

COVID-19 and Economic Duress: A Pretext to Enhance Police State Powers? Suspension of Constitutional Rights During COVID-19?

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, March 28, 2020

Region: [USA](#)

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

Crises are times when ruling authorities convince people to sacrifice personal freedoms for greater security — not realizing that both will be lost.

Ruling authorities take advantage of times like now by instituting draconian policies they're unable to introduce during normal times without risking mass rebellion.

Following the state-sponsored 9/11 false flag, police state America emerged.

A war OF terrorism was launched at home and abroad, not on it. **Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF)** was a declaration of forever wars on invented enemies to feed the military, industrial, security, media complex.



Military Order No. 1 let Bush/Cheney capture, kidnap, arrest, indefinitely detain, or eliminate virtually anyone anywhere claimed to be involved in international terrorism — true or false.

Initially the order applied only to non-citizens, later to anyone at home and abroad.

Unconstitutional military commissions were established to conduct secret trials, their rulings not subject to appeal.

Torture became official US policy, Guantanamo the tip of a global network of secret torture prisons that still operate extrajudicially.

National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directives enabled the executive to usurp virtual dictatorial powers on the phony pretext of combatting terrorist groups — created and supported by the US, their fighters used as Pentagon/CIA proxies.

The USA Patriot Act, Homeland Security Act, Military Commissions Act, Detainee Treatment Act, revision of the 1807 Insurrection Act and virtual elimination of 1878 Posse Comitatus

Protection, mass surveillance, Protect America Act, compromising Miranda rights, indefinite detentions of individuals uncharged and untried, a secret kill list, and other police state measures became official policy under both right wings of the one-party state.

So is Continuity of Government (COG) coup d'état authority, violating constitutional separation of powers under alleged catastrophic emergency conditions, defined as:

“(A)ny incident (such as a terrorist attack), regardless of location, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the US population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government functions.”

COG is defined as:

“(A) coordinated effort within the Federal Government’s executive branch to ensure that National Essential Functions continue to be performed during a Catastrophic Emergency.”

Renewed annually, COG authority gives presidents and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) unprecedented police state powers to declare martial law without congressional approval and rule extrajudicially, free from constitutional constraints.

In September 1982, Ronald Reagan’s National Security Decision Directive/NSDD 55 established a National Program Office (NPO), tasked with ensuring the federal government’s survive in case of a national emergency, specifically a nuclear attack.



In 1988, Reagan’s Executive Order 12656 authorized a COG response, including full-scale militarization in case of a “national security emergency,” defined as:

“(A)ny occurrence, including natural disaster, military attack, technological or other emergency, that seriously degrades or seriously threatens the national security of the United States.”

The policy remains in place to let US ruling authorities act against designated domestic and foreign adversaries, dissent, civil and human rights, and other fundamental freedoms — on the phony pretext of protecting and defending national security at a time when America’s only enemies are invented.

Post-9/11 laws and presidential actions compromised the Constitution’s First, Fourth, Fifth,

Sixth, Eighth, and 14 Amendments.

Speech, press, and academic freedoms were eroded. So were free association, due process, judicial fairness, habeas and Miranda rights.

Will spreading COVID-19 outbreaks and economic duress be used as reasons to suspend the Constitution and institute martial law on the phony pretext of public protection and security.

The Trump regime's Justice Department secretly asked Congress to pass legislation that permits suspension of constitutional rights during the COVID-19 and other emergencies.

Undefined emergencies would give the White House authority to invent pretexts for hardening police state powers to include whatever actions the executive wishes to order.

Once in place, they'd likely be hard to reverse short of national rebellion.

Power isn't relinquished voluntarily. Responsible change most always comes bottom up, not top down.

If US ruling authorities usurp unconstitutional powers on the pretext of a COVID-19 emergency and/or threat of economic collapse, martial law may replace remaining fundamental freedoms.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely — the slippery slope in the US where things today are perilously heading.

A Final Comment

In August 2017, the Trump regime reversed a ban on providing battlefield military weapons and equipment to police departments nationwide.

The action was and remains an effort to harden control in cities and towns nationwide on the phony pretext of protecting public safety.

It comes at the expense of civil liberties. It gives local police more firepower to protect privileged interests at the expense of constitutional rights and public welfare.

VISIT MY WEBSITE: stephenlendman.org ([Home - Stephen Lendman](http://stephenlendman.org)). Contact at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

My newest book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

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

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III." <http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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