)

Another peaceful protester was [reportedly shot in the head with an impact weapon](#) by this federal goon squad.

The Trump Administration has already announced its plans to [deploy these border patrol agents to other cities across the country](#) (Chicago is supposedly next) in an apparent bid to put down civil unrest. Yet the [overriding concerns by state and local government officials](#) to Trump's plans suggest that weaponizing the DHS as an occupying army will only provoke more violence and unrest.

We've been set up.

Under the guise of protecting federal properties against civil unrest, the Trump Administration has formed a [task force of secret agents who look, dress and act like military stormtroopers on a raid and have been empowered to roam cities in unmarked vehicles](#), snatching citizens off the streets, whether or not they've been engaged in illegal activities.

As the *Guardian* reports, "[The incidents being described sound eerily reminiscent of the CIA's post-9/11 rendition program under George W Bush](#), where intelligence agents would roll up in unmarked vans in foreign countries, blindfold terrorism suspects (many of whom turned to be innocent) and kidnap them without explanation. Only instead of occurring on the streets of Italy or the Middle East, it's happening in downtown Portland."

The so-called racial justice activists who have made looting, violence, vandalism and intimidation tactics the hallmarks of their protests have played right into the government's hands

They have delivered all of us into the police state's hands.

There's a reason Trump has tapped the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection for this dirty business: these agencies are notorious for their lawlessness, routinely sidestepping the Constitution and trampling on the rights of anyone who gets in their way, including legal citizens.

Indeed, it was only a matter of time before these [roving bands of border patrol agents began flexing their muscles far beyond the nation's borders and exercising their right to disregard the Constitution at every turn](#).

Except these border patrol cops aren't just disregarding the Constitution.

They're [trampling all over the Constitution](#), especially the Fourth Amendment, which prohibits the government from carrying out egregious warrantless searches and seizures without probable cause.

As part of the government's so-called crackdown on illegal immigration, drugs and trafficking, its border patrol cops have been expanding their reach, [roaming further afield](#) and subjecting greater numbers of Americans to warrantless searches, ID checkpoints, transportation checks, and even surveillance on private property far beyond the boundaries of the borderlands.

That so-called border, once a thin borderline, has become an ever-thickening band

spreading deeper and deeper inside the country.

Now, with this latest salvo by the Trump administration in its so-called crackdown on rioting and civil unrest, America itself is about to become a Constitution-free zone where freedom is off-limits and government agents have all the power and “we the people” have none.

The Customs and Border Protection (CBP), with its more than [60,000 employees](#), supplemented by the National Guard and the U.S. military, is an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, a national police force imbued with all the brutality, ineptitude and corruption such a role implies.

As journalist Todd Miller explains:

In these vast domains, Homeland Security authorities can institute [roving patrols with broad, extra-constitutional powers backed by national security, immigration enforcement and drug interdiction mandates](#). There, the Border Patrol can set up traffic checkpoints and fly surveillance drones overhead with high-powered cameras and radar that can track your movements. Within twenty-five miles of the international boundary, CBP agents can enter a person’s private property without a warrant.

Just about every nefarious deed, tactic or thuggish policy advanced by the government today can be traced back to the DHS, its police state mindset, and the [billions of dollars it distributes](#) to local police agencies in the form of grants to transform them into extensions of the military.

As Miller points out, the government has turned the nation’s expanding border regions into “[a ripe place to experiment with tearing apart the Constitution](#),” a place where not just undocumented border-crossers, but millions of borderland residents have become the targets of continual surveillance.”

In much the same way that police across the country have been schooled in the art of sidestepping the Constitution, border cops have also been drilled in the art of “anything goes” in the name of national security.

In fact, according to FOIA documents shared with *The Intercept*, [border cops even have a checklist of “possible behaviors” that warrant overriding the Constitution](#) and subjecting individuals—including American citizens—to stops, searches, seizures, interrogations and even arrests.

For instance, if you’re [driving a vehicle that to a border cop looks unusual](#) in some way, you can be stopped. If your [passengers look dirty](#) or unusual, you can be stopped. If you or your [passengers avoid looking at a cop](#), you can be stopped. If you or your [passengers look too long at a cop](#), you can be stopped.

If you’re [anywhere near a border](#) (near being within 100 miles of a border, or in a city, or on a bus, or at an airport), you can be stopped and asked to prove you’re legally allowed to be in the country. If you’re [traveling on a public road](#) that smugglers and other criminals may have traveled, you can be stopped.

If you’re [not driving in the same direction as other cars](#), you can be stopped. If you [appear](#)

[to be avoiding a police checkpoint](#), you can be stopped. If your [car appears to be weighed down](#), you can be stopped. If your [vehicle is from out of town](#), wherever that might be, you can be stopped. If you're [driving a make of car that criminal-types have also driven](#), you can be stopped.

If your [car appears to have been altered or modified](#), you can be stopped. If the [cargo area in your vehicle is covered](#), you can be stopped.

If you're [driving during a time of day or night that border cops find suspicious](#), you can be stopped. If you're [driving when border cops are changing shifts](#), you can be stopped. If you're [driving in a motorcade](#) or with another vehicle, you can be stopped. If your [car appears dusty](#), you can be stopped.

If [people with you are trying to avoid being seen](#), or exhibiting “unusual” behavior, you can be stopped. If you [slow down after seeing a cop](#), you can be stopped.

In Portland, which is 400 miles from the border, protesters didn't even have to be near federal buildings to be targeted. Some claimed to be targeted [for simply wearing black clothing](#) in the area of the demonstration.

Are you starting to get the picture yet?

This was never about illegal aliens and border crossings at all. It's been a test to see how far “we the people” will allow the government to push the limits of the Constitution.

We've been failing this particular test [for a long time](#) now.

It was 1798 when Americans, their fears stoked by rumblings of a Quasi-War with France, failed to protest the [Alien and Sedition Acts](#), which criminalized anti-government speech, empowered the government to deport “dangerous” non-citizens and made it harder for immigrants to vote.

During the Civil War, Americans went along when Abraham Lincoln [suspended the writ of habeas corpus](#) (the right to a speedy trial) and authorized government officials to spy on Americans' mail.

During World War I, Americans took it in stride when President Woodrow Wilson and Congress adopted the Espionage and Sedition Acts, which made it a crime to interfere with the war effort and [criminalized any speech critical of war](#).

By World War II, Americans were marching in lockstep with the government's expanding war powers to imprison Japanese-American citizens in detainment camps, censor mail, and [lay the groundwork for the future surveillance state](#).

Fast-forward to the [Cold War's Red Scares, the McCarthy era's hearings on un-American activities, and the government's surveillance of Civil Rights activists](#) such as Martin Luther King Jr.—all done in the name of national security.

By the time 9/11 rolled around, all George W. Bush had to do was claim the country was being invaded by terrorists, and the government was given [greater powers to spy, search, detain and arrest](#) American citizens *in order to keep America safe*.

The terrorist invasion never really happened, but the government kept its newly acquired police powers made possible by the nefarious USA Patriot Act.

Barack Obama continued Bush's trend of undermining the Constitution, going so far as to give [the military the power to strip Americans of their constitutional rights, label them extremists, and detain them indefinitely without trial](#), *all in the name of keeping America safe*.

Despite the fact that the breadth of the military's power to detain American citizens violates not only U.S. law and the Constitution but also international laws, the government has refused to relinquish its detention powers made possible by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Then Donald Trump took office, claiming the country was being invaded by dangerous immigrants and insisting that the only way to keep America safe was to build an expensive border wall, expand the reach of border patrol, and [empower the military to "assist" with border control](#).

That so-called immigration crisis has now morphed into multiple crises (domestic extremism, the COVID-19 pandemic, race wars, civil unrest, etc.) that the government is eager to use in order to expand its powers.

Yet as we've learned the hard way, once the government acquires—and uses—additional powers (to spy on its citizens, to carry out surveillance, to transform its police forces into extensions of the police, to seize taxpayer funds, to wage endless wars, to censor and silence dissidents, to identify potential troublemakers, to detain citizens without due process), it does not voluntarily relinquish them

This is the slippery slope on which we've been traveling for far too long.

As Yale historian Timothy Snyder explains, "This is a classic way that violence happens in authoritarian regimes, whether it's Franco's Spain or whether it's the Russian Empire. [The people who are getting used to committing violence on the border are then brought in to commit violence against people in the interior.](#)"

Sure, it's the Trump Administration calling the shots *right now*, but it's *government agents* armed with totalitarian powers and beholden to the bureaucratic Deep State who are carrying out these orders in defiance of the U.S. Constitution and all it represents.

Whether it's Trump or Biden or someone else altogether, this year or a dozen years from now, the damage has been done: as I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#), we have allowed the president to acquire dictatorial powers that can be unleashed at any moment.

There's a reason the Trump Administration is [consulting with John Yoo](#), the Bush-era attorney notorious for justifying waterboarding torture tactics against detainees. They're not looking to understand how to follow the law and abide by the Constitution. Rather, they're desperately seeking ways to thwart the Constitution.

As Harvard constitutional law professor Laurence Tribe recognizes, "[The dictatorial hunger for power is insatiable.](#)"

This is how it begins.

This is how it always begins.

Don't be fooled into thinking any of this will change when the next election rolls around.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

This article was originally published on [The Rutherford Institute](#).

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of [The Rutherford Institute](#). His new book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) is available at [www.amazon.com](#). Whitehead can be contacted at [johnw@rutherford.org](#).

Featured image is from OneWorld

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [John W. Whitehead](#), Global Research, 2020

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [John W. Whitehead](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](#)
[www.globalresearch.ca](#) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](#)