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Totalitarian Paranoia Run Amok: Pandemics, Lockdowns and Martial Law

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"Totalitarian paranoia runs deep in American society, and it now inhabits the highest levels of government."—Professor Henry Giroux

Once upon a time, there was a government so paranoid about its hold on power that it treated everyone and everything as a threat and a reason to expand its powers. Unfortunately, the citizens of this nation believed everything they were told by their government, and they suffered for it.

When terrorists attacked the country, and the government passed massive laws aimed at paving the way for a surveillance state, the people believed it was done merely to keep them safe. The few who disagreed were labeled traitors.

When the government waged costly preemptive wars on foreign countries, insisting it was necessary to protect the nation, the citizens believed it. And when the government brought the weapons and tactics of war home to use against the populace, claiming it was just a way to recycle old equipment, the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were labeled unpatriotic.

When the government spied on its own citizens, claiming they were looking for terrorists hiding among them, the people believed it. And when the government began tracking the citizenry's movements, monitoring their spending, snooping on their social media, and surveying them about their habits—supposedly in an effort to make their lives more efficient—the people believed that, too. The few who disagreed were labeled paranoid.

When the government allowed private companies to take over the prison industry and agreed to keep the jails full, justifying it as a cost-saving measure, the people believed them. And when the government started arresting and jailing people for minor infractions, claiming the only way to keep communities safe was to be tough on crime, the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were labeled soft on crime.

When the government hired crisis actors to take part in disaster drills, never alerting the

public to which “disasters” were staged, the people genuinely believed they were under attack. And when the government insisted it needed greater powers to prevent such attacks from happening again, the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were told to shut up or leave the country.

When the government started carrying out covert military drills around the country, insisting it was necessary to train the troops for foreign combat, most of the people believed them. The few who disagreed, fearing that perhaps all was not what it seemed, were shouted down as conspiracy theorists and quacks.

When government leaders locked down the nation, claiming it was the only way to prevent an unknown virus from sickening the populace, the people believed them and complied with the mandates and quarantines. The few who resisted or voiced skepticism about the government’s edicts were denounced as selfish and dangerous and silenced on social media.

When the government expanded its war on terrorism to include domestic terrorists, the people believed that only violent extremists would be targeted. Little did they know that anyone who criticizes the government can be considered an extremist.

By the time the government began using nationalized police and the military to routinely lockdown the nation, the citizenry had become so acclimated to such states of emergency that they barely even noticed the prison walls that had grown up around them.

Now every fable has a moral, and the moral of this story is to beware of anyone who urges you to ignore your better instincts and blindly trust that the government has your best interests at heart.

In other words, if it looks like trouble and it smells like trouble, you can bet there’s trouble afoot.

Unfortunately, the government has fully succeeded in recalibrating our general distaste for anything that smacks too overtly of tyranny.

After all, like the proverbial boiling frogs, the government has been gradually acclimating us to the specter of a police state for years now: Militarized police. Riot squads. Camouflage gear. Black uniforms. Armored vehicles. Mass arrests. Pepper spray. Tear gas. Batons. Strip searches. Surveillance cameras. Kevlar vests. Drones. Lethal weapons. Less-than-lethal weapons unleashed with deadly force. Rubber bullets. Water cannons. Stun grenades. Arrests of journalists. Crowd control tactics. Intimidation tactics. Brutality.

This is how you prepare a populace to accept a police state willingly, even gratefully.

You don't scare them by making dramatic changes. Rather, you acclimate them slowly to their prison walls. Persuade the citizenry that their prison walls are merely intended to keep them safe and danger out. Desensitize them to violence, acclimate them to a military presence in their communities, and persuade them that only a militarized government can alter the seemingly hopeless trajectory of the nation.

It's happening already.

The sight of police clad in body armor and gas masks, wielding semiautomatic rifles and escorting an armored vehicle through a crowded street, a scene likened to "a military patrol through a hostile city," no longer causes alarm among the general populace.

We've allowed ourselves to be acclimated to the occasional lockdown of government buildings, military drills in small towns so that special operations forces can get "realistic military training" in "hostile" territory, and Live Active Shooter Drill training exercises, carried out at schools, in shopping malls, and on public transit, which can and do fool law enforcement officials, students, teachers and bystanders into thinking it's a real crisis.

Still, you can't say we weren't warned.

Back in 2008, an Army War College report revealed that "widespread civil violence inside the United States would force the defense establishment to reorient priorities in extremis to defend basic domestic order and human security." The 44-page report went on to warn that potential causes for such civil unrest could include another terrorist attack, "unforeseen economic collapse, loss of functioning political and legal order, purposeful domestic resistance or insurgency, *pervasive public health emergencies*, and catastrophic natural and human disasters."

In 2009, reports by the Department of Homeland Security surfaced that called on the government to subject right-wing and left-wing activists and military veterans to full-fledged, pre-crime surveillance.

Meanwhile, the government has been amassing an arsenal of military weapons, including hollow point bullets, for use domestically and equipping and training their "troops" for war. Even government agencies with largely administrative functions such as the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Smithsonian have been acquiring body armor, riot helmets and shields, cannon launchers and police firearms and ammunition. In fact, there are now at least 120,000 armed federal agents carrying such weapons who possess the power to arrest.

Rounding out this profit-driven campaign to turn American citizens into enemy combatants (and America into a battlefield) is a technology sector that has been colluding with the government to create a Big Brother that is all-knowing, all-seeing and inescapable. It's not just the drones, fusion centers, license plate readers, stingray devices and the NSA that you have to worry about. You're also being tracked by the black boxes in your cars, your cell phone, smart devices in your home, grocery loyalty cards, social media accounts, credit cards, streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon, and e-book reader accounts.

And then there are the military drills that have been taking place on American soil in recent

years.

In the latest "unconventional warfare exercise," dubbed "Robin Sage," special forces soldiers will battle seasoned "freedom fighters" in a "realistic" guerrilla war across two dozen North Carolina counties.

Robin Sage follows on the heels of other such military drills, including Jade Helm, which involved U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the Navy Seals, Air Force Special Operations, Marine Special Operations Command, Marine Expeditionary Units, the 82nd Airborne Division, and other interagency partners.

According to the government, these planned military exercises are supposed to test and practice unconventional warfare including, but not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.

The training, known as Realistic Military Training (RMT) because it will be conducted outside of federal property, are carried out on both public and private land, with locations marked as "hostile territory," permissive, uncertain (leaning friendly), or uncertain (leaning hostile).

This is psychological warfare at its most sophisticated.

Add these military exercises onto the list of other troubling developments that have taken place over the past 30 years or more, and suddenly, the overall picture seems that much more sinister: the expansion of the military industrial complex and its influence in Washington DC, the rampant surveillance, the corporate-funded elections and revolving door between lobbyists and elected officials, the militarized police, the loss of our freedoms, the injustice of the courts, the privatized prisons, the school lockdowns, the roadside strip searches, the military drills on domestic soil, the fusion centers and the simultaneous fusing of every branch of law enforcement (federal, state and local), the stockpiling of ammunition by various government agencies, the active shooter drills that are indistinguishable from actual crises, the economy flirting with near collapse, the growing social unrest, the socio-psychological experiments being carried out by government agencies, etc.

And then you have the government's Machiavellian schemes for unleashing all manner of dangers on an unsuspecting populace, then demanding additional powers in order to protect "we the people" from the threats. Almost every national security threat that the government has claimed greater powers in order to fight—all the while undermining the liberties of the American citizenry—has been manufactured in one way or another by the government.

What we've seen play out before us is more than mere totalitarian paranoia run amok.

What has unfolded over the past few years has been a test to see how well "we the people" have assimilated the government's lessons in compliance, fear and police state tactics; a test to see how quickly "we the people" will march in lockstep with the government's dictates, no questions asked; and a test to see how little resistance "we the people" will offer up to the government's power grabs when made in the name of national security.

Most critically of all, this has been a test to see whether the Constitution—and our commitment to the principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights—could survive a national crisis and true state of emergency.

We have failed the test abysmally.

We have also made it way too easy for a government that has been working hard to destabilize to lockdown the nation.

Mark my words, there's trouble brewing.

Better yet, take a look at "Megacities: Urban Future, the Emerging Complexity," a Pentagon training video created by the Army for U.S. Special Operations Command.

The training video is only five minutes long, but it says a lot about the government's mindset, the way its views the citizenry, and the so-called "problems" that the government must be prepared to address in the near future through the use of martial law.

Even more troubling, however, is what this military video doesn't say about the Constitution, about the rights of the citizenry, and about the dangers of locking down the nation and using the military to address political and social problems.

The training video anticipates that all hell will break loose by 2030—that's barely eight short years away—but we're already witnessing a breakdown of society on virtually every front.

The danger signs are screaming out a message

The government is anticipating trouble (read: civil unrest), which is code for anything that challenges the government's authority, wealth and power.

According to the Pentagon training video created by the Army for U.S. Special Operations Command, the U.S. government is grooming its armed forces to solve future domestic political and social problems.

What they're really talking about is martial law, packaged as a well-meaning and overriding concern for the nation's security.

The chilling five-minute training video, obtained by *The Intercept* through a FOIA request and made available online, paints an ominous picture of the future—*a future the military is preparing for*—bedeviled by "criminal networks," "substandard infrastructure," "religious and ethnic tensions," "impoverishment, slums," "open landfills, over-burdened sewers," a "growing mass of unemployed," and an urban landscape in which the prosperous economic elite must be protected from the impoverishment of the have nots.

And then comes the kicker. Three-and-a-half minutes into the Pentagon's dystopian vision of "a world of Robert Kaplan-esque urban hellscapes—brutal and anarchic supercities filled with gangs of youth-gone-wild, a restive underclass, criminal syndicates, and bands of malicious hackers," the ominous voice of the narrator speaks of a need to "drain the swamps."

The government wants to use the military to drain the swamps of futuristic urban American cities of "noncombatants and engage the remaining adversaries in high intensity conflict within." And who are these noncombatants, a military term that refers to civilians who are *not* engaged in fighting? They are, according to the Pentagon, "adversaries." They are "threats."

They are the "enemy."

They are people who don't support the government, people who live in fast-growing urban communities, people who may be less well-off economically than the government and corporate elite, people who engage in protests, people who are unemployed, people who engage in crime (in keeping with the government's fast-growing, overly broad definition of what constitutes a crime).

In other words, in the eyes of the U.S. military, noncombatants are American citizens a.k.a. domestic extremists a.k.a. enemy combatants who must be identified, targeted, detained, contained and, if necessary, eliminated.

In the future imagined by the Pentagon, any walls and prisons that are built will be used to protect the societal elite—the haves—from the have-nots.

If you haven't figured it out already, *we the people* are the have-nots.

Suddenly, the events of recent years begin to make sense: the invasive surveillance, the extremism reports, the civil unrest, the protests, the shootings, the bombings, the military exercises and active shooter drills, the color-coded alerts and threat assessments, the fusion centers, the transformation of local police into extensions of the military, the distribution of military equipment and weapons to local police forces, the government databases containing the names of dissidents and potential troublemakers.

The government is systematically locking down the nation and shifting us into martial law.

This is how you prepare a populace to accept a police state willingly, even gratefully.

As Nazi Field Marshal Hermann Goering remarked during the Nuremberg trials:

> It is always a simple matter to drag people along whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. This is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.

It does indeed work the same in every country.

It's time to wake up and stop being deceived by government propaganda.

Mind you, by "government," I'm not referring to the highly partisan, two-party bureaucracy of the Republicans and Democrats.

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People* and in its fictional counterpart *The Erik Blair Diaries*, I'm referring to "government" with a capital "G," the entrenched Deep State that is unaffected by elections, unaltered by populist movements, and has set itself beyond the reach of the law. I'm referring to the corporatized, militarized, entrenched bureaucracy that is fully operational and staffed by unelected officials who are, in essence, running the country and calling the shots in Washington DC, no matter who sits in the White House.

Be warned: in the future envisioned by the government, we will not be viewed as

Republicans or Democrats. Rather, “we the people” will all be enemies of the state.

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