

The State of the Nation: I am afraid

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*“As I look at America today, I am not afraid to say that I am afraid.”—Bertram Gross, *Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America**

Ominous developments in America have been a long time coming, in part precipitated by “we the people”—a citizenry that has been asleep at the wheel for too long. And while there have been wake-up calls, we have failed to heed the warnings.

Just consider the state of our nation:

We’re encased in what some are calling an electronic concentration camp. The government continues to amass data files on more and more Americans. Everywhere we go, we are watched: at the banks, at the grocery store, at the mall, crossing the street. This loss of privacy is symptomatic of the growing surveillance being carried out on average Americans. Such surveillance gradually poisons the soul of a nation, transforming us from one in which we’re presumed innocent until proven guilty to one in which everyone is a suspect and presumed guilty. Thus, the question that must be asked is: can freedom in the United States flourish in an age when the physical movements, individual purchases, conversations and meetings of every citizen are under constant surveillance by private companies and government agencies?

We are metamorphosing into a police state. Governmental tentacles now invade virtually every facet of our lives, with agents of the government listening in on our telephone calls and reading our emails. Technology, which has developed at a rapid pace, offers those in power more invasive, awesome tools than ever before. Fusion centers—data collecting agencies spread throughout the country, aided by the National Security Agency—constantly monitor our communications, everything from our internet activity and web searches to text messages, phone calls and emails. This data is then fed to government agencies, which are now interconnected—the CIA to the FBI, the FBI to local police—a relationship which will make a transition to martial law that much easier. We may very well be one terrorist attack away from seeing armed forces on our streets—and the American people may not put up much resistance. According to a recent study, a greater percentage of Americans are now willing to sacrifice their civil liberties in order to feel safer in the wake of the failed crotch bomber’s attack on Christmas Day.

We are plagued by a faltering economy and a monstrous financial deficit that threatens to bankrupt us. Our national debt is more than \$12 trillion (which translates to more than \$110,000 per taxpayer), and is expected to nearly double to \$20 trillion by 2015. The unemployment rate is over 10% and growing, with more than 15 million Americans out of work and many more forced to subsist on low-paying or part-time jobs. The number of U.S. households on the verge of losing their homes soared by nearly 15% in the first half of last year alone. The number of children living in poverty is on the rise (18% in 2007). As history illustrates, authoritarian regimes assume more and more power in troubled financial times.

Our representatives in the White House and Congress bear little resemblance to those they have been elected to represent. Many of our politicians live like kings. Chauffeured around in limousines, flying in private jets and eating gourmet meals, all paid for by the American taxpayer, they are far removed from those they represent. What’s more, they continue to spend money we don’t have on pork-laden stimulus packages while running up a huge deficit and leaving the American taxpayers to foot the bill. And while our representatives may engage in a show of partisan bickering, the Washington elite—that is, the President and Congress—moves forward with whatever it wants, paying little heed to the will of the people.

We are embroiled in global wars against enemies that seem to attack from nowhere. Our armed forces are pushed to their limit, spread around the globe and under constant fire. The amount of money spent on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is nearing \$1 trillion and is estimated to total somewhere in the vicinity of \$3 trillion before it’s all over. That does not take into account the ravaged countries that we occupy, the thousands of innocent civilians killed (including women and children), or the thousands of American soldiers who have been killed or irreparably injured or who are committing suicide at an alarming rate. Nor does it take into account the families of the 1.8 million Americans who have served or are currently serving tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

America’s place in the world is also undergoing a drastic shift, with China slated to emerge as the top economy over the next decade. Given the extent to which we are financially beholden to China, their influence over how our government carries out its affairs, as well as how it deals with its citizens, cannot be discounted. As of July 2009, China owned \$800.5 billion of our debt—that’s 45% of our total (foreign) debt—making them the largest foreign holder of U.S. foreign debt. Little wonder, then, that the Obama administration has kowtowed to China, hesi-

tant to overtly challenge them on critical issues such as human rights. The most recent example of this can be seen in the Obama administration's initial reluctance to confront the Chinese government over its reported cyberattacks on Google and other American technology companies.

As national borders dissolve in the face of spreading globalization, the likelihood increases that our Constitution, which is the supreme law of America, will be subverted in favor of international laws. What that means is that our Constitution will come increasingly under attack.

The corporate media, increasingly acting as a mouthpiece for governmental propaganda, no longer serves a primary function as watchdogs, guarding against encroachments of our rights. Instead, much of the mainstream media has given itself over to mindless, celebrity-driven news, which bodes ill for our country. It doesn't matter whether you're talking about tabloid news, entertainment news or legitimate news shows, there's very little difference between them anymore. Unfortunately, most Americans have bought into the notion that whatever the media happens to report is important and relevant. In the process, Americans have largely lost the ability to ask questions and think analytically. Indeed, most citizens have little, if any, knowledge about their rights or how their government even works. For example, a national poll found that less than one percent of adults could name the five freedoms protected in the First Amendment.

Finally, I have never seen a country more spiritually beaten down than the United States. We have lost our moral compass. A growing number of our young people now see no meaning or purpose in life. And we no longer have a sense of right and wrong or a way to hold the government accountable. We have forgotten that the essential premise of the American governmental scheme, as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, is that if the government will not be accountable to the people, then it must certainly be accountable to the "Creator."

But what if the government is not accountable to the people or the Creator?

As Thomas Jefferson writes in the Declaration, it is then the right of "the People to alter or abolish it" and form a new government.

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