

Tyranny Without a Tyrant: the Deep State's Divide-and-Conquer Strategy Is Working

[Tyranny Without a Tyrant: the Deep State's Divide-and-Conquer Strategy Is Working](#)

by [John W. Whitehead, The Rutherford Institute](#)

July 7, 2020

“In a fully developed bureaucracy there is nobody left with whom one can argue, to whom one can present grievances, on whom the pressures of power can be exerted. Bureaucracy is the form of government in which everybody is deprived of political freedom, of the power to act; for the rule by Nobody is not no-rule, and where all are equally powerless, we have a tyranny without a tyrant.” – Hannah Arendt, On Violence

What exactly is going on?

Is this revolution? Is this anarchy? Is this a spectacle engineered to distract us from the machinations of the police state? Is this a sociological means of re-setting our national equilibrium? Is this a Machiavellian scheme designed to further polarize the populace and undermine our efforts to stand unified against government tyranny? Is this so-called populist uprising actually a manufactured race war and election-year referendum on who should occupy the White House?

Whatever it is, this—the racial hypersensitivity without racial justice, the kowtowing to politically correct bullies with no regard for anyone else's free speech rights, the

violent blowback after years of government-sanctioned brutality, the mob mindset that is overwhelming the rights of the individual, the oppressive glowering of the Nanny State, the seemingly righteous indignation full of sound and fury that in the end signifies nothing, the partisan divide that grows more impassable with every passing day—is not leading us anywhere good.

Certainly it's not leading to more freedom.

This draconian exercise in how to divide, conquer and subdue a nation is succeeding.

It must be said: the Black Lives Matter protests have not helped. Inadvertently or intentionally, these protests—tinged with mob violence, rampant incivility, intolerance, and an arrogant disdain for how an open marketplace of ideas can advance freedom—have politicized what should never have been politicized: police brutality and the government's ongoing assaults on our freedoms.

For one brief moment in the wake of George Floyd's death, it seemed as if *finally* “we the people” might put aside our differences long enough to stand united in outrage over the government's brutality.

That sliver of unity didn't last.

We may be worse off now than we were before.

Suddenly, no one seems to be talking about any of the egregious governmental abuses that are still wreaking havoc on our freedoms: police shootings of unarmed individuals, invasive surveillance, roadside blood draws, roadside strip searches, SWAT team raids gone awry, the military industrial complex's costly wars, pork barrel spending, pre-crime laws, civil asset forfeiture, fusion centers, militarization, armed drones, smart policing carried out by AI robots, courts that march in lockstep with the police state, schools that function

as indoctrination centers, bureaucrats that keep the Deep State in power.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

How do you persuade a populace to embrace totalitarianism, that goose-stepping form of tyranny in which the government has all of the power and “we the people” have none?

You persuade the people that the menace they face (imaginary or not) is so sinister, so overwhelming, so *fearsome* that the only way to surmount the danger is by empowering the government to take all necessary steps to quash it, even if that means allowing government jackboots to trample all over the Constitution.

This is how you use the politics of fear to persuade a freedom-endowed people to shackle themselves to a dictatorship.

It works the same way every time

The government’s overblown, extended wars on terrorism, drugs, violence, illegal immigration, and so-called domestic extremism have been convenient ruses used to terrorize the populace into relinquishing more of their freedoms in exchange for elusive promises of security.

Having allowed our fears to be codified and our actions criminalized, we now find ourselves in a strange new world where just about everything we do is criminalized, even our ability to choose whether or not to wear a mask in public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strangely enough, in the face of outright corruption and incompetency on the part of our elected officials, Americans in general remain relatively gullible, eager to be persuaded that the government can solve the problems that plague us, whether it be terrorism, an economic depression, an

environmental disaster, or a global pandemic.

We have relinquished control over the most intimate aspects of our lives to government officials who, while they may occupy seats of authority, are neither wiser, smarter, more in tune with our needs, more knowledgeable about our problems, nor more aware of what is really in our best interests. Yet having bought into the false notion that the government does indeed know what's best for us and can ensure not only our safety but our happiness and will take care of us from cradle to grave—that is, from daycare centers to nursing homes—we have in actuality allowed ourselves to be bridled and turned into slaves at the bidding of a government that cares little for our freedoms or our happiness.

The lesson is this: once a free people allows the government inroads into their freedoms or uses those same freedoms as bargaining chips for security, it quickly becomes a slippery slope to outright tyranny.

Nor does it seem to matter whether it's a Democrat or a Republican at the helm anymore. Indeed, the bureaucratic mindset on both sides of the aisle now seems to embody the same philosophy of authoritarian government, whose priorities are to milk "we the people" of our hard-earned money (by way of taxes, fines and fees) and remain in control and in power.

Modern government in general—ranging from the militarized police in SWAT team gear crashing through our doors to the rash of innocent citizens being gunned down by police to the invasive spying on everything we do—is acting illogically, even psychopathically. (The characteristics of a psychopath include a "lack of remorse and empathy, a sense of grandiosity, superficial charm, conning and manipulative behavior, and refusal to take responsibility for one's actions, among others.")

When our own government no longer sees us as human beings with

dignity and worth but as things to be manipulated, maneuvered, mined for data, manhandled by police, conned into believing it has our best interests at heart, mistreated, and then jails us if we dare step out of line, punishes us unjustly without remorse, and refuses to own up to its failings, we are no longer operating under a constitutional republic. Instead, what we are experiencing is a pathocracy: tyranny at the hands of a psychopathic government, which “operates against the interests of its own people except for favoring certain groups.”

So where does that leave us?

Having allowed the government to expand and exceed our reach, we find ourselves on the losing end of a tug-of-war over control of our country and our lives. And for as long as we let them, government officials will continue to trample on our rights, always justifying their actions as being for the good of the people.

Yet the government can only go as far as “we the people” allow. Therein lies the problem.

The pickle we find ourselves in speaks volumes about the nature of the government beast we have been saddled with and how it views the rights and sovereignty of “we the people.”

Now you don’t hear a lot about sovereignty anymore. Sovereignty is a dusty, antiquated term that harkens back to an age when kings and emperors ruled with absolute power over a populace that had no rights. Americans turned the idea of sovereignty on its head when they [declared their independence](#) from Great Britain and rejected the absolute authority of King George III. In doing so, [Americans claimed for themselves the right to self-government](#) and established themselves as the ultimate authority and power.

In other words, in America, “we the people”— sovereign citizens—call the shots.

So when the government acts, it is supposed to do so at our bidding and on our behalf, because we are the rulers.

That's not exactly how it turned out, though, is it?

In the 200-plus years since we boldly embarked on this experiment in self-government, we have been steadily losing ground to the government's brazen power grabs, foisted upon us in the so-called name of national security.

The government has knocked us off our rightful throne. It has usurped our rightful authority. It has staged the ultimate coup. Its agents no longer even pretend that they answer to "we the people." Worst of all, "we the people" have become desensitized to this constant undermining of our freedoms.

How do we reconcile the Founders' vision of the government as an entity whose only purpose is to serve the people with the police state's insistence that the government is the supreme authority, that its power trumps that of the people themselves, and that it may exercise that power in any way it sees fit (that includes government agents crashing through doors, mass arrests, ethnic cleansing, racial profiling, indefinite detentions without due process, and internment camps)?

They cannot be reconciled. They are polar opposites.

We are fast approaching a moment of reckoning where we will be forced to choose between the vision of what America was intended to be (a model for self-governance where power is vested in the people) and the reality of what it has become (a police state where power is vested in the government).

This slide into totalitarianism—helped along by overcriminalization, government surveillance, militarized police, neighbors turning in neighbors, privatized prisons, and forced labor camps, to name just a few similarities—is tracking very closely with what happened in Germany in the

years leading up to Hitler's rise to power.

We are walking a dangerous path right now.

No matter who wins the presidential election come November, it's a sure bet that the losers will be the American people.

Despite what is taught in school and the propaganda that is peddled by the media, the 2020 presidential election is not a populist election for a representative. Rather, it's a gathering of shareholders to select the next CEO, a fact reinforced by the nation's [archaic electoral college system](#).

Anyone who believes that this election will bring about any real change in how the American government does business is either incredibly naïve, woefully out-of-touch, or oblivious to the fact that as an in-depth Princeton University study shows, [we now live in an oligarchy](#) that is "of the rich, by the rich and for the rich."

When a country spends close to [\\$10 billion](#) on elections to select what is, for all intents and purposes, a glorified homecoming king or queen to occupy the White House and fill other government seats, while more than [40 million of its people live in poverty](#), [more than 40 million Americans are on](#) unemployment, more than [500,000 Americans are homeless](#), and analysts forecast it will take [a decade to work our way out of the current COVID-induced recession](#), that's a country whose priorities are out of step with the needs of its people.

Be warned, however: the Establishment—the Deep State and its corporate partners that really run the show, pull the strings and dictate the policies, no matter who occupies the Oval Office—is not going to allow anyone to take office who will unravel their power structures. Those who have attempted to do so in the past have been effectively put out of commission.

Voting sustains the illusion that we have a democratic republic, but it is merely a dictatorship in disguise, or what

political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page more accurately refer to as an “[economic elite domination](#).”

In such an environment, the economic elite (lobbyists, corporations, monied special interest groups) dictate national policy. As the Princeton University oligarchy study indicates, [our elected officials, especially those in the nation's capital, represent the interests of the rich and powerful](#) rather than the average citizen. As such, the citizenry has little if any impact on the policies of government.

We have been saddled with a two-party system and fooled into believing that there's a difference between the Republicans and Democrats, when in fact, the [two parties are exactly the same](#). As one commentator [noted](#), both parties support endless war, engage in out-of-control spending, ignore the citizenry's basic rights, have no respect for the rule of law, are bought and paid for by Big Business, care most about their own power, and have a long record of expanding government and shrinking liberty

We're drowning under the weight of too much debt, too many wars, too much power in the hands of a centralized government run by a corporate elite, too many militarized police, too many laws, too many lobbyists, and generally too much bad news.

The powers-that-be want us to believe that our job as citizens begins and ends on Election Day. They want us to believe that we have no right to complain about the state of the nation unless we've cast our vote one way or the other. They want us to remain divided over politics, hostile to those with whom we disagree politically, and intolerant of anyone or anything whose solutions to what ails this country differ from our own.

What they don't want us talking about is the fact that the government is corrupt, the system is rigged, the politicians

don't represent us, the electoral college is a joke, most of the candidates are frauds, and, as I point out in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#), we as a nation are repeating the mistakes of history—namely, allowing a totalitarian state to reign over us.

Former concentration camp inmate Hannah Arendt warned against this when she wrote, “Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much on political forces that cannot be trusted to follow the rules of common sense and self-interest—forces that look like sheer insanity, if judged by the standards of other centuries.”

As we once again find ourselves faced with the prospect of voting for the lesser of two evils, “we the people” have a decision to make: do we simply participate in the collapse of the American republic as it degenerates toward a totalitarian regime, or do we take a stand and reject the pathetic excuse for government that is being fobbed off on us?

Never forget that the lesser of two evils is still evil.