

Government Requires “Make Believe”

Thanksgiving in America. Judge Napolitano

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“Government requires make-believe. Make believe that the king is divine, make believe that he can do no wrong or make believe that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Make believe that the people have a voice or make believe that the representatives of the people are the people. Make believe that governors are the servants of the people. Make believe that all men are created equal or make believe that they are not.”— Edmund S. Morgan, 1916-2013

What if the government’s true goal is to perpetuate its own power?

What if the real levers of governmental power are pulled by agents and diplomats and by bureaucrats and central bankers behind the scenes?

What if they stay in power no matter who is elected president or which political party controls either house of Congress?

What if the frequent public displays of adversity between Republicans and Democrats are just a facade? What if both major political parties agree on the fundamental issues of our day?

What if the leadership of both political parties believes that our rights are not natural to our humanity but instead are gifts from the government? What if those leaders believe the government that gives gifts to the people can take those gifts away?

What if the leadership of both parties gives only lip service to Thomas Jefferson’s assertions in the Declaration of Independence that all persons “are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” and that when the government assaults our natural rights, we can “alter or abolish” it?

What if the leadership of both parties quietly dismisses those ideas as Jefferson's outdated musings? What if Jefferson's words have been enacted into federal law that all in government have sworn to uphold?

What if the leadership of both political parties believes that the constitutional requirement of due process somehow permits mothers to hire doctors to kill babies in their wombs, out of fear or convenience? What if the leadership of both political parties believes that the president may lawfully kill any foreigner out of fear, because due process is an inconvenience?

What if the last four presidents — two from each political party — have used high-tech drones to kill innocent people in foreign lands with which America was not at war and claimed that they did so legally, relying not on a declaration of war from Congress but on erroneous and secret arguments that claim American presidents can kill with impunity?

What if the Constitution requires a congressional declaration of war or due process whenever the government wants anyone's life, liberty or property, whether convenient or not, and whether the person is American or not? What if due process means a fair jury trial, not a secretly ordered killing?

What if most members of Congress from both political parties believe in perpetual war and perpetual debt? What if the political class believes that war is the health of the state? What if the leadership of that class wants war so as to induce the loyalty of its base, open the pocketbooks of the taxpayers and gain the compliance of the voters? What if the political class uses war to enrich its benefactors? What if the government has been paying for war by increasing its debt?

What if the \$31 trillion current federal government debt has been caused by borrowing to pay for wars and false prosperity? What if the federal government collects about \$4 trillion annually but spends about \$6.8 trillion? What if the feds borrow money to pay \$500 billion in interest annually?

What if it is insane to borrow money to pay interest on borrowed money? What if American taxpayers are still paying interest on debts incurred by Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt and every post-World War II president?

What if the banks have borrowed the money that they lend? What if they can't pay it back? What if the stock market was once soaring on money borrowed at artificially low interest rates?

What if the government demands transparency from us but declines to be transparent to us? What if government leaders assert the make-believe that they work for us but recognize silently that we work for the government?

What if the federal government has access to all our electronic communications, bank accounts, medical and legal records, and utility and credit card bills? What if the government knows more about us than we know about it?

What if the federal government stays in power by bribing the states with cash, the rich with bailouts, the middle class with tax cuts and the poor with welfare?

What if the government thinks the Constitution is make-believe and doesn't apply in bad times? What if it thinks it can cure disease by forcing experimental drugs on the healthy? What if it mocks the Bill of Rights?

What if the government the Founding Fathers gave us needed our permission to do nearly everything? What if today we need the government's permission to do nearly anything?

What if, on Thanksgiving Day, our gratitude is not to the government that assaults our freedoms and steals our wealth but to God, who gave us our freedoms and our ability to earn wealth?

What if, on Thanksgiving Day, our gratitude is for life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and the exercise of free will and human reason? What if these are integral to our humanity despite the government's assaults on them?

What if the Thanksgiving holiday has become a four-day oasis from a fractious government that is blind to the consequences of its borrowing, killing and assaults on freedom?

What if, on Thanksgiving Day, we are most grateful that we are free creatures made in God's image and likeness?

What if, on Thanksgiving Day, we begin altering or abolishing the government, make-believe or not?

Happy Thanksgiving.

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Andrew P. Napolitano, a former New Jersey Superior Court Judge, has published nine books on the U.S. Constitution.

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