

# The Jackboots Are Coming: Mass Arrests, Power Grabs and the Politics of Fear

By [John W. Whitehead](#)

Global Research, June 20, 2019

Region: [USA](#)

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

*“Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much on political forces that cannot be trusted to follow the rules of common sense and self-interest—[forces that look like sheer insanity](#), if judged by the standards of other centuries.”*  
— Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

How do you persuade a populace to embrace totalitarianism, that goose-stepping form of tyranny in which the government has all of the power and “we the people” have none?

You persuade the people that the menace they face (imaginary or not) is so sinister, so overwhelming, so *fearsome* that the only way to surmount the danger is by empowering the government to take all necessary steps to quash it, even if that means allowing government jackboots to trample all over the Constitution.

This is how you use the politics of fear to persuade a freedom-loving people to shackle themselves to a dictatorship.

It works the same way every time.

The government’s overblown, extended wars on terrorism, drugs, violence and illegal immigration have been convenient ruses used to terrorized the populace into relinquishing more of their freedoms in exchange for elusive promises of security.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Case in point: on June 17, the same day President Trump announced that the [government would be making mass arrests](#) in order to round up and forcibly remove millions of illegal immigrants—including families and children—from the country, the U.S. Supreme Court [handed down a ruling in \*Gamble v. United States\*](#) that placed the sovereignty (i.e., the supreme power or authority) of federal and state governments over that of the citizenry, specifically as it relates to the government’s ability to disregard the Constitution’s Double Jeopardy Clause.

---

National

## Trump vows mass immigration arrests, removals of ‘millions of illegal aliens’ starting next week

At first glance, the two incidents—one relating to illegal immigration and the other to the government’s prosecutorial powers—don’t have much to do with each other, and yet there is a common thread that binds them together.

That common thread speaks to the nature of the government beast we have been saddled with and how it views the rights and sovereignty of “we the people.”

Now you don’t hear a lot about sovereignty anymore.

Sovereignty is a dusty, antiquated term that harkens back to an age when kings and emperors ruled with absolute power over a populace that had no rights. Americans turned the idea of sovereignty on its head when they [declared their independence](#) from Great Britain and rejected the absolute authority of King George III. In doing so, [Americans claimed for themselves the right to self-government](#) and established themselves as the ultimate authority and power.

In other words, in America, “we the people”— sovereign citizens—call the shots.

So when the government acts, it is supposed to do so at our bidding and on our behalf, because we are the rulers.

That’s not exactly how it turned out, though, is it?

In the 200-plus years since we boldly embarked on this experiment in self-government, we have been steadily losing ground to the government’s brazen power grabs, foisted upon us in the so-called name of national security.

The government has knocked us off our rightful throne. It has usurped our rightful authority. It has staged the ultimate coup. Its agents no longer even pretend that they answer to “we the people.”

So you see, the two incidents on June 17 were not hugely significant in and of themselves.

Trump’s plan to carry out mass arrests of anyone the government suspects might be an illegal immigrant, and the Supreme Court’s recognition that the government can sidestep the Constitution for the sake of expediency are merely more of the same abuses that have been heaped upon us in recent years.

Yet these incidents speak volumes about how far our republic has fallen and how desensitized “we the people” have become to this constant undermining of our freedoms.

How do we reconcile the Founders’ vision of our government as an entity whose only purpose is to serve the people with the police state’s insistence that the government is the supreme authority, that its power trumps that of the people themselves, and that it may exercise that power in any way it sees fit (that includes government agents crashing through doors, mass arrests, ethnic cleansing, racial profiling, indefinite detentions without due process, and internment camps)?

They cannot be reconciled. They are polar opposites.

We are fast approaching a moment of reckoning where we will be forced to choose between the vision of what America was intended to be (a model for self-governance where power is vested in the people) and the reality of what she has become (a police state where power is vested in the government).

This slide into totalitarianism—helped along by overcriminalization, government surveillance, militarized police, neighbors turning in neighbors, privatized prisons, and forced labor camps, to name just a few similarities—is tracking very closely with what happened in Germany in the years leading up to Hitler’s rise to power.

We are walking a dangerous path right now.

The horrors of the Nazi concentration camps weren’t kept secret from the German people. They were well-publicized. As *The Guardian* reports:

The mass of ordinary Germans did know about the evolving terror of Hitler’s Holocaust... They knew concentration camps were full of Jewish people who were stigmatised as sub-human and race-defilers. They knew that these, like other groups and minorities, were being killed out of hand. They knew that Adolf Hitler had repeatedly forecast the extermination of every Jew on German soil. They knew these details because they had read about them. They knew because the camps and the measures which led up to them had been [prominently and proudly reported step by step in thousands of officially-inspired German media articles](#) and posters... The reports, in newspapers and magazines all over the country were phases in a public process of “desensitisation” which worked all too well, culminating in the killing of 6m Jews....

# Germans knew of Holocaust horror about death camps

## **Details of deaths of Jews and other groups in concentration camps were well publicised**

The mass of ordinary Germans did know about the evolving terror of Hitler's Holocaust, according to a new research study. They knew concentration camps were full of Jewish people who were stigmatised as sub-human and race-defilers. They knew that these, like other groups and minorities, were being killed out of hand.

They knew that Adolf Hitler had repeatedly forecast the extermination of every Jew on German soil. They knew these details because they had read about them. They knew because the camps and the measures which led up to them had been prominently and proudly reported step by step in thousands of officially-inspired German media articles and posters according to the study, which is due to be published simultaneously in Britain and the US early next month and which was described as ground-breaking by Oxford University Press yesterday and already hailed by other historians.

Source: The Guardian

Likewise, the mass of ordinary Americans are fully aware of the Trump Administration's efforts to stigmatize and dehumanize any and all who do not fit with the government's plans for this country.

These mass arrests of anyone suspected of being an illegal immigrant may well be the shot across the bow.

You see, it's a short hop, skip and a jump from allowing government agents to lock large swaths of the population up in detention centers unless or until they can prove that they are not only legally in the country to empowering government agents to subject anyone—citizen and noncitizen alike—to similar treatment unless or until they can prove that they are in compliance with every statute and regulation on the books, and not guilty of having committed some crime or other.

*It's no longer a matter of if, but when.*

You may be innocent of wrongdoing now, but when the standard for innocence is set by the government, no one is safe. Everyone is a suspect, and anyone can be a criminal when it's the government determining what is a crime.

Remember, the police state does not discriminate.

At some point, once the government has been given the power to do whatever it wants—the Constitution be damned—it will not matter whether you're an illegal immigrant or a citizen

by birth, a law-breaker or someone who marches in lockstep with the government's dictates. Government jails will detain you just as easily whether you've obeyed every law or broken a dozen. And government agents will treat you like a suspect, whether or not you've done anything wrong, simply because they have been trained to view and treat everyone like potential criminals.

Eventually, all that will matter is whether some government agent—poorly trained, utterly ignorant of the Constitution, way too hyped up on the power of their badges, and authorized to detain, search, interrogate, threaten and generally harass anyone they see fit—chooses to single you out for special treatment.

We've been having this same debate about the perils of government overreach for the past 50-plus years, and still we don't seem to learn, or if we learn, we learn too late.

All of the excessive, abusive tactics employed by the government today—warrantless surveillance, stop and frisk searches, SWAT team raids, roadside strip searches, asset forfeiture schemes, private prisons, indefinite detention, militarized police, etc.—started out as a seemingly well-meaning plan to address some problem in society that needed a little extra help.

Be careful what you wish for: you *will* get more than you bargained for, especially when the government's involved.

Remember, nothing is ever as simple as the government claims it is.

The war on drugs turned out to be a war on the American people, waged with SWAT teams and militarized police.

The war on terror turned out to be a war on the American people, waged with warrantless surveillance and indefinite detention.

The war on immigration is turning out to be yet another war on the American people, waged with roving government agents demanding "papers, please."

Whatever dangerous practices you allow the government to carry out now—whether it's in the name of national security or protecting America's borders or making America great again—rest assured, these same practices can and will be used against you when the government decides to set its sights on you.

If you're inclined to advance this double standard because you believe you have done nothing wrong and have nothing to hide, beware: *there's always a boomerang effect.*

As commentator Shaun Kenney [observed](#):

What civil liberties are you willing to surrender in the apprehension of 12 million people? Knock and drags? Detention centers? Checkpoints? House-to-house searches? Papers, please? Will we be racially profiling folks to look for or are we talking about people of Chinese... Indian... Irish... Polish... Italian... people-who-might-look-like-you descent as well? If the federal government makes a 1% rounding error and accidentally deports an American citizen, that's 120,000 Americans... what means will be used to restore their rights? Who will remunerate them for their financial loss? Restore their lost homes? Personal property? Families? ... [What happens when these means are turned](#)

[against some other group of undesirables in America by a president who does not share your political persuasion, but can now justify the act based on previous justifications?](#)

We are all at risk.

The law of reciprocity applies here. The flip side of that Golden Rule, which calls for us to treat others as we would have them treat us, is that we shouldn't inflict on others what we wouldn't want to suffer ourselves.

In other words, if you don't want to be locked up in a prison cell or a detention camp—if you don't want to be discriminated against because of the color of your race, religion, politics or anything else that sets you apart from the rest—if you don't want your loved ones shot at, strip searched, tasered, beaten and treated like slaves—if you don't want to have to be constantly on guard against government eyes watching what you do, where you go and what you say—if you don't want to be tortured, waterboarded or forced to perform degrading acts—if you don't want your children to be forcibly separated from you, caged and lost—then don't allow these evils to be inflicted on anyone else, no matter how compelling a case the government makes for it or how fervently you believe in the cause.

You can't have it both ways.

You can't live in a constitutional republic if you allow the government to act like a police state.

You can't claim to value freedom if you allow the government to operate like a dictatorship.

You can't expect to have your rights respected if you allow the government to treat whomever it pleases with disrespect and an utter disregard for the rule of law.

Indeed, when the government is allowed to operate as a law unto itself, the rule of law itself becomes illegitimate. As Martin Luther King Jr. pointed out in his [Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#),

"everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was 'legal' and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was 'illegal.' It was 'illegal' to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany."

In other words, there comes a time when law and order are in direct opposition to justice.

Isn't that what the American Revolution was all about?

Finally, if anyone suggests that the government's mass immigration roundups and arrests are just the government doing its job to fight illegal immigration, don't buy it.

This is not about illegal immigration. It's about power and control.

It's about testing the waters to see how far the American people will allow the government to go in re-shaping the country in the image of a totalitarian police state.

It's about the rise of an "emergency state" that justifies all manner of government

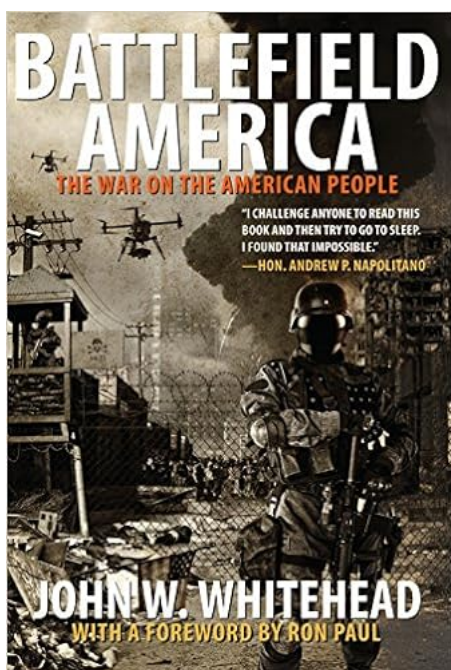


misconduct and power grabs in the so-called name of national security.

It's about how much tyranny "we the people" will tolerate before we find our conscience and our voice.

It's about how far we will allow the government to go in its efforts to distract and divide us and turn us into a fearful, easily controlled populace.

Ultimately, it's about whether we believe—as the Founders did—that our freedoms are inherently ours and that the government is only as powerful as we allow it to be. Freedom does not flow from the government. It was not *given* to us, to be taken away at the will of the State. In the same way, the government's appointed purpose is not to threaten or undermine our freedoms, but to safeguard them.



We must get back to this way of thinking if we are to ever stand our ground in the face of threats to those freedoms.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#), it's time to draw that line in the sand.

The treatment being meted out to anyone that *looks* like an illegal immigrant is only the beginning. Eventually we will all be in the government's crosshairs for one reason or another.

This is the start of the slippery slope.

Martin Niemöller understood this. A Lutheran minister who was imprisoned and executed for opposing Hitler's regime, Niemöller [warned](#):

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Jew. [Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.](#)

\*

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](#).*

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [John W. Whitehead](#), Global Research, 2019

---

**[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](#)