

The State of Our Nation: Still Divided, Enslaved and Locked Down

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[“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”—Abraham Lincoln](#)

History has a funny way of circling back on itself.

The facts, figures, faces and technology may change from era to era, but the dangers remain the same.

This year is no different, whatever the politicians and talking heads may say to the contrary.

Sure, there’s a new guy in charge, but for the most part, we’re still recycling the same news stories that have kept us with one eye warily glued to the news for the past 100-odd years: War. Corruption. Brutality. Economic instability. Partisan politics. Militarism. Disease. Hunger. Greed. Violence. Poverty. Ignorance. Hatred.

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

Brush up on your history, and you’ll find that we’ve been stuck on repeat for some time now.

Take the United States of America in the year 2021, which is not so far different from the United States of America during the [Civil Rights era](#), or the [Cold War era](#), or even [the Depression era](#).

Go far enough afield, and you’ll find aspects of our troubled history mirrored in the totalitarianism of Nazi Germany, in the fascism of Mussolini’s Italy, and further back in the [militarism of the Roman Empire](#).

We’re like TV weatherman Phil Connors in Harold Ramis’ classic 1993 comedy [Groundhog Day](#), forced to live the same day over and over again.

Here in the American police state, however, we continue to wake up, hoping each new day,

new president and new year will somehow be different from what has come before.

Unfortunately, no matter how we change the narrative, change the characters, change the plot lines, we seem to keep ending up in the same place that we started: enslaved, divided and repeating the mistakes of the past.

You want to know about the true State of our Nation? Listen up.

The State of the Union: The state of our nation is politically polarized, controlled by forces beyond the purview of the average American, and rapidly moving the nation away from its freedom foundation. Over the past year, due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans have found themselves repeatedly subjected to egregious civil liberties violations, invasive surveillance, martial law, lockdowns, political correctness, erosions of free speech, strip searches, police shootings of unarmed citizens, government spying, the criminalization of lawful activities, warmongering, etc.

The predators of the police state have wreaked havoc on our freedoms, our communities, and our lives. The government does not listen to the citizenry, refuses to abide by the Constitution, and treats taxpayers as a source of funding and little else. Police officers shoot unarmed citizens and their household pets. Government agents—including local police—remain armed to the teeth and act like soldiers on a battlefield. Bloated government agencies continue to fleece taxpayers. Government technicians spy on our emails and phone calls. And government contractors make a killing by waging endless wars abroad.

Consequently, the state of our nation remains bureaucratic, debt-ridden, violent, militarized, fascist, lawless, invasive, corrupt, untrustworthy, mired in war, and unresponsive to the wishes and needs of the electorate.

The [policies of the American police state continue](#) unabated.

The Executive Branch: All of the [imperial powers amassed by Donald Trump, Barack Obama and George W. Bush](#)—to kill American citizens without due process, to detain suspects indefinitely, to strip Americans of their citizenship rights, to carry out mass surveillance on Americans without probable cause, to suspend laws during wartime, to disregard laws with which he might disagree, to conduct secret wars and convene secret courts, to sanction torture, to sidestep the legislatures and courts with executive orders and signing statements, to direct the military to operate beyond the reach of the law, to act as a dictator and a tyrant, above the law and beyond any real accountability—were inherited by Joe Biden.

Biden has these powers because every successive occupant of the Oval Office has been allowed to [expand the reach and power of the presidency](#) through the use of [executive orders, decrees, memorandums, proclamations, national security directives and legislative signing statements](#) that can be activated by any sitting president. Those of us who saw this eventuality coming have been [warning for years](#) about the growing danger of the Executive Branch with its presidential toolbox of terror that could be used—and abused—by future presidents. The groundwork, we [warned](#), was being laid for a new kind of government where it won't matter if you're innocent or guilty, whether you're a threat to the nation or even if you're a citizen. What will matter is what the president—or whoever happens to be occupying the Oval Office at the time—thinks. And if he or she thinks you're a threat to the nation and should be locked up, then you'll be locked up with no access to the protections

our Constitution provides. In effect, you will disappear.

Our warnings continue to go unheeded.

The Legislative Branch: Congress may well be the most [self-serving, semi-corrupt institution](#) in America. Abuses of office runs the gamut from elected representatives neglecting their constituencies to engaging in self-serving practices, including the misuse of eminent domain, earmarking hundreds of millions of dollars in federal contracting in return for personal gain and campaign contributions, having inappropriate ties to lobbyist groups and incorrectly or incompletely disclosing financial information. Pork barrel spending, hastily passed legislation, partisan bickering, a skewed work ethic, graft and moral turpitude have all contributed to the public's increasing dissatisfaction with congressional leadership. No wonder only [31 percent of Americans approve](#) of the job Congress is doing.

The Judicial Branch: The 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 United States Supreme Court have become the [guardians of the American police state](#) in which we now live. As a result, sound judgment and justice have largely taken a back seat to legalism, statism and elitism, while preserving the rights of the people has been deprioritized and made to play second fiddle to both governmental and corporate interests. The courts have empowered the government to wreak havoc on our liberties. Protections for private property continue to be undermined. And Americans can no longer rely on the courts to mete out justice.

Shadow Government: Joe Biden inherited more than a bitterly divided nation teetering on the brink of financial catastrophe when he assumed office. He also inherited a [shadow government, one that is fully operational and staffed by unelected officials](#) who are, in essence, running the country. Referred to as the Deep State, this shadow government is comprised of unelected government bureaucrats, corporations, contractors, paper-pushers, and button-pushers who are actually calling the shots behind the scenes right now.

Law Enforcement: By and large the term "law enforcement" encompasses all agents within a militarized police state, including the military, local police, and the various agencies such as the Secret Service, FBI, CIA, NSA, etc. Having been given the green light 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, America's law enforcement officials, no longer mere servants of the people entrusted with keeping the peace but now extensions of the military, are part of an elite ruling class dependent on keeping the masses corralled, under control, and treated like suspects and enemies rather than citizens. As a result, police are becoming even more militarized and weaponized, and police shootings of unarmed individuals continue to increase.

A Suspect Surveillance Society: Every dystopian sci-fi film we've ever seen is suddenly converging into this present moment in a dangerous trifecta between science, technology and a government that wants to be all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful. By tapping into your phone lines and cell phone communications, the [government knows what you say](#). By uploading all of your emails, opening your mail, and reading your Facebook posts and [text messages](#), the [government knows what you write](#). By monitoring your movements with the

use of license plate readers, surveillance cameras and other tracking devices, the [government knows where you go](#). By churning through all of the detritus of your life—[what you read, where you go, what you say](#)—the [government can predict what you will do](#). By mapping the synapses in your brain, scientists—and in turn, the government—[will soon know what you remember](#). And by accessing your DNA, the [government will soon know everything else about you that they don't already know](#): your family chart, your ancestry, what you look like, your health history, your inclination to follow orders or chart your own course, etc. Consequently, in the face of [DNA evidence that places us at the scene of a crime, behavior sensing technology](#) that interprets our body temperature and facial tics as suspicious, and government surveillance devices that cross-check our [biometrics, license plates](#) and DNA against a growing database of unsolved crimes and potential criminals, we are no longer “innocent until proven guilty.”

Military Empire: America’s endless global wars and burgeoning military empire—funded by taxpayer dollars—have depleted our resources, over-extended our military and increased our similarities to the Roman Empire and its eventual demise. Black budget spending has completely undermined any hope of fiscal transparency, with government contractors padding their pockets at the expense of taxpayers and the nation’s infrastructure—railroads, water pipelines, ports, dams, bridges, airports and roads—taking the hit. The U.S. [now operates approximately 800 military bases in foreign countries](#) around the globe at an annual cost of at least \$156 billion. The consequences of financing a global military presence are dire. In fact, David Walker, former comptroller general of the U.S., believes there are [“striking similarities” between America’s current situation and the factors that contributed to the fall of Rome](#), including “declining moral values and political civility at home, an over-confident and over-extended military in foreign lands and fiscal irresponsibility by the central government.”

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. However, 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.

So how do we go about reclaiming our freedoms and reining in our runaway government?

Essentially, there are four camps of thought among the citizenry when it comes to holding the government accountable. Which camp you fall into says a lot about your view of government—or, at least, your view of whichever administration happens to be in power at the time.

In the first camp are those who trust the government to do the right thing, despite the government’s repeated failures in this department.

In the second camp are those who not only don’t trust the government but think the government is out to get them.

In the third camp are those who see government neither as an angel nor a devil, but merely as an entity that needs to be controlled, or as Thomas Jefferson phrased it, bound “down from mischief with the chains of the Constitution.”

Then there's the fourth camp, comprised of individuals who pay little to no attention to the workings of government. Easily entertained, easily distracted, easily led, these are the ones who make the government's job far easier than it should be.

It is easy to be diverted, distracted and amused by the antics of politicians, the pomp and circumstance of awards shows, athletic events, and entertainment news, and the feel-good evangelism that passes for religion today.

What is far more difficult to face up to is the reality of life in America, where unemployment, poverty, inequality, injustice and violence by government agents are increasingly norms.

The powers-that-be want us to remain divided, alienated from each other based on our politics, our bank accounts, our religion, our race and our value systems. Yet as George Orwell observed, "The real division is not between conservatives and revolutionaries but between authoritarians and libertarians."

The only distinction that matters anymore is where you stand in the American police state.

In other words, you're either part of the problem or part of the solution.

America is at a crossroads.

History may show that from this point forward, we will have left behind any semblance of constitutional government and entered into a militaristic state where all citizens are suspects and security trumps freedom.

Certainly, we have moved beyond the era of representative government and entered a new age: the age of authoritarianism. Even with its constantly shifting terrain, this topsy-turvy travesty of law and government has become America's new normal.

As long as we continue to put our politics ahead of our principles—moral, legal and constitutional—"we the people" will lose.

And you know who will keep winning by playing on our prejudices, capitalizing on our fears, deepening our distrust of our fellow citizens, and dividing us into polarized, warring camps incapable of finding consensus on the one true menace that is an immediate threat to all of our freedoms? The government.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), when we lose sight of the true purpose of government—to protect our rights—and fail to keep the government in its place as our servant, we allow the government to overstep its bounds and become a tyrant that rules by brute force.

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