

The State of Our Nation: In the U.S. “Things Are Getting Worse, Not Better”

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*“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**

Let me tell you about the state of our nation: things are getting worse, not better.

Easily distracted by wall-to-wall news coverage of the latest crisis and conveniently diverted by news cycles that change every few days, Americans remain oblivious to the many governmental abuses that are still wreaking havoc on our freedoms: police shootings of unarmed individuals, invasive surveillance, roadside blood draws, roadside strip searches, SWAT team raids gone awry, the military industrial complex’s costly wars, pork barrel spending, pre-crime laws, civil asset forfeiture, fusion centers, militarization, armed drones, smart policing carried out by AI robots, courts that march in lockstep with the police state, schools that function as indoctrination centers, and bureaucrats that keep the Deep State in power.

These are dangerous times for America and the world.

Yet while you may hear plenty about the dangers posed by Russia and COVID-19 in President Biden’s State of the Union address, it’s still the U.S. government that poses the gravest threat to our freedoms and way of life.

Consider for yourself.

Americans have little protection against police abuse. The police and other government agents have been generally empowered to probe, poke, pinch, taser, search, seize, strip and generally manhandle anyone they see fit in almost any circumstance, all with the general blessing of the courts. It is no longer unusual to hear about incidents in which police shoot unarmed individuals first and ask questions later. What is increasingly common, however, is the news that the officers involved in these incidents get off with little more than a slap on

the hands.

Americans are little more than pocketbooks to fund the police state. If there is any absolute maxim by which the federal government seems to operate, it is that the American taxpayer always gets ripped off. This is true, whether you're talking about taxpayers being forced to fund high-priced weaponry that will be used against us, endless wars that do little for our safety or our freedoms, or bloated government agencies with their secret budgets, covert agendas and clandestine activities.

Americans are no longer innocent until proven guilty. We once operated under the assumption that you were innocent until proven guilty. Due in large part to rapid advances in technology and a heightened surveillance culture, the burden of proof has been shifted so that the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty has been usurped by a new norm in which all citizens are suspects. Indeed, the government—in cahoots with the corporate state—has erected the ultimate suspect society. In such an environment, we are all potentially guilty of some wrongdoing or other.

Americans no longer have a right to self-defense. While the courts continue to disagree over the exact nature of the rights protected by the Second Amendment, the government itself has made its position extremely clear. When it comes to gun rights in particular, and the rights of the citizenry overall, the U.S. government has adopted a “do what I say, not what I do” mindset. Nowhere is this double standard more evident than in the government's attempts to arm itself to the teeth, all the while viewing as suspect anyone who dares to legally own a gun, let alone use one in self-defense. Indeed, while it still technically remains legal to own a firearm in America, possessing one can now get you pulled over, searched, arrested, subjected to all manner of surveillance, treated as a suspect without ever having committed a crime, shot at, and killed.

Americans no longer have a right to private property. If government agents can invade your home, break down your doors, kill your dog, damage your furnishings and terrorize your family, your property is no longer private and secure—it belongs to the government. Likewise, if government officials can fine and arrest you for growing vegetables in your front yard, praying with friends in your living room, installing solar panels on your roof, and raising chickens in your backyard, you're no longer the owner of your property.

Americans no longer have a say about what their children are exposed to in school. Incredibly, the government continues to insist that parents essentially forfeit their rights when they send their children to a public school. This growing tension over whether young people, especially those in the public schools, are essentially wards of the state, to do with as government officials deem appropriate, in defiance of the children's constitutional rights and those of their parents, is at the heart of almost every debate over educational programming, school discipline, and the extent to which parents have any say over their children's wellbeing in and out of school.

Americans are powerless in the face of militarized police forces. With local police agencies acquiring military-grade weaponry, training and equipment better suited for the battlefield, Americans are finding their once-peaceful communities transformed into military outposts patrolled by a standing military army.

Americans no longer have a right to bodily integrity. The debate over bodily integrity covers

broad territory, ranging from abortion and euthanasia to forced blood draws, biometric surveillance and basic healthcare. Forced vaccinations, forced cavity searches, forced colonoscopies, forced blood draws, forced breath-alcohol tests, forced DNA extractions, forced eye scans, forced inclusion in biometric databases: these are just a few ways in which Americans continue to be reminded that we have no control over what happens to our bodies during an encounter with government officials.

Americans no longer have a right to the expectation of privacy. Despite the staggering number of revelations about government spying on Americans' phone calls, Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, Google searches, emails, bookstore and grocery purchases, bank statements, commuter toll records, etc., Congress, the president and the courts have done little to nothing to counteract these abuses. Instead, they seem determined to accustom us to life in this electronic concentration camp.

Americans no longer have a representative government. We have moved beyond the era of representative government and entered the age of authoritarianism, where all citizens are suspects, security trumps freedom, and so-called elected officials represent the interests of the corporate power elite. This topsy-turvy travesty of law and government has become America's new normal.

Americans can no longer rely on the courts to mete out justice. The U.S. Supreme Court was intended to be an institution established to intervene and protect the people against the government and its agents when they overstep their bounds. Yet through their deference to police power, preference for security over freedom, and evisceration of our most basic rights for the sake of order and expediency, the justices of the Supreme Court have become the architects of the American police state in which we now live, while the lower courts have appointed themselves courts of order, concerned primarily with advancing the government's agenda, no matter how unjust or illegal.

I haven't even touched on the corporate state, the military industrial complex, SWAT team raids, invasive surveillance technology, zero tolerance policies in the schools, overcriminalization, or privatized prisons, to name just a few, but what I have touched on should be enough to show that the landscape of our freedoms has already changed dramatically from what it once was and will no doubt continue to deteriorate unless Americans can find a way to wrest back control of their government and reclaim their freedoms.

This steady slide towards tyranny, meted out by militarized local and federal police and legalistic bureaucrats, has been carried forward by each successive president over the past seventy-plus years regardless of their political affiliation.

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

Big government has grown bigger, and the rights of the citizenry have grown smaller.

We are walking a dangerous path right now.

Having allowed the government to expand and exceed our reach, we find ourselves on the losing end of a tug-of-war over control of our country and our lives. And for as long as we let them, government officials will continue to trample on our rights, always justifying their actions as being for the good of the people.

Yet the government can only go as far as “we the people” allow. Therein lies the problem.

The pickle we find ourselves in speaks volumes about 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.

We have relinquished control over the most intimate aspects of our lives to government officials who, while they may occupy seats of authority, are neither wiser, smarter, more in tune with our needs, more knowledgeable about our problems, nor more aware of what is really in our best interests.

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.”

Worst of all, “we the people” have become desensitized to this constant undermining of our freedoms.

How do we reconcile the Founders’ vision of the 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 it has become (a police state where power is vested in the government).

We are repeating the mistakes of history—namely, allowing a totalitarian state to reign over us.

Former concentration camp inmate Hannah Arendt warned against this when she wrote:

“No matter what the specifically national tradition or the particular spiritual source of its ideology, totalitarian government always transformed classes into masses, supplanted the party system, not by one-party dictatorships, but by mass movement, shifted the center of power from the army to the police, and established a foreign policy openly directed toward world domination.”

So where does that leave us?

Aldous Huxley predicted that eventually the government would find a way of:

“making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorship without tears, so to speak, producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their liberties taken away from them, but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods. And this seems to be the final revolution.”

The answer? Get *un*-brainwashed. Stop allowing yourself to be distracted and diverted.

Learn your rights. Stand up for the founding principles.

Make your voice and your vote count for more than just political posturing.

Never cease to vociferously protest the erosion of your freedoms at the local and national level.

Most of all, do these things today.

Ultimately, I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we need to shift the center of power back to “we the people.”

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