



Sleepwalking Into Tyranny: How Power Is Silently Being Seized

How something is done is just as important as *why* something is done.

To suggest that the ends justify the means is to launch oneself down a moral, ethical and legal rabbit hole that leaves us in a totalitarian bind.

We are already halfway down that road.

Whatever the justifications for discarding, even temporarily, the constitutional framework and protocols that have long served as the foundations for our republic (national security, an economic crisis, terrorists at the border, a global pandemic, etc.), none of them are worth the price we are being asked to pay—the rule of law—for what is amounting to a hostile takeover of the U.S. government by an oligarchic elite.



John Whitehead

This is no longer a conversation about stolen elections, insurrections, or even the Deep State.

This has become a lesson in how quickly things can fall apart.

This is what all those years of partisan double standards and constitutional undermining and legislative sell-outs and judicial betrayals add up to: a coup by oligarchic forces intent on a hostile takeover.

The government's past efforts to sidestep the rule of law pale in comparison to what is unfolding right now, which is nothing less than the complete dismantling of every last foundational principle for a representative government that answers to "we the people."

This shock-and-awe blitz campaign of daily seizures, raids and overreaching executive orders is a deliberate attempt to keep us distracted and diverted while the government is remade in the image of an autocracy, one in which privacy, due process, the rule of law, free speech, and equality will all be contingent on whether you are worthy of the *privilege* of rights.

I have long insisted on the need to recalibrate the government, but *this* is not how one goes about it.

The issue is not whether the actions being taken by the Trump Administration are right or wrong—although there are many that are egregiously wrong and some that are long overdue—but whether the Executive Branch has the power to unilaterally override the Constitution.

If we allow this imperial coup to move forward without pushback or protest, we will be just as culpable as those signing the death warrant for our freedoms.

Power corrupts.

And absolute power corrupts absolutely.



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However, it takes a culture of entitlement and a nation of compliant, willfully ignorant, politically divided citizens to provide the foundations of tyranny.

For too long now, America has played politics with its principles and allowed the president and his colleagues to act in violation of the rule of law.

“We the people” are paying the price for it now.

We allowed Bush to overstep. We allowed Obama to overstep. We allowed Trump to overstep. We allowed Biden to overstep.

These power grabs by the Trump Administration, aided and abetted by Elon Musk, are more than an overstep, however.

All of us are in danger.

Those cheering the erection of migrant camps at Guantanamo, take heed: you could be next.

It’s no longer a question of *whether* the government will lock up Americans for defying its mandates but *when*.

Partisan politics have no place in what is unfolding now.

This is what we know: [the government has the means](#), the muscle and the motivation to detain individuals who resist its orders and do not comply with its mandates in a vast array of prisons, detention centers, and concentration camps paid for with taxpayer dollars.

It’s just a matter of time.

It no longer matters what the hot-button issue might be (vaccine mandates, immigration, gun rights, abortion, same-sex marriage, healthcare, criticizing the government, protesting election results, etc.) or which party is wielding its power like a hammer.

The groundwork has already been laid.

Under the indefinite detention provision of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the President and the military can detain and imprison American citizens with no access to friends, family or the courts if the government believes them to be terrorists.

So, it should come as no surprise that merely criticizing the government could get you labeled as a terrorist.

After all, it doesn’t take much to be considered a terrorist anymore, especially given that the government likes to use the words “anti-government,” “extremist” and “terrorist” [interchangeably](#).

This is what happens when you not only put the power to determine who is a *potential* danger in the hands of government agencies, the courts and the police, but also give those agencies liberal authority to lock individuals up for perceived wrongs.

It’s a system just begging to be abused by power-hungry bureaucrats desperate to retain their power at all costs.

It’s happened before.

As history shows, the U.S. government is not averse to locking up its own citizens for its own purposes. One need only go back to the 1940s, when the federal government proclaimed that Japanese-Americans, labeled potential dissidents, could be put in concentration (a.k.a. internment) camps based only upon



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their ethnic origin, to see the lengths the federal government will go to in order to maintain “order” in the homeland.

The U.S. Supreme Court validated the detention program in *Korematsu v. US* (1944), concluding that the government’s need to ensure the safety of the country trumped personal liberties.

Although that *Korematsu* decision was [never formally overturned](#), Chief Justice Roberts opined in *Trump v. Hawaii* (2018) that “the forcible relocation of U. S. citizens to concentration camps, solely and explicitly on the basis of race, is [objectively unlawful and outside the scope of Presidential authority](#).”

Roberts’ statements provide little assurance of safety in light of the government’s tendency to sidestep the rule of law when it suits its purposes. Pointing out that [such blatantly illegal detentions could happen again](#)—with the blessing of the courts—Justice Scalia once warned, “In times of war, the laws fall silent.”

As I point out in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we seem to be coming full circle on many fronts.

Consider that two decades ago we were debating whether non-citizens—for example, so-called enemy combatants being held at Guantanamo Bay and Muslim-Americans rounded up in the wake of 9/11—were entitled to protections under the Constitution, specifically as they relate to indefinite detention.

Americans weren’t overly concerned about the rights of non-citizens then, nor do they seem all that concerned now. And yet in the near future we could well be the ones in the unenviable position of being targeted for indefinite detention by our own government.

About John & Nisha Whitehead:

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