

America Greatest Threat to World Peace

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Global Research, January 06, 2014

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights, US](#)
[NATO War Agenda](#)

A [new poll](#) affirms it. Respondents in 68 countries said so. Anti-US sentiment is palpable. It doesn't surprise. It's for good reason.

Around one-fourth of people surveyed believe America is the greatest threat to world peace. Pakistan was second with 8%. Other countries mentioned were Afghanistan, Iran, Israel and North Korea.

About 13% of Americans believe the same thing as many abroad. Others in Latin America feel the same way. Moroccans, Lebanese and Iraqis called Israel the number one threat.

For sure Palestinians, Syrians and many others throughout the Middle East and beyond feel the same way about Israel and America.

Both countries threaten world peace. They wage war on humanity. They deny their own people fundamental rights.

They ignore rule of law principles. They operate extrajudicially. They do whatever they please. They remain unaccountable.

Peace begins at home. It means protecting the rights of all citizens and residents. It includes respecting rule of law principles.

It's about democratic values. It involves government of, by and for everyone. It features peace, equity, justice and fairness above all.

Not in Israel. Not in America. Conditions in both countries are deplorable. They're worse than ever.

Israel spies lawlessly like America. It does it aggressively. It targets Americans. Previous articles explained.

On January 3, The [New York Times](#) headlined "Court Grants Secrecy for Memo on Phone Data."

Only a police state one would do so. A three-judge panel "ruled (unanimously) that the Obama administration may continue to withhold a (secret) Justice Department memo," said The Times.

It "came down on the side of a broad conception of the executive branch's power to keep secret its interpretation of what the law permits it to do."

It makes it easier for federal authorities to circumvent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) disclosure.

The court approved giving FBI officials customers' telecommunications data without subpoena or court order.

Doing so violates the 1986 Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA). It restricts telecommunications wiretaps. It prevents unauthorized government access to private online communications.

It sets strict guidelines for search warrants. It protects stored online communications. It prohibits pen registering and/or trap and trace devices.

They're used to record dialing, routing, addressing, and signaling information for processing or transmitting wire or electronic communications without court order.

Emails may be subpoenaed lawfully. Warrantless authorizations are strictly prohibited. USA Patriot Act provisions subvert ECPA restrictions. So does the 2008 FISA Amendments Act.

The 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) authorized surveillance relating to "foreign intelligence information" between "foreign powers" and "agents of foreign powers."

It restricts spying on US citizens and residents to those engaged in espionage in America and territory under US control.

The 2008 FISA Amendments Act authorized warrantless spying. The 2012 FISA Amendments Reauthorization Act renewed it for another five years. No federal statute authorizes mass surveillance.

Doing so is unconstitutional. So is warrantless spying. It doesn't matter. Meaningful oversight is lacking. Courts largely OK what demands rejection.

On January 3, the secret/rubber-stamp Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court renewed US intelligence agencies' authority to collect telecommunications meta-data.

The [Office of the Director of National Intelligence](#) (DNI) announced it, saying:

"It is the administration's view, consistent with the recent holdings of the United States District Courts for the Southern District of New York and Southern District of California, as well as the findings of 15 judges of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court on 36 separate occasions over the past seven years, that the telephony metadata collection program is lawful."

The Justice Department appealed "the lone contrary decision issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia."

At issue is Judge Richard Leon's December 16 ruling. He justifiably called NSA spying unconstitutional. It's "almost Orwellian," he said.

He's the exception that proves the rule. The federal bench is stacked with right-wing extremists. Odds favor his ruling being overturned.

FISA court judges renewed mass surveillance for three months. They did so before. They'll do it again when current authorization expires. It applies to all meta-data spying at home and abroad.

Handing over private telecommunications data to government agencies without court order or subpoenas raises serious constitutional concerns.

The [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) (EFF) sued for injunctive relief. It did so under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

It sought "disclosure of a memorandum prepared by DOJ's Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) in January 2010 concerning statutory provisions governing the conduct of electronic surveillance."

DOJ Office of the Inspector (OIG) released a report titled "A Review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Use of Exigent Letters and Other Informal Requests for Telephone Records."

It pertains to FBI "informal requests" to obtain private telephone records "without any legal process at all."

Doing so violates 18 USC No. 2702 of the Stored Communications Act. Electronic Communications Privacy Act provisions relating to regulating provider disclosures and government demands for communications records and content are violated.

Federal authorities stonewalled EFF's request for information. "Defendant DOJ has violated the applicable statutory time limit for rendering decisions on administrative appeals under the FOIA," said EFF.

DOJ "wrongfully withheld the requested records from plaintiff."

EFF sought injunctive and "such other relief as the Court may deem just and proper."

Appeals Court judges unanimously rejected EFF's suit. They didn't surprise. They agreed with a district court ruling.

They said withholding OLC memorandum disclosure is permitted under a legal exception. It's called "deliberative process privilege."

It's legalistic mumbo jumbo. It can be interpreted any way courts wish. According to Appeals Court judges:

"The District Court correctly concluded that the unclassified portions of the OLC Opinion could not be released without harming the deliberative processes of the government by chilling the candid and frank communications necessary for effective governmental decision-making."

Government agency memos, other official communications and documents reflect policy.

The New York Times said OLC "issues binding legal advice to the executive branch on whether proposed actions would be legal."

"If it says something is permitted, government officials who act on that advice are essentially immune from prosecution by the Justice Department."

It's done for precisely that purpose. An earlier article discussed notorious Bush administration memos and other documents. More on this below.

EFF attorney David Sobel called the Appeals Court ruling "troubling." He described OLC memos as a body of "secret law." It denies what the public has a right to know.

"It's kind of hard to imagine how a different case in the DC Circuit is likely to have a different outcome in light of this opinion," he said. It's harder imagining Supreme Court justices overturning it.

Justice Department attorneys lie. They argued that memos like OLC's contain classified information. "It's highly specific in nature and known to a very few individuals," they said.

It pertains to "secret (FBI) intelligence-gathering techniques (against) hostile entities." They're undefined.

They include ordinary Americans. They include virtually anyone FBI operatives claim for any reason or none at all. Bush administration officials operated the same way.

A January 9, 2002 John Yoo/Robert Delahunty memo said in part:

"(T)he laws of armed conflict (don't) apply to the conditions of detention and the procedures for trial of members of al Qaeda and the Taliban militia."

These treaties "do not protect members of the al Qaeda organization (or) the Taliban militia."

Days later, Bush issued a finding. It designated Al Qaeda and Taliban members "enemy combatants."

It called them unprotected by Third Geneva provisions. At the same time, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Al Qaeda and Taliban detainees "are not entitled to prisoner of war status for purposes of the Geneva Conventions of 1949."

To this day, CIA operatives and Pentagon commanders take full advantage. They claim "military necessity" to do whatever they wish.

America wages dirty wars. Fundamental laws are violated with impunity. Homeland practices are similar. Government memos and other documents run cover for lawlessness.

Ordinary people are gravely harmed. Many wind up political prisoners in America's gulag. Torture occurs at home like abroad.

Police state lawlessness is official policy. Obama exceeds the worst of George Bush.

Democracy is a figure of speech. Freedom is vanishing in plain sight.

Rule of law protections don't exist. Anything goes is policy. Wealth, power and privilege alone matter. State terror targets non-believers.

Mass surveillance watches everyone. Congress enacts police state laws. Federal courts rubber-stamp them.

People wanting to live free are considered state enemies. Challenging government of, by and for privileged elites is criminalized.

Orwell envisioned a dark future. It's worse than he imagined. Wars rage without end. Big Brother watches everyone.

State-of-the-art technology is used repressively. Privacy is a thing of the past. Electoral politics doesn't work.

Monied interests run America. Both parties are two sides of the same coin. Democrats are as ruthless as Republicans.

Vital change more than ever is needed. Ordinary people are on their own to achieve it. Collective activism has power. What better time to use it than now.

Civil disobedience is a longstanding tradition. America's Declaration of Independence states:

"(W)henever any form of government becomes destructive (of unalienable rights too important to lose), it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government..."

"(W)hen a long train of abuses and usurpations (establishes) absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government."

Failure to act assures worse ahead than now. If that's not incentive enough to change things, what is?

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