

## **The US Police State**

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti, via Zero Hedge, 23 January 2020

### **And so it continues.**

This impeachment fiasco is merely the latest in a never-ending series of distractions, distortions, and political theatre aimed at diverting the public's attention from the sinister advances of the American Police State.

Don't allow yourselves to be distracted, diverted or mesmerized by the cheap theatre tricks.

### **This impeachment spectacle is Shakespearean in its scope: full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.**

Nothing is the key word here.

### **Despite the wall-to-wall media coverage, nothing will change.**

Mark my words: the government will remain as corrupt and self-serving as ever, dominated by two political factions that pretend to be at odds with each other all the while moving in lockstep to maintain the status quo.

So President Trump's legal team can grandstand all they want about the impeachment trial being "an affront to the Constitution" and "a dangerous perversion of the Constitution," but that's just smoke and mirrors.

### **You know what is really "an affront to the Constitution"? The U.S. government.**

We've been losing our freedoms so incrementally for so long—sold to us in the name of national security and global peace, maintained by way of martial law disguised as law and order, and enforced by a standing army of militarized police and a political elite determined to maintain their powers at all costs—that it's hard to pinpoint exactly when it all started going downhill, but we're certainly on that downward trajectory now, and things are moving fast.

The republic has fallen.

### **The Deep State's plot to take over America has succeeded.**

**The American system of representative government has been overthrown by a profit-driven, militaristic, corporate oligarchy bent on total control and global domination through the imposition of martial law here at home and by fomenting wars abroad.**

Even now, we are being pushed and prodded towards a civil war, not because the American people are so divided but because that's how corrupt governments control a populace (i.e., divide and conquer).

### **These are dangerous times.**

These are indeed dangerous times but not because of violent crime, which remains at [an all-time low](#), or because of terrorism, which is [statistically rare](#), or because the borders are being invaded by foreign armies, which data reports from the Department of Homeland Security [refute](#).

No, the real danger that we face comes from none other than the U.S. government and the powers it has granted to its standing armies to rob, steal, cheat, harass, detain, brutalize, terrorize, torture and kill American citizens with immunity.

The danger “we the people” face comes from masked invaders on the government payroll who crash through our doors in the dark of night, shoot our dogs, and terrorize our families.

This danger comes from militarized henchmen on the government payroll who demand absolute obedience, instill abject fear, and shoot first and ask questions later.

This danger comes from greedy, power-hungry bureaucrats on the government payroll who have little to no understanding of their constitutional limits.

This danger comes from greedy politicians and corporations for whom profit trumps principle.

**You want to know about the state of our union? It’s downright scary.**

Consider, if you will, all of the dastardly, devious, diabolical, dangerous, debilitating, deceitful, dehumanizing, demonic, depraved, dishonourable, disillusioning, discriminatory, dictatorial schemes inflicted on “we the people” by a bureaucratic, totalitarian regime that has long since ceased to be “a government of the people, by the people and for the people.”

*Americans have no protection against police abuse. It is no longer unusual to hear about incidents in which police shoot unarmed individuals first and ask questions later, such as the 16-year-old teenager who skipped school only to be shot by police after they mistook him for a fleeing burglar. Then there was the unarmed black man in Texas “who was pursued and shot in the back of the neck by Austin Police... after failing to properly identify himself and leaving the scene of an unrelated incident.” And who could forget the 19-year-old Seattle woman who was accidentally shot in the leg by police after she refused to show her hands? What is increasingly common, however, is the news that the officers involved in these incidents get off with little more than a slap on the hands.*

*Americans are little more than pocketbooks to fund the police state. If there is any absolute maxim by which the federal government seems to operate, it is that the American taxpayer always gets ripped off. This is true, whether you’re talking about taxpayers being forced to fund high-priced weaponry that will be used against us, endless wars that do little for our safety or our freedoms, or bloated government agencies such as the National Security Agency with its secret budgets, covert agendas and clandestine activities. Rubbing salt in the wound, even monetary awards in lawsuits against government officials who are found guilty of wrongdoing are paid by the taxpayer.*

*Americans are no longer innocent until proven guilty. We once operated under the assumption that you were innocent until proven guilty. Due in large part to rapid advances in technology and a heightened surveillance culture, the burden of proof has been shifted so that the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty has been usurped by a new norm in which all citizens are suspects. This is exemplified by police practices of stopping and frisking people who are merely walking down the street and where there is no evidence of wrongdoing. Likewise, by subjecting Americans to full-body scans and license-plate readers without their knowledge or compliance and then storing the scans for later use, the government—in cahoots with the corporate state—has erected the ultimate suspect society. In such an environment, we are all potentially guilty of some wrongdoing or other.*

*Americans no longer have a right to self-defense. In the wake of various shootings in recent years, “gun control” has become a resounding theme. Those advocating gun reform see the Second Amendment’s right to bear arms as applying only to government officials. As a result, even Americans who legally own firearms are being treated with suspicion and, in some cases, undue violence. In one case, a Texas man had his home subjected to a no-knock raid and was shot in his bed after police, attempting to deliver a routine search warrant, learned that he was in legal possession of a firearm. In another incident, a Florida man who was*

licensed to carry a concealed firearm found himself detained for two hours during a routine traffic stop in Maryland while the arresting officer searched his vehicle in vain for the man's gun, which he had left at home. Incidentally, the Trump Administration has [done more to crack down on Second Amendment rights](#) than anything the Obama Administration ever managed.

**Americans no longer have a right to private property.** If government agents can invade your home, break down your doors, kill your dog, damage your furnishings and terrorize your family, your property is no longer private and secure—it belongs to the government.

Likewise, if government officials can fine and arrest you for growing vegetables in your front yard, praying with friends in your living room, installing solar panels on your roof, and raising chickens in your backyard, you're no longer the owner of your property.

**Americans no longer have a say about what their children are exposed to in school.** Incredibly, the government continues to insist that parents essentially forfeit their rights when they send their children to a public school. This growing tension over whether young people, especially those in the public schools, are essentially wards of the state, to do with as government officials deem appropriate, in defiance of the children's constitutional rights and those of their parents, is reflected in the debate over sex education programs that expose young people to all manner of sexual practices and terminology, zero tolerance policies that strip students of any due process rights, let alone parental involvement in school discipline, and Common Core programs that teach students to be test-takers rather than critical thinkers.

**Americans are powerless in the face of militarized police.** In early America, citizens were considered equals with law enforcement officials. Authorities were rarely permitted to enter one's home without permission or in a deceitful manner. And it was not uncommon for police officers to be held personally liable for trespass when they wrongfully invaded a citizen's home. Unlike today, early Americans could resist arrest when a police officer tried to restrain them without proper justification or a warrant—which the police had to allow citizens to read before arresting them. (Daring to dispute a warrant with a police official today who is armed with high-tech military weapons and tasers would be nothing short of suicidal.) As police forces across the country continue to be transformed into outposts of the military, with police agencies acquiring military-grade hardware in droves, Americans are finding their once-peaceful communities transformed into military outposts, complete with tanks, weaponry, and other equipment designed for the battlefield.

**Americans no longer have a right to bodily integrity.** Court rulings undermining the Fourth Amendment and justifying invasive strip searches have left us powerless against police empowered to forcefully draw our blood, strip search us, and probe us intimately. Accounts are on the rise of individuals—men and women—being subjected to what is essentially government-sanctioned rape by police in the course of “routine” traffic stops. Remember the New Mexico man who was subjected to a 12-hour ordeal of anal probes, X-rays, enemas, and finally a colonoscopy—all because he allegedly rolled through a stop sign?

**Americans no longer have a right to the expectation of privacy.** Despite the staggering number of revelations about government spying on Americans' phone calls, Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, Google searches, emails, bookstore and grocery purchases, bank statements, commuter toll records, etc., Congress, the president and the courts have done little to nothing to counteract these abuses. Instead, they seem determined to accustom us to life in this electronic concentration camp.

**Americans can no longer rely on the courts to mete out justice.** The U.S. 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 Supreme Court have become the architects of the American police state in which we now live, while the lower courts have appointed themselves courts of order, concerned primarily with advancing the government's agenda, no matter how unjust or illegal.*

*Americans no longer have a representative government. We have moved beyond the era of representative government and entered a new age, let's call it the age of authoritarianism. In fact, a study conducted by Princeton and Northwestern University concluded that the [U.S. government does not represent the majority of American citizens](#). Instead, the study found that the government is ruled by the rich and powerful, or the so-called "economic elite." Moreover, the researchers concluded that policies enacted by this governmental elite nearly always favor special interests and lobbying groups. It is not overstating matters to say that Congress, which has done its best to keep their unhappy constituents at a distance, may well be the most self-serving, semi-corrupt institution in America.*

**In other words, we are being [ruled by an oligarchy](#) disguised as a democracy, and arguably on our way towards fascism: a form of government where private corporate interests rule, money calls the shots, and the people are seen as mere subjects to be controlled.** Rest assured that when and if fascism finally takes hold in America, the basic forms of government will remain: Fascism will appear to be friendly. The legislators will be in session. There will be elections, and the news media will continue to cover the entertainment and political trivia. Consent of the governed, however, will no longer apply. Actual control will have finally passed to the oligarchic elite controlling the government behind the scenes. Sound familiar? Clearly, we are now ruled by an oligarchic elite of governmental and corporate interests. We have moved into "corporatism" ([favored by Benito Mussolini](#)), which is a halfway point on the road to full-blown fascism. Corporatism is where the few moneyed interests—not elected by the citizenry—rule over the many.

**History may show that from this point forward, we will have left behind any semblance of constitutional government and entered into a totalitarian state where all citizens are suspects and security trumps freedom.** Even with its constantly shifting terrain, this topsy-turvy travesty of law and government has become America's new normal. From Clinton to Bush, then Obama and now Trump, it's as if we've been caught in a time loop, forced to re-live the same thing over and over again: the same assaults on our freedoms, the same disregard for the rule of law, the same subservience to the Deep State, and the same corrupt, self-serving government that exists only to amass power, enrich its shareholders and ensure its continued domination.

**Elections will not save us.**

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, but 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.

**There can be no denying that the world is indeed a dangerous place, but what the president and his cohorts fail to acknowledge is that it's the government that poses the gravest threat to our freedoms and way of life, and no amount of politicking, parsing or pandering will change that.**

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, wrapped-in-the-flag 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, and where “we the people” are at a distinct disadvantage in the face of the government elite’s power grabs, greed and firepower.

The Constitution doesn’t stand a chance against a federalized, globalized standing army protected by legislative, judicial and executive branches that are all on the same side, no matter what political views they subscribe to: suffice it to say, they are not on *our* side or the side of freedom.

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, the powers-that-be want us to remain distracted, 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.”***

You either believe in freedom or you don’t. It’s that simple.

**Everything else is just a deadly distraction.** As Orwell observed in 1984:

*“All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working hours or shorter rations. And even when they became discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontent led nowhere, because, being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances. The larger evils invariably escaped their notice.”*