

Distract, Divide and Conquer: The Painful Truth About the State of Our Union

By [John W. Whitehead](#) and [Nisha Whitehead](#)

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Step away from the blinders that [partisan politics uses to distract, divide and conquer](#), and you will find that we are drowning in a cesspool of problems that individually and collectively threaten our lives, liberties, prosperity and happiness.

These are not problems the politicians want to talk about, let alone address, yet we cannot afford to ignore them much longer.

Foreign interests are buying up our farmland and holding our national debt. As of 2021, [foreign persons and entities owned 40.8 million acres of U.S. agricultural land](#), 47% of which was forestland, 29% in cropland, and 22% in pastureland. Foreign land holdings have increased by an average of 2.2 million acres per year since 2015. Foreign countries also [own \\$7.4 trillion worth of U.S. national debt](#), with Japan and China ranked as our two largest foreign holders of our debt.

Corporate and governmental censorship have created digital dictators. While the "[Twitter files](#)" revealed the lengths to which the FBI has gone to monitor and censor social media content, the government has been colluding with the tech sector for some time now in order to silence its critics and target "dangerous" speech [in the name of fighting so-called disinformation](#). The [threat of being labelled "disinformation"](#) is being used to undermine anyone who asks questions, challenges the status quo, and engages in critical thinking.

Middle- and lower-income Americans are barely keeping up. [Rising costs of housing, food, gas and other necessities](#) are presenting nearly insurmountable hurdles towards financial independence for the majority of households who are scrambling to make ends meet. Meanwhile, [mounting layoffs](#) in the tens of thousands are adding to the fiscal pain.

The government is attempting to weaponize mental health care. Increasingly, in communities across the nation, [police are being empowered to forcibly detain individuals they believe might be mentally ill](#), even if they pose no danger to others. While these programs are ostensibly aimed at [getting the homeless off the streets](#), when combined with

the government's ongoing [efforts to predict who might pose a threat to public safety based on mental health sensor data](#) (tracked by wearable data and monitored by government agencies such as HARPA), the specter of mental health round-ups begins to sound less far-fetched.

The military's global occupation is spreading our resources thin and endangering us at home. America's war spending and commitment to policing the rest of the world are bankrupting the nation and spreading our troops dangerously thin. In 2022 alone, the [U.S. approved more than \\$50 billion in aid for Ukraine](#), half of which went towards military spending, with more on the way. The U.S. also maintains some [750 military bases in 80 countries](#) around the world.

Deepfakes, AI and virtual reality are blurring the line between reality and a computer-generated illusion. Powered by AI software, deepfake audio and video move us into [an age where it is almost impossible to discern what is real](#), especially as it relates to truth and [disinformation](#). At the same time, the technology sector continues to use virtual reality to develop a digital universe—the metaverse—that is envisioned as being the [next step in our evolutionary transformation](#) from a human-driven society to a technological one.

Advances in technology are outstripping our ability to protect ourselves from its menacing side, both in times of rights, humanity and workforce. In the absence of constitutional protections in place to guard against encroachments on our rights in the electronic realm, we desperately need an Electronic Bill of Rights that protects “we the people” from predatory surveillance and data-mining business practices.

The courts have aligned themselves with the police state. In one ruling after another, the courts have used the doctrine of qualified immunity to [shield police officers from accountability](#) for misconduct, tacitly giving them a green light to act as judge, jury and executioner on the populace. All the while, police violence, the result of training that emphasizes brute force over constitutional restraints, continues to endanger the public.

The nation's dependence on foreign imports has fueled a \$1 trillion trade deficit. While analysts have pointed to the [burgeoning trade deficit](#) as a sign that the U.S. economy is growing, it underscores the extent to which [very little is actually made in America](#) anymore.

World governments, including the U.S., continue to use national crises such as COVID-19 to expand their emergency powers. None are willing to relinquish these powers when the crisis passes. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, the U.S. government still has [42 declared national emergencies in effect](#), allowing it to sidestep constitutional protocols that maintain a system of checks and balances. For instance, the emergency declared after the 9/11 has yet to be withdrawn.

The nation's infrastructure is rapidly falling apart. Many of the country's roads, bridges, airports, dams, levees and water systems are woefully outdated and in dire need of overhauling, and have [fallen behind that of other developed countries](#) in recent years. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that [crumbling infrastructure costs every American household \\$3,300 in hidden costs a year](#) due to lost time, increased fuel consumption while sitting in traffic jams, and extra car repairs due to poor road conditions.

The nation is about to hit a healthcare crisis. Despite the fact that the U.S. spends more on health care than any other high-income country, it has the [worst health outcomes](#) than its

peer nations. Experts are also predicting a [collapse in the U.S. health care system](#) as the medical community deals with growing staff shortages and shuttered facilities.

These are just a small sampling of the many looming problems that threaten to overwhelm us in the near future.

Thus far, Americans seem inclined to just switch the channel, tune out what they don't want to hear, and tune into their own personal echo chambers.

Yet as I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), no amount of escapism can shield us from the harsh reality that the danger in our midst is posed by an entrenched government bureaucracy that has no regard for the Constitution, Congress, the courts or the citizenry.

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Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of [The Rutherford Institute](#). His most recent books are the best-selling [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#), the award-winning [A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State](#), and a debut dystopian fiction novel, [The Erik Blair Diaries](#). Whitehead can be contacted at staff@rutherford.org.

Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.

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