

My predictions for 2015. By Ron Paul, Ron Paul Institute, www.ronpaulinstitute.org. 14 January 2015

If Americans were honest with themselves they would acknowledge that the Republic is no more. We now live in a police state. If we do not recognize and resist this development, freedom and prosperity for all Americans will continue to deteriorate. All liberties in America today are under siege.

It didn't happen overnight. It took many years of neglect for our liberties to be given away so casually for a promise of security from the politicians. The tragic part is that the more security was promised — physical and economic — the less liberty was protected.

With cradle-to-grave welfare protecting all citizens from any mistakes and a perpetual global war on terrorism, which a majority of Americans were convinced was absolutely necessary for our survival, our security and prosperity has been sacrificed.

It was all based on lies and ignorance. Many came to believe that their best interests were served by giving up a little freedom now and then to gain a better life.

The trap was set. At the beginning of a cycle that systematically undermines liberty with delusions of easy prosperity, the change may actually seem to be beneficial to a few. But to me that's like excusing embezzlement as a road to leisure and wealth — eventually payment and punishment always come due. One cannot escape the fact that a society's wealth cannot be sustained or increased without work and productive effort. Yes, some criminal elements can benefit for a while, but reality always sets in.

Reality is now setting in for America and for that matter for most of the world. The piper will get his due even if "the children" have to suffer. The deception of promising "success" has lasted for quite a while. It was accomplished by ever-increasing taxes, deficits, borrowing, and printing press money. In the meantime the policing powers of the federal government were systematically and significantly expanded. No one cared much, as there seemed to be enough "gravy" for the rich, the poor, the politicians, and the bureaucrats.

Warfare/Welfare State Requires Police Control

As the size of government grew and cracks in the system became readily apparent, a federal police force was needed to regulate our lives and the economy, as well as to protect us from ourselves and make sure the redistribution of a shrinking economic pie was "fair" to all. Central economic planning requires an economic police force to monitor every transaction of all Americans. Special interests were quick to get governments to regulate everything we put in our bodies: food, medications, and even politically correct ideas. IRS employees soon needed to carry guns to maximize revenue collections.

The global commitment to perpetual war, though present for decades, exploded in size and scope after 9/11. If there weren't enough economic reasons to monitor everything we did, fanatics used the excuse of national security to condition the American people to accept total surveillance of all by the NSA, the TSA, FISA courts, the CIA, and the FBI. The people even became sympathetic to our government's policy of torture.

To keep the people obedient to statism that originated at the federal level of government, control of education was required. It is now recognized that central control of education has actually ruined education, while costs have skyrocketed. National control of medical care has brought a similar result. This has meant more money for bureaucrats, as well as drug, insurance, and health management companies, and less money for medical care. Constantly more police are required to run our lives at greater costs while providing less benefit. “Nationalizing” both medical care and education has provided a great incentive to increase the policing powers of the federal government.

The predictable poverty that results from such a terrible system is now upon us and is a strong motivation for the militarization of local police as part of the expansion of the national police state. Temporary and perceived benefits of government overreach and expanded policing powers end up becoming the real problem. By the time it is understood that these “benefits” are artificial, government power and special interests have gained control of a system designed to serve them and not the people the programs were purported to help. The victims are left hanging and taught that too much freedom is the source of the problem, prompting even more support for the policing power of the state.

Today the failure of central economic planning and of the US as world policeman is everywhere to be found. This is especially noticeable in the police war on the lawbreakers — real and unreal — in America. The failures of social and economic policy of the past 50 years have led to a mounting friction between the local police and the rights of the people. Local police have been militarized and have become an integral part of the national police state. A police culture that accepts the principle of initiating unjustified violence against citizens has become a serious problem.

The news is constant. If it’s not Ferguson, it’s New York City. If not New York City, it’s Chicago or Detroit or Cleveland. And I believe the violence in our cities is only in its early stages. We had a taste of the conflict in the 1960s, but the fundamental values of equal justice and economic opportunity have receded further from reality. Failing to understand why the past 50 years of government expansion to eradicate poverty has only worsened the conditions of our cities will guarantee that the violent conflicts we see erupting today will only get worse.

Fight for Equal Protection Distorted by 'War on Poverty'

Fifty years ago, as a result of Martin Luther King Jr.’s leadership in a plea for equal justice, LBJ declared war on poverty. Poverty was seen at that time as the major contributing factor in the plight of those living in the inner city. King’s dream was to make sure all people will be judged by the “content of their character” and not by “the color of their skin.” Good advice, but it was never followed. Residual racism remains, but the excuse for every shortcoming in the failed cities is said to be due to the color of one’s skin.

The very expensive war on poverty has after 50 years only made matters worse, compounding the problems of poverty and inflation while hurting most of the people the “war” was supposed to help. Currently our government spends over \$1 trillion per year on anti-poverty programs. Over the past 50 years, over \$16 trillion was spent, i.e., wasted. And yet poverty and dire economic conditions remain the major factor in the violence that persists, which incites or gives the police the excuse to overreact to maintain order. The plans and expectations for the war on poverty must have been seriously flawed.

Although the degree of poverty is different for the various races in the United States, all categories — Asian, white, Hispanic, and black — have had a steady increase in real median income from 1964 until the year 2000, when the first of many bubbles started bursting. In all four race categories incomes are lower since then. With the economy moving into the next stage of liquidation of bad investment and debt, we should expect this trend to continue. Economic setbacks and a decrease in real income are not limited to blacks in the inner city. The setback for the young has been dramatically worse than for the older generations, aggravating the problem of violent crime in our cities.

The “progress” of the early years of the war on poverty is understandable because the payment that always must be paid was delayed. The deficits and the borrowing and printing of money were unsustainable. It should not be difficult to understand that the welfare benefits, the bloated government, the excessive salaries, and the promised pensions for thousands of nonproductive bureaucrats in Detroit would lead to bankruptcy. The benefits had to be reduced. If policies don’t change and the politicians continue to be elected by wild promises, the disaster will continue. How can the provocateurs blame racism for the plight of the middle class in Detroit?

We must get people to reject flawed economic policy if we want a real war on poverty. LBJ’s war on poverty was no more successful than his Vietnam War — or any war since, for that matter. A national government that can print money as needed to finance extraordinary extravagance can function longer than a city, state, or private entity, but it too must eventually “file for bankruptcy” albeit in a different fashion. As we are now seeing, the bankruptcy of a nation also involves poverty for many. This situation will continue to worsen. Since poverty is a major contributing factor to the violence of excessive police militarization, some fundamentals must be understood. The economic theories of Paul Samuelson, Paul Krugman, John Maynard Keynes, and all those who claim to know how to “regulate” the economy to benefit the poor, must be challenged and abandoned.

So far reality has not yet set in. The poor grow in numbers as the middle class shrinks and the privileged class that benefits from government spending and government control of the monetary system thrives. The political demagogues and the authoritarians feed the flames of resentment that develop between the rich and the poor as class warfare and racial strife take over. They care little and understand less what liberty is all about — the more chaos there is, the more laws they seek to pass.

The Victimized Inner Cities

This social disruption has motivated the enthusiastic growth and militarization of our local police departments. The law and order crowd thrives on excessive laws and regulations that no US citizen can escape. The out-of-control war on drugs is the worst part, and it generates the greatest danger in poverty-ridden areas via out-of-control police. It is estimated that these conditions have generated up to 80,000 SWAT raids per year in the United States. Most are in poor neighborhoods and involve black homes and businesses being hit disproportionately. This involves a high percentage of no-knock attacks. As can be expected many totally innocent people are killed in the process. Property damage is routine and compensation is rare. The routine use of civil forfeiture of property has become an abomination, totally out of control, which significantly contributes to the chaos. It should not be a surprise to see resentment building up against the police under these conditions. The violent reaction against local

merchants in retaliation for police actions further aggravates the situation —hardly a recipe for a safe neighborhood.

Though poverty and excessive laws associated with the war on drugs are significant factors in the conflicts that are routine in the inner-city, the overreaction by both sides continues to make the situation much worse. As a result, policing in general is out of control, and anything suggesting racial confrontation leads to rioting, looting, and property destruction. Civil liberties are ignored by the police, and the private property of innocent bystanders is disregarded by those resenting police violence. When police overreact and unfairly enforce the law, it elicits a violent reaction from those on the receiving end. This only escalates the problem. It's an invitation for outside provocateurs to rush in and aggravate the racial tensions — all the while never trying to understand the real reasons behind police militarization and the cause of poverty.

The military-industrial complex now systematically lobbies to provide to local police departments the newest and most sophisticated weaponry — just as they sell weapons to the United States government to fight undeclared wars overseas. Drug laws are pushed by many corporate interests as well. Pharmaceutical companies, alcohol companies, and private prison systems all support of the insane war on drugs. The victims are the poor who suffer with a messed up economy and have no easy access to jobs. A natural temptation is to become a drug dealer. Violent activities arising from the drug war making drug transactions a criminal undertaking create demand in communities for strict law enforcement.

Why do the race baiters have so much success in making this type of conflict a racial problem alone? Unfortunately many of them make a living off stirring up trouble. If the situation were understood in terms of police brutality and poverty, the evening news would be dramatically different. Turning it into strictly a racial conflict narrows the discussion, and the idea of responsibility for one's action no longer needs to be discussed.

The race factor seems to stir up the emotions. Mob-like responses can be achieved, which further inflames the situation. Out of control police and an entire segment of our population taught that responsibility for one's actions is a negative are a volatile mix.

Justice under the law requires that people cannot be punished or rewarded because of the color of their skin, but unfortunately King's claim that only a person's character counts is forgotten.

The entitlement mentality is a source of much anger and misunderstanding. It leads people who see themselves as victims to one conclusion: they are entitled to be taken care of. They believe that more government transfer payments are the solution. They claim that they deserve to be taken care of and that, if they are not, there's trouble to be had — which only opens the door to more police overreactions.

There is agreement with my contention that poverty is a big problem and the source of much trouble. Therefore, it is said, someone must take care of it. If one trillion dollars per year doesn't do the job, then make it \$2 trillion. If the war on poverty's \$16 trillion hasn't worked, make it \$32 trillion. This sentiment reflects the entitlement mentality that has taught many that some people have a "right" to government handouts and that the rich must pay. This is an idea that is deeply flawed, and it stirs up class warfare on top of racial animosities and police brutality.

The blanket demand that all wealthy individuals owe support to the poor through government

welfare programs is not an example of equal justice under the law. It is an example of egalitarianism gone awry. Welfare, which is the use of force to transfer wealth from one group to another, is based on a moral principle of equality that in fact is not moral and does not work. The wealthy special interests, such as banks, the military-industrial complex, the medical industry, the drug industry, and many other corporatists, quickly gain control of the system. Crumbs may be thrown to the poor, but the principle of wealth transfer is hijacked and used for corporate and foreign welfare instead of wealth transfers to the poor.

Many people do indeed gain wealth unfairly with today's system, which adds to the envy shared by many and especially the poor. But this is a problem that is not solved by indiscriminately placing blame on successful businesses. The result would be the country and the whole world becoming poorer while resentment rises. Honest profits of successful entrepreneurs are quite different than profits of the corporate elite who gain control of the government and, as a consequence, accumulate obscene wealth by "robbing" the middle class. To blame and destroy those who make an honest living by satisfying consumers without the use of special benefits from the government is destructive to liberty and wealth.

Reforms that are driven by envy of successful people making an honest living will not address the problem of poverty. Poverty is actually made worse by an aggressive sense of victimization.

Many factors are involved in the crisis of our cities, including the following:

- Police brutality, militarization of the police, excessive laws, courts and law enforcement efforts ignoring the principles of equal justice,
- Racism that exists to some degree on both sides of the conflict,
- Rampant crime reflecting structural poverty,
- Absence of an understanding of the difference between earned and stolen wealth,
- Race baiting,
- The entitlement mentality, self-reliance not being a goal for many, and the breakdown of the family unit,
- The war on drugs, and
- The lack of economic understanding regarding the Federal Reserve, taxes, welfare, economic consequences of constant war, deficits, and excessive government spending.

True satisfaction comes from productive effort and self-reliance and not from a government transferring wealth in an effort to bring about an egalitarian society. The absence of an understanding of the nonaggression principle makes it difficult for positive reforms to develop. Unfortunately hypocrisy has come to equal "common sense." Placing confidence in people who thrive on wielding government power and who spend a lifetime using it to benefit special interests is not a wise policy.

The people have too little confidence that most problems can be solved in a voluntary manner

in a society that cherishes civil liberties. There's never an admission that government problem-solving doesn't work. Government-created problems are a road to poverty and resentment. Too many people believe that "free stuff" from the government can solve our problems. They mistakenly believe that deficits don't matter and that wealth can come from a printing press.

The recent high profile episodes of racial conflict involving police killings and the violence in some neighborhoods have been a fertile environment for the demagogues and those who thrive on racial conflict.

Some have suggested that sensitivity training for all police personnel should be required, to teach proper ways to deal with the public. Though there's a lot of extenuating circumstances that provoke overreaction by the police, I'm not optimistic that the problem will be helped much by sensitivity training. Retraining the police won't touch the complex problems that pit the police against the victims of complex social conditions generated by hate, violence and bad economic policies. The high profile episodes of police violence and overreaction are a consequence of conditions that in many ways were generated by government policy.

If social engineering intended to produce economic equality fails, more of the same cannot possibly be the solution. Seeking and promoting equal justice has nothing to do with welfare redistribution. On the contrary: equal justice requires the end of welfare redistribution. Redistribution is a process that is always destined to help a small minority, whether in an economy like ours that endorses central economic planning or in one run by radical fascists or communists. While advocates claim that it's the duty of government to pursue economic equality, all efforts fail to achieve that goal, while gutting the principle of equal justice.

The Rich Are Getting Richer, But Why?

Under an authoritarian regime, those in power take care of themselves. This always leads to poverty and discrepancy in wealth distribution. Eventually the social strife that is predictable leads to an overthrow of the government. The Soviet communist leaders never suffered from want, but even they were routed when the people in the Soviet system decided that they had had enough.

We must realize that we are not exempt from a breakdown of our system. The strife that we are witnessing is a reflection of a growing number of people who are recognizing the discrepancy between rich and poor, the weak and the powerful, Wall Street and Main Street. The courts are obviously failing at meting out justice fairly and impartially. Money and race have a lot to do with how arrests, convictions, and incarcerations are carried out. That provides motivation for some people to become angry and violently strike out against anyone who appears to have more than they do.

While the courts fail to follow the rules of equal justice, those who react violently believe that attacking almost anyone is justifiable in seeking what they claim is justice. Talk of the 99 percent and one percent is not just sloganeering. It reveals a problem generated by government and a situation in which some people believe that they have a "right" to be taken care of rather than just a right to live in a free and just society where all persons are treated equally under the law.

Indeed the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. The extreme current inequality is not a consequence of free markets and true liberty. Rather it results from the welfare state that, as

always, morphs into a system that provides excesses for the powerful few. Better management of the welfare system does not help. That only changes the types of authoritarians in charge. Both political parties are financed by Wall Street, the big banks, and the military-industrial complex. Getting rich by being part of the government class is the problem. Wealth achieved by hard work is quite a bit different. Opening the door to this opportunity is achievable by following the principle of life, liberty, and property.

The economic interventionist system under which we live today rewards those who benefit from government economic planning by the Federal Reserve, access to government contracts, and targeted special regulations to help one group over the other. The insiders benefit during the bubble phase of the business cycle and are the first ones in line for the bailouts. The poor, for whom welfare is supposedly designed to help and for whom the politicians justify the spending, end up with the crumbs while the Wall Street/banking elites thrive in good times and bad. There are two problems. First is conceding the principle that government has the moral authority to redistribute wealth. Second is believing the redistribution will be managed wisely and without corruption.

All government management ends up being unwise, corrupt, and wasteful. The money interests inevitably prevail. Belief that “good” bureaucrats and politicians can be found to manage the economy and achieve equity in distribution is a dream that always ends up a nightmare. To make even a modest attempt at this goal requires government to use aggression against one group for the benefit of another. This authority must be denied to government. We must limit the government’s role to protecting equal justice in defense of life, liberty, and property.

Currently the political system in America and in most of the rest of the world is not motivated to seek this limited goal for government. Thus the move toward unfair concentration of wealth in the few and a dramatic increase in the number of people living in poverty as the middle class shrinks. Since there is little understanding of the economic system that is a major contributing factor to the economic problems, it can be expected to exacerbate social and class conflict. The killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson plus many similar incidents are signs of a serious economic and political crisis that is not limited to police brutality and runaway violence.

Police brutality and militarization may well induce a violent event far beyond what we have seen in Ferguson. It also can serve as an excuse. But it is not the root cause of turmoil. The real cause is poverty, the entitlement mentality, and the breakdown of the rule of law. Moral decay and the national police state are the real culprits.

More police with improved training will not do much to deal with this growing conflict. Bowing to entitlement demands from the “victims” will not be helpful in a bankrupt system. We have too many police, too many laws, and too much exemption of government officials from the crimes they commit. Both adding police and increasing entitlements involve expanding the role of government in an effort to solve problems that too much government has already caused. Government can only be expanded by diminishing the people’s liberty. This problem can only be ended by maximizing liberty and getting people to realize that self-reliance, hard work, and the absence of coercive force by individuals and government is the only way to reverse the downward trend from which we are suffering.

The battle will no longer be to get the government to pick sides in a conflict between rich and poor, black and white, young and old, or the lawless police versus the lawless demands of entitlement recipients demanding their “fair share.” There has to be an understanding that

productive effort and self-reliance on the part of everyone is required for a free society to thrive.

Our Liberties Under Attack

The economic and moral decay of American society is reflected in the loss of liberties. This problem affects all Americans and not just the poor in the inner city. Gradual erosion of personal and economic liberty has proceeded for a century. The loss of our liberty has sharply accelerated since the 9/11 attacks. We have done to ourselves what no foreign enemy could have possibly accomplished.

Government surveillance provides the state with information that enables it to know our every move. The protection of the Fourth Amendment is gone. Many Americans are comfortable with the sacrifice of liberty for safety and accept the notion that government's key responsibility is to keep us safe. It's a nice dream but the truth is it can't do it. One thing for sure: if it tries, it will do so at the expense of liberty.

Welfare, for the rich or poor, cannot exist without the sacrifice of the principal of property ownership. Though it always starts small and justified for the "needy," the principle of wealth transfer incentivizes the special interests and the rich to obtain benefit at the expense of the poor. This occurs in all societies and inevitably grows to a point where the production of wealth is diminished and the system collapses. This is what we are witnessing today.

The growth of the state necessitates government surveillance of all our financial transactions to enhance the collection of tax revenues. Because there is never enough money for the "do-gooders," the tactics of the tax collectors have become more vicious. Violation of our liberties is excused by the majority in order to ensure that all people "pay their fair share." When conditions deteriorate, capital controls are imposed to prevent moving assets out of the country. Our monstrous tax code reflects the hundred-years development of our income tax system and is one of the greatest invitations for our "caring" government to pursue the impossible goal of the fair distribution of all wealth.

The vicious drug war, which dates from the early 1970s, provides another excuse for knowing everything about everybody at all times. Its selling point is to keep people safe from themselves. Pursuing this principle guarantees that liberty will be decimated in the process. It invites the government's interference in our spiritual and intellectual well-being. What one reads and believes becomes of interest to the manipulators who want to care for us for our own good. And they never rest from seeking this goal.

This concession to the state invites controls on everything we put into our bodies: what we eat, drink, or inhale. It takes a lot of bureaucrats, politicians, and money to manage the process. The people, we have been told, are "too stupid" to make their own decisions about their own lives. We are to believe that politicians who invite themselves to rule over us are all-wise and that we should be thankful to sacrifice our liberty for this "service." Authoritarians actually believe that we should be grateful to them for all the good things that they do for us. We must remember that if the people don't rebel against a police state it only grows in size and becomes more ruthless.

In addition to all these trends — which includes the federal government monopolizing and administering medical care and education — government surveillance becomes the darling of

the gurus who love the technology that allows the government to know our every move, every day, without limits.

With the disaster of 9/11, an existing acceptance of government monitoring, along with technological advances, helped allow a new age to be ushered in that makes the horrors of George Orwell's 1984 look less threatening by comparison.

The Federal Government's War on Us

Tolerance is a favorable trait when it means acting without aggression toward others, but tolerance of the monster that has evolved in our government is not good. Instead of adding more government agencies to spy on the American people, we should be talking about eliminating the ones we have, at a cost the American taxpayers of over \$80 billion per year.

We have lived with the global war on terrorism for over 13 years now, and the threat of terrorist attacks against Americans and American allies is worse than ever. Though a global threat exists, the greatest dangers for American citizens here at home have been caused by our own government. Our government's attacks on our liberties have been overwhelming and worse than anything any foreign power has ever done.

It's the federal government that leads the charge in all our domestic wars, which, in addition to the global war on terrorism, include the war on drugs, taxpayers, and poverty, all of which contribute to the constant war on our privacy. Today every American is a suspect. Our president has established a policy that an American citizen can be assassinated without even being charged with a crime. The national police are made up of over 100,000 bureaucrats and police officials who carry guns to enforce federal law on the American citizens. The Founders and our Constitution intended that policing powers would be the responsibility of the individual states. That was forgotten a long time ago.

Not only do employees of agencies like the CIA, FBI, and BATF carry guns, employees of OSHA, EPA, Fish and Wildlife, and many other agencies enforcing regulations do so as well. The notion of total homeland security being provided by a heavily armed Department of Homeland Security was foreign to America up until just recently. Today, whether it's riots in our cities or chaos after a national disaster like a hurricane, the Feds are there taking charge over all local officials and property owners. It shouldn't surprise us that our local police departments have become an arm of a runaway federal police mentality that mimics an army.

The Founders did not even want a standing army. They wanted only a militia. Today we endure, at the expense of our liberties, a national police force armed like an invading military force. We are destined to see a continued escalation of violence in our cities as the internal conflicts grow. Instead of the police quelling the violence, they unfortunately have become part of it.

It's evident we have a national police force harassing the people and failing to protect liberty and property. It fails to quell riots while. Too often it incites them. We are also stuck with a huge "standing" army, marching around the world and engaged to some degree in over 150 countries, "making the world safe for democracy" and serving as a private police force for American corporations overseas.

The US Empire: Who Does it Serve?

When Obama announced a shift in geopolitical interest to the Far East — to keep an eye on China — one TV anchor pointed out that the move seems quite logical since we have a lot of “business interests” in the region. It is, in fact, far from logical if one looks at the tragic mess US government interventionism has caused in the Middle East and the conflict the US government is stirring up with Russia over Ukraine.

Old-fashioned colonialism was deemed necessary by various European powers to secure natural resources along with control over sea lanes and markets for selling manufactured goods. European-style colonialism — supporting a mercantilistic economy — came to be seen as politically unrealistic and unnecessary. When free-trade principles were utilized, colonialism did not die; it only changed form. Mercantilism in various forms and degrees drove trade policies of nations with strong economies and militaries. Though the United States is the world’s military powerhouse, controls the oceans and airspace, and has a presence in the four corners of the earth, few people refer to America as a colonial power. But in many ways it is, which has prompted our interests in oil and mineral rich countries. We are frequently involved in choosing the “elected” leaders, as well as hand-picking dictators, in many countries as well. This is not exactly what the Founders had advised.

International militarization of our policies is just as dangerous to our liberties and economy as is the domestic policy that drives our authoritarian governments to regulate our every move. We are now subject to an out-of-control domestic police force while the US military maintains our Empire overseas.

The “one percenters,” generally speaking, are internationalists who are not champions of individual liberty and free trade. They are supporters of managed trade and international institutions like the WTO where the interests of the one percent can influence the rulings that frequently have little to do with advancing advertised goals of low tariffs and free trade.

The international monetary system is a powerful tool for the select few. Easy credit, government guarantees, and generous contracts are a great benefit to those in charge. Non-compliant nations, or any country that is deemed unfriendly, can be punished with severe sanctions without moral or economic justification. US corporations benefit from our military presence worldwide. The military-industrial complex profits not only by selling weapons to the US government, but also by being the world’s chief arms provider.

It is a fact that many weapons we send into areas such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria frequently end up in the hands of our enemies. ISIS obtaining US weapons led to the US military then taking action to destroy the weapons. The military-industrial complex is immediately available to replace the weapons while earning generous profits. This is great if you happen to be an insider manufacturing or selling these weapons. It is quite a lucrative business, all at the expense of the American taxpayer.

The United States military presence around the world provides a “private” police force to protect US and other international companies against any local resistance or leaders that turn unfriendly. Our military presence overseas has nothing to do with protecting our freedoms and defending our Constitution. Those are lies and are used for the purpose of gaining the support of the American people for wars that should never have been fought. After long periods of tragic losses and expense, the American people generally wake up and realize what has happened. But what we need to do is wake the American people up earlier and get them to

realize that the resistance has to be heard from the people when the government is *preparing* for war, not after the war has begun or even ended.

Military personnel are idolized, and, if any one raises a question on whether or not all soldiers are universally “heroes,” that person is accused of being unpatriotic, un-American, and unsupportive of the troops. In fact, the real heroes are the ones who expose the truth and refuse to fight foreign wars for the international corporations. Disengaging our troops from around the world and refusing to defend American neocolonialism is pursuing a course compatible with the qualities that Americans claim to stand for.

Liberty at home is never enhanced by war abroad. Preemptive wars are especially antagonistic to the goals of peace, commerce, and honest friendship. War “is the health of the state,” it has been said, and the state is the enemy of liberty. Wars overseas justify the wars at home against the American people. It is expected that liberties will be sacrificed when a country is at war. Pro-war neoconservatives are blatantly honest by arguing that for freedom to exist the sacrifice of liberty is required. This admission is truly discouraging. It hardly makes sense that voluntarily sacrificing liberty is worthwhile, if the goal is to preserve liberty. Time is short to reverse this trend.

Not only are our policies destructive to liberty, the economic costs are prohibitive. So far the bills have not been paid, but they are rapidly coming due. Both the deeply flawed policy of military interventionism abroad and the failed errors of central economic planning at home are now threatening our liberties and our general welfare. The recent breakout of violence in our cities between police on one side and people who have been thrust into the stagnation of poverty as a consequence of bad government social and economic policy on the other side should not be a mystery if one could see the forest for the trees. Economic problems are “blowback” and unintended consequences of well-meaning welfare programs that have been usurped by the powerful special interests demanding benefits off the top.

Yes, it’s tempting to believe the falsehoods of economists who claim that transferring wealth for fairness sake is beneficial, but history shows that it never works. The same humanitarians argue that all spending is crucial and beneficial, deficits don’t matter, borrowing is good, and taxing is the equalizer. If government still comes up short they say just turn on the printing presses. That is the philosophy we have been living with for 85 years, and the evidence is now in. It is clear to most Americans that these policies have not worked. Yet they are not ready to concede that it is less government and more freedom that is the solution.

The obsession with continuing all the same policies has increased our poverty, increased violence between the classes, and lowered the standard of living for all except the elite one percent. And worst of all, the sacrifice of liberty was for naught. Losing both liberty and the right to truly own property undermines the ability to create wealth. When this process gets out-of-control the economy goes into a death spiral, in the beginning of which we currently find ourselves. Without a correction to the basic understanding of the proper role of government, the downward spiral will continue.

Blowback All Around: We Are Less Safe

Economic blowback and unintended consequences is one thing, but blowback from our needless and aggressive policies around the world is another, and every bit as dangerous. As we find ourselves increasingly engaged economically and militarily around the world, we can

expect many more attacks on American interests. With so many military personnel abroad, they will be the easiest targets to be hit. But attacks similar in nature to the 9/11 attacks will remain a threat to our homeland. We will not be attacked because we are free and rich. The attacks will come from angry people who have had friends and relatives killed by America's careless and often vicious use of our military force in their countries.

It is not that difficult to feel resentment against a country that comes thousands of miles from home and bombs, invades, and punishes with sanctions, other countries that have never initiated force against it. As long as our foreign policy remains the same we can expect serious blowback attacks — and for them to increase in number as our prowess is diminished. Economic factors will determine this, and the loss of dollar hegemony will aggravate the situation.

The US government's foolishness in foreign affairs has plagued us for 100 years. The escalation of our presence around the world since 9/11 continues. It is a policy "bubble" of gigantic proportions. This "bubble" of intervention is about to burst. Any serious look at our last 13 years of intervention around the world should convince all skeptics of how foolish, dangerous, and expensive it has been. The US operates with an attitude that it has the power and therefore the responsibility to be involved in deciding almost every foreign leader, whether elected or appointed as a dictator.

We have been engaged in picking and financing political factions in revolts in countries including Egypt, Libya, Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kurdistan, Syria, Ukraine, Somalia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Liberia, Georgia, Haiti, and Lebanon.

These involvements impose a huge tax and inflation burden on the American people. Trillions of dollars have been spent, and the debt continues to mount. The abject failure of our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan elicits a loud call from the neoconservatives for more money, troops, weapons, and bombs, with zero hope of a successful mission. ISIS, now considered our greatest threat, is not even a country, but our occupation and destruction in the region motivates even a ragtag bunch to expel foreign forces from their homeland. ISIS has rallied enormous support and resources to undermine our allies in the region. That assessment is difficult, of course, since it's hard for anyone to identify exactly who our allies are and distinguish them from our avowed enemies.

US foreign policy has helped create the disastrous situation in Syria. We declared that Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad had to go. We supported rebel factions. We armed them. They turned on us and used their American weapons against us with an amazing resistance headed by the ruthless ISIS, an outgrowth of al-Qaeda. It's quite an irony that ISIS is well entrenched in northern Iraq, since before we decided to invade Iraq and kill Saddam Hussein no al-Qaeda were present in Iraq. Now the neocons are getting their way and American forces are returning with reinforcements and weapons to save Baghdad from the jihadists.

No one can make this stuff up. It's too bizarre for fiction. Unfortunately, with the help of the media and our government, the American people have remained oblivious to the stupidity of our policies of the past 13 years. A day will come though when the full cost of this policy is dumped on the American people. Then they will get the message. Then it will be too late to

gracefully exit and restore sanity without cataclysmic changes being forced on us. The major challenge will be the survival of our liberties.

What to expect in 2015?

Foreign Affairs

More American troops will be sent overseas to places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. There will be no military victories to brag about. More American military personnel will be killed in 2015 than in 2014. Military contractors will be used in growing numbers and their casualties will not be counted as military casualties.

The Ukraine civil war will not end, and the United States will be further bogged down in this conflict. Relations with Russia will continue to deteriorate. The neocons in Congress will gain even more influence over our foreign policy. Punishing sanctions will continue to be made more severe and push Russia further into China's sphere of influence. Gold will gain credibility as we isolate the Russians from the financial markets.

Sanctions on Russia will alienate Europe against the United States. The British oil industry will suffer from the "conspiracy" of the US and Saudi Arabia to drive oil prices down to punish Russia.

The military-industrial complex will continue to thrive and make even more money with the greater influence of the neocons in the new Congress. Supplemental budgets for the military should be expected, along with covert assistance and additional foreign aid to finance the management of our Empire.

Our enemies' strength will grow and prompt even more abuse of American citizens' privacy and free expression. We should not be surprised if there is a reigniting of the conflict in the Balkans. The first of the color revolutions in 2000 in Serbia can hardly be claimed a permanent victory. Generally, bombs from outsiders don't solve internal problems. Those problems must eventually be solved from within a country rather than from outside interference.

The US and NATO announced that the 13 year war in Afghanistan has ended. There has been neither the pretense of "Mission Accomplished" nor an admission of outright failure, along with an exodus. In reality the war has not ended and instead will continue for a long time. No victory for US policy is possible. The conflict will actually spread and increase in intensity since our goals are undefinable and therefore the war is un-winnable.

Sanity will not return to US leaders until our financial system collapses — an event for which they are feverishly working

Domestic issues

An honest assessment of the economy will not reveal any significant improvement in 2015. Inflation will continue to plague us, possibly even with the government-rigged CPI figures showing an increase. But the true inflation of the Fed's credit creation, as well as the subsequent

mal- investment and the various bubbles bursting will accelerate. Debt in all categories will continue to increase at unsustainable rates. The Fed will not permit interest rates to rise — at least on purpose. Eventually the market will demand that rates do rise, however.

Tax revenues will continue to rise, aiding the policy of the government spending the people's money rather than those who earned it. Regulations, even with (or maybe especially with) a Republican Congress will continue to increase and make the Federal Register more incomprehensible. Friction between the middle class and the one percent, many of whom are living off government privileges, will escalate further and be reflected in confrontations especially in the large cities. Financial currency controls will continue to expand especially with cross-border transactions.

Blowback and unintended consequences from our sanctions and foreign policy in general will continue to threaten our domestic security and our economy, as well as our liberties.

Relations with Cuba will be improved with the president's effort to resume diplomatic relations, but the radicals and isolationists who oppose free trade will place roadblocks in the way and slow the process.

A major geopolitical or economic event, greater than the crisis of 2008, is fast approaching. The precipitating event will be a surprise to the majority of politicians and economists. There are many "next shoe to drop" possibilities, and one could happen any time or any place.

Wall Street will be protected, and the trillions of dollars of big banks derivatives will be absorbed by the Fed, the FDIC, and ultimately by the American taxpayers in the next financial crisis. There's no doubt the poor will get poorer and the rich richer until the spirit of revolution in the people calls a halt to the systematic destruction of freedom in America.

Conclusion: Toward a Peaceful Revolution

Authoritarianism has overtaken our economic system as the welfare mentality takes over at every level of government. Once the initiation of force by government is accepted by the people, even minimally, it escalates and involves every aspect of society. The only question that remains is just who gets to wield the power to distribute the largess to their friends and chosen beneficiaries. It's a recipe for steady growth of the government at the expense of liberties, even if official documents and laws written to limit government power are in place. Planting even small seeds of monopoly power in the hands of a few people in government, whether democratically elected or not, will always metastasize like a cancer. This was Jefferson's concern when he advised that "[t]he tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time." He believed the people must warn the rulers that taking up arms against the government is legitimate if the government fails to protect the people's liberty.

This should be a consideration. But if the spirit of liberty is not alive and well in the hearts and minds of the people, violence alone against the government will not be a solution. History has shown that, more often than not, people who rebel against abusive governments, whether run

by kings or modern day dictators, do not gain much — overthrowing one dictator and replacing him with another just as bad.

A clear understanding of the nature and source of liberty is required for revolutions to be beneficial. Restraining the few who thrive on the use of force to rule over us is the challenge. Fortunately they are outnumbered by those who would choose liberty yet lack the will to challenge the humanitarian monsters who gain support from naive and apathetic citizens. All positive revolutions must be philosophic in nature to make a difference. Violence alone achieves nothing.

Before we can actually restore our liberties, we most likely will have to become a lot less free and much poorer. This is sad since correct and workable answers are available to us if only the people understood them and demanded liberty and honesty, rather than being dependent on excessive government power and believing the false promises of politicians.

Even with the problems we face today and the bleak outlook for the coming year there's much to encourage us. During this next year there will be the continuation of many more people recognizing the failure of government to create peace and prosperity. More widespread understanding of this truth is required in order to bring about a successful revolution.

The freedom movement, especially with many young people involved, will grow in numbers and influence.

Current monetary policy and the Federal Reserve will continue to lose credibility, especially with the next bailout. Although "too big to fail" will stay in place, it will further alienate Main Street America causing it to rebel against the system.

The real problem of course is that too many "stupid people" are IN our government and have high visibility on the major TV networks. There will be plenty of people, not officially associated with government, who will rebel against various governments around the world. The sentiments supporting secession, jury nullification, nullification of federal laws by state legislatures, and a drive for more independence from larger governments will continue.

We should not be discouraged. Enlightenment is not nearly as difficult to achieve as it was before the breakthrough with Internet communications occurred. Besides we must remember that "an idea whose time has come" cannot be stopped by armies, demagogues, politicians, or even Fox News or MSNBC. The time has come for the ideas of liberty to prevail. I smell progress. Let's make 2015 a fun year for LIBERTY.