

"Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" -- Lord Acton

from *Activist Post* website...

For a people to be free, they must first be honest with themselves, their government, and the world at large. History is filled with stories of free nations that fell under the spell cast by their governments who exploited the threat of terror.

In fact, numerous presidents in American history already have used various specific threats to sidestep their Constitutional restraints. Today we are entering a nebulous world where our "enemy" cannot be defined, has no particular allegiance to one country, and is able to adopt new leaders at will. Rather than encourage a sense of resilience and independence in its citizens, America has chosen to amplify the terror threat in order to concentrate power in the hands of the State. The very first signpost on this historically familiar road to tyranny is an atmosphere of hate, suspicion, and vindictiveness. It first begins as an outwardly directed aggression and then rather abruptly turns inward upon itself.

The good news is that freedom is won and lost in our hearts and minds. It is for this reason that we must state the obvious: we have clearly passed through the first "atmospheric" stage of approaching dictatorship, and have now entered the second -- the open behavior of a dictatorship in the United States.

It will never be announced on the evening news, and it is not likely to continue under an authoritarian leader in the mold of a Stalin, Hitler, or Mao. Likewise, it is not to say that Barack Obama is the first dictator of The United States, but rather is part of a continued expansion of executive power that is now so great that by all measures America can no longer be called a Land of the Free ruled by We the People. We stand no chance of reversing this forced march by false democracy until we understand where we are headed, who is leading us there, and for what purpose.

10 Indications The United States Is A Dictatorship

1. Rule by force, not by law: This is where it all begins; when the legal framework that serves to define a country and its behavior is dismantled and intimidation tactics take over. In the most extreme case, drone bombings and assassinations have begun on non-citizens, as well as U.S. citizens, leading only to a debate over whether U.S. citizens should be stripped of citizenship before assassination. Governmental assassinations are in complete opposition to the laws of America and all international laws and agreements. In the last week we have also seen the official elimination of the 4th Amendment in Indiana, which is a clear precedent-setting ruling to say that the State now believes that it owns the property and person of its citizens. As a result, the militarized police have been granted unlimited access, which will only cause an escalation in cases of police brutality and misconduct. This is yet another addition to the precedent set by TSA groping and sexual harassment in airports, Child Protective Services kidnapping children of activists in pro-liberty causes, public school surveillance, and the lawless detention of activists who videotape the police. All areas of society are now ruled top-down through state legislation adopted to justify federal grants that have installed a police state apparatus in America. And these federal agencies such as the TSA actually believe they rule supreme over the states. We now live in a country where CIA abductions, overseas detention, torture and assassinations can be carried out against anyone without due process and without recourse if later cleared; in fact, the Supreme Court has just ended the legal debate by refusing to even consider appeals. Consequently, an atmosphere has been created where the government is permitted to break countless laws, like warrantless GPS tracking of activists by the FBI, while average citizens are guilty of pre-crimes. The increase in executive power under the aegis of National Security is our greatest threat and has led to all that follows.

2. Crushing peaceful protest: Despite the current mission to defend protesters living in dictatorships overseas, when George Bush brought "free speech zones" to America it effectively spelled the end of peaceful, lawful street protest. Now the full force of brutality and surveillance has been unleashed upon the very people intent in stopping it through peaceful means. It is as sure a sign as any about totalitarian intentions, when anti-war activists have become one of the targets. The activist is beginning to equal the terrorist in the all-seeing eye of the State, and any street gathering is a sure sign to let loose all of the riot weapons that were formerly used against insurgents on foreign battlefields. One look at the G20 protest in Pittsburgh, a recent Illinois University event, and the ongoing travesty of the torture and incarceration of Bradley Manning, and we can begin to see through the propaganda of White House officials when they talk about terrible dictators in other nations crushing dissent.

3. Checkpoints: The slow acclimation of the populace to military-style checkpoints began first as border control operations up to 100 miles inland in what the ACLU calls the Constitution Free Zone. However, this has rather quickly morphed into local traffic stops across the country for "unsavory" characters such as those targeted by the Amber Alert system and DUI checkpoints. Though apparently well meaning, we are now far beyond even loosely suspected criminal activity, as VIPR teams have been introduced to take over public transportation and events. The TSA tyranny has hit the streets of America, now forming a de facto internal passport system straight out of the totalitarian playbook. The expanding checkpoint system dovetails with new initiatives such as the No Ride List proposal of Chuck Shumer, building upon the No Fly List already in place. These no-travel lists are extrajudicial, secret, and form a guilty-until-proven innocent framework that subverts freedom instead of protecting it. Incidentally, this element of constant suspicion is exactly what leads to a citizen spy network.

4. Citizen spy network: Dictatorships know how difficult it is to rule over large populations with only the relatively small numbers of military and police. Despite the lessons of terror created by citizen surveillance that the East German Stasi files left us to examine, just such a network has been openly introduced to present-day America -- and now it's even more high-tech and populated. Secret black budget projects organized through the NSA like Perfect Citizen is just one among many. Our head of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano -- in partnership with retailer Wal-Mart -- kicked off the See Something, Say Something program, which goes beyond the already high-tech surveillance apparatus of the NSA and turns each of us into an unpaid employee of the police state. Similarly, the web of cameras and data mining is far too massive for even the well-funded NSA, but with gadgets at our disposal we can now download apps to enable spying on our neighbors. Most dangerous of all, though, is new legislation introduced by Peter King that enshrines Janet Napolitano's program and would provide immunity for accusers "acting in

good faith" while reporting suspicious activities. This is guaranteed to lead to false arrests and disappearances, just as it has on every occasion throughout history when a society's fear becomes self-directed.

5. Executive Orders: This is means by which a dictator can come to power in the United States, despite a framework of checks and balances. Any time a country has centralized its power to the executive branch by erasing the checks and balances of separate legislative and judicial bodies, the result has been dictatorship. And this normally happens when national security is "threatened." The Constitution is clear, however: only the legislature (Congress) can make laws. Yet, the use of Executive Orders has increased, beginning with President Clinton who came under fire for his abuse of this power, becoming one of only two presidents (the other was Truman's E.O. 12954) to have an Executive Order struck down by the courts. His successors seem only to have been encouraged. Clinton issued 14, George W. issued over 60, and Obama is at 26 with many more to be expected if he wins a second term. Among the most egregious of Obama's orders is the ability to hold detainees indefinitely even after a court has found them not guilty. Executive Orders also form the basis for control over regulatory agencies, which then impose the directives. While it seems multi-layered with potential checks and balances, all directives can now be issued top-down in dictatorial fashion.

6. Control of regulatory agencies: This is the more insidious and, ultimately, dangerous tactic used by dictatorships. Dictatorship through regulation invades every facet of society without relying only upon overt violence. As mentioned above, only the legislature can make laws. However, the legislature has created "regulatory bodies" which make de facto laws through "violations" that rob us of freedom. There is no clearer example at the moment than the FDA, which has brought in near-total food control. The FDA is working in concert with a global agenda being foisted upon us through the Codex Alimentarius commission in Europe which essentially renders anything healthy as toxic, and all that is toxic as healthy. Regulatory agencies in the United States have engendered a system where the corporate-government revolving door leads to corruption and consolidation -- not free markets. The current regulations are opposed to the principles of freedom and independence, and favor only those in positions to make money from more control; so more control and less freedom is what we can expect under these federal directives controlling the states.

7. President declares war unilaterally: Despite the parade of lies that led to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it pales in comparison with the new war in Libya and other interventions and sanctions throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Through Executive Orders, outlined above, the President can declare war so long as there is a resolution passed by Congress. This has been dispensed with through Obama's illegal wars, and it appears that Congress could go even further by ceding its power completely to the president. The disregard for Congressional approval is already dictatorial, but if this last step is taken we will effectively be living in a permanent state of war tantamount to WWII that will be controlled at the sole discretion of the current and future presidents. This unilateral power to drag nations into war without checks and balances is a hallmark of dictatorships where entire countries are swept along purely by the ideology of their leader. As Ron Paul and Lew Rockwell have stated, "We have a dictatorship when it comes to foreign policy." With the latest development, it is actually a dictatorship when it comes to domestic policy as well, since America's espionage network has turned inward, and this new presidential power would not be limited to overseas actions.

8. Torture: Torture has long been a tactic used by America. In fact it runs the leading school on its methods. The School of the Americas (now called WHINSEC) has been responsible for training Latin American dictators and their thugs on how to intimidate the local population and rule with an iron fist. However, the torture debate has hit mainstream media in a serious discussion about its effectiveness, especially following the assassination of Osama bin Laden. Aside from the despicable morals involved, torture doesn't work for intelligence gathering, according to experts. Furthermore, the legalization of torture was what really brought the dreaded Russian secret police out into the open. When such a declaration is made, it is literally a recruiting strategy to find the criminals and sadists who would love to be part of such a system. Torture is not normal work for normal people; it is the work of psychopaths such as Dick Cheney who loves the tactic of waterboarding so much that he has stated it should be brought back and used more widely. No nation that uses torture to obtain confessions can be called legitimate. It is only used as a tool of intimidation and oppression by totalitarian regimes.

9. Forced labor camps (gulags): This is when we know that a totalitarian society has arrived in full and our society is run completely by coercion. As Naomi Wolf has illustrated, "With its jails in Iraq and Afghanistan, and, of course, Guantánamo in Cuba, where detainees are abused, and kept indefinitely without trial and without access to the due process of the law, America certainly has its gulag now." Additionally, a silent gulag has already been created inside America, starting with the nation's prisoners who are increasingly locked up within a for-profit prison-industrial system that makes money both on the construction of prisons as well as the cheap labor force. The Defense Department itself pays prisoners 23 cents per hour to build its weapons systems, which is clearly a type of slave labor. One might immediately argue that there is a huge difference between real prisoners and innocent people swept off the streets as they were in Stalinist Russia, for example, or in modern day North Korea and China. That is to presume, however, that everyone in prison is guilty; and, if they are, that the crimes which have sent them there really constitute offenses worthy of prison sentences. America has the world's largest prison population and the highest incarceration rate precisely because nearly everything is a jail-time crime, and there is money to be made by the growing corporate prison system. The War on Drugs alone has led to a disproportionate number of inmates for non-violent offenses among the already 2.4 million in jail and the 5 million on probation. With the economy imploding, even debtors prisons have made a comeback. Although FEMA camps conspiracy theory, we should be wary of the potential endgame for such a proven system of oppression. Through Continuity of Government, national emergency directives would openly suspend the Constitution and could possibly lead once again to internment camps in America.

10. Control over all communications (propaganda): Once the physical framework of dictatorial control has been set up, then the justification for its continued presence can commence. The type of high-tech control grid now put into place in The United States to this point has only been explored in works of fiction such as 1984 which has led Paul Craig Roberts to draw a correct parallel. A public emergency announcement system has in fact been in place since the '50s, whereby the president can interrupt television and radio to deliver critical messages. However, this has been recently expanded even beyond the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as the FCC voted to mandate (PDF) "the first-ever Presidential alert to be aired across the United States on the

Nation's Emergency Alert System (EAS)." Now, with the arrival of the trackable smartphone that can be hijacked to bring government messages (emergency or not) we find ourselves "willing" participants in a scenario reaching far beyond 1984. Using the bin Laden assassination and the threat of guaranteed reprisal, the government has announced that the president will break into these private networks to carry PLAN government messages and warnings; and there is no opt-out. This is slated to go even further, as Infowars has reported: "All smart devices have federally-mandated control and kill switches added. This will give the government total control over incoming information to all smart phones regardless of manufacturer. These policies dovetail with the roll out of Smart Meters and the new Google controlled smart homes which will send messages over the power-lines to your appliances to control power consumption or simply cut the power. In addition, new 'green' lighting systems are being installed in government buildings which send and receive data through controlled pulses of light. And now the Pentagon wants the authority to run it all." At the same time, we have seen the buildup in rhetoric leading toward Internet control. As always, an unsavory element of society (pirating) has been used as one of the pretexts to introduce government control over private industry, while cybersecurity lays claim to total control over the infrastructure for national emergencies. Ideologically, Obama advisor, Cass Sunstein, has proposed a fairness doctrine for the Internet that would enable a government overlay on private websites that would offer counter opinions to anti-establishment content. We are approaching a situation worse than China, where both mental intrusion via propaganda and physical intrusion via systems control are merging. It is not comforting to know, also, that the president made a shocking claim recently that he can censor unclassified documents. There is clearly a concerted effort to take over all forms of information, permitting the government to alter it or censor it before consumption by its citizens. In any other country we would call this a dictatorship.

It would appear that the United States should be called a dictatorship based on the above criteria. Once the atmosphere is established, average participants need not be part of a conspiracy, as they tend to unquestioningly go with the flow. However, we must acknowledge that the U.S. is in a vastly different position than totalitarian regimes of the past, as well as her contemporaries. America has a history that is built upon the foundation of resistance to dictators. This memory needs to be invoked by following the protections outlined in our founding documents, particularly the power of the states to resist Federal tyranny. The protections therein can be restored once we have the courage to admit how much freedom we have lost, then refuse to succumb to a fear-based perception of reality. Only then will Liberty, Love and Peace prevail!