

## Choose Dangerous Freedom or Peaceful Slavery

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### A Modern American Social Tragedy

Disingenuous and dishonest puppet president Obama has managed, with flagrant lies, overt deception and a thorough lack of integrity to mangle the Constitution and thoroughly abuse the American people; notwithstanding the assistance he received from a 'bought' Congress and a partial/corrupt judiciary.

This is nothing new, it's called the American status quo! However, with his recent speech on the NSA—a heady cocktail of lies, obfuscations, contradictions and Orwellian doublespeak—lying Obama has also managed to pervert and propagandize our nation's history, starting with Paul Revere and the Sons of Liberty, likening their efforts to secure our freedoms to NSA phone surveillance. Frankly, George Orwell's Winston Smith, rewriting news stories for Big Brother and the Ministry of Truth, couldn't have done a better job of revising history to suit the party line.

While it didn't bode well for what was to follow, here's how Obama opened his speech:

"At the dawn of our Republic, a small, secret surveillance committee borne out of the 'The Sons of Liberty' was established in Boston. And the group's members included Paul Revere. At night, they would patrol the streets, reporting back any signs that the British were preparing raids against America's early Patriots. Throughout American history, intelligence has helped secure our country and our freedoms."

Obama's inference is clear: rather than condemning the NSA for encroaching on our privacy rights, we should be commending them for helping to "secure our country and our freedoms." Never mind that the Sons of Liberty were actually working against the British government, to undermine what they perceived as a repressive regime guilty of perpetrating a host of abuses against the colonists.

After such a 1984-esque send-up, it doesn't even really matter what else Obama had to say in his speech about NSA reforms and the like. Rest assured, it was largely a pack of lies. Mind you, Obama said it eloquently enough and interspersed it with all the appropriately glib patriotic remarks about individual freedom and the need to defend the Constitution and securing the life of our nation while preserving our liberties. After all, Obama has proven to be very good at saying one thing and doing another, whether it's insisting that "you can keep your health care plan," that he'll close Guantanamo, or that his administration's controversial drone strikes only target terrorists and not civilians.

When it comes to the NSA, Obama has been lying to the American people for quite some time now. There was the time he claimed the secret FISA court is "transparent." Then he insisted that "we don't have a domestic spying program." And then, to top it all off, he actually insisted there was no evidence the NSA was "actually abusing" its power. As David Sirota writes for Salon: "it has now become almost silly to insinuate or assume that the president hasn't also been lying. Why? Because if that's true — if indeed he hasn't been deliberately lying — then it means he has been dangerously, irresponsibly and negligently ignorant of not only the government he runs, but also of the news breaking around him."

Sirota continues:

I, of course, don't buy that at all. I don't buy that a constitutional lawyer and legal scholar didn't know that the FISA court is secret — aka the opposite of "transparent." I don't buy that he simply didn't see any of the news showing that spying is happening in the United States. And I don't buy that he didn't know that there is evidence — both public and inside his own administration — of the NSA "actually abusing" its power.

I don't buy any of that because, to say the least, it makes no sense. I just don't buy that he's so unaware of the world around him that he made such statements from a position of pure ignorance. On top of that, he has a motive. Yes, Obama has an obvious political interest in trying to hide as much of his administration's potentially illegal behavior as possible, which means he has an incentive to calculatedly lie. For all of these reasons, it seems safe to suggest that when it comes to the NSA situation, the president seems to be lying.

So in terms of Obama's latest speech on the NSA, if you read between the lines—or just ignore the president's words and pay attention to his actions—it's clear that nothing is going to change. The NSA will continue to abuse its power by spying on Americans' phone calls and emails. They will continue to collect metadata on our various communications and activities. And they will continue to carry out their surveillance in secret, with no attempts at transparency or accountability.

The NSA will do so, no matter what Obama claims to the contrary, because this black ops-funded agency whose very existence is abhorrent to the Constitution has become a power unto itself. They no longer work for us or for the president, for that matter. He works for them.

Remember, Obama is the chief executive of a super secretive surveillance state whose overarching purpose is to remain in power by any means available. As such, he and his surveillance state cohorts have far more in common with King George and the British government of his day than with the American colonists who worked hard to foment a rebellion and overthrow a despotic regime.

Indeed, Obama and his speechwriters would do well to brush up on their history. In doing so, they will find that the Sons of Liberty, the "small, secret surveillance committee" they conveniently liken to the NSA, was in fact an underground, revolutionary movement that fought the established government of its day, whose members were considered agitators, traitors and terrorists not unlike Edward Snowden.

In much the same way that the U.S. government under the leadership of Barack Obama is today going after whistleblowers and activists who oppose their tactics, the British government went after the Sons of Liberty. These people were neither career politicians nor government bureaucrats. Instead, they were mechanics, merchants, artisans and the like—ordinary people groaning under the weight of Britain's oppressive rule—who, having reached a breaking point, had decided that enough was enough. Through the use of Committees of Correspondence, they alerted the colonists to the abuses being meted out by the British crown by way of pamphlets, speeches and resolutions, inciting them to actively resist the acts of oppression, and conspiring with them to revolt.

The colonists' treatment at the hands of the British was not much different from the abuses meted out to the American people today: they too were taxed on everything from food to labor without any real say in the matter, in addition to which they had their homes invaded, their property seized and searched, their families terrorized, their communications, associations and activities monitored, and their attempts to defend themselves and challenge the government's abuses dismissed as

belligerence, treachery, and sedition.

Unlike most Americans today, who remain ignorant of the government's abuses, cheerfully distracted by the entertainment spectacles trotted out before them by a complicit media, readily persuaded that the government has their best interests at heart, and easily cowed by the slightest show of force, the colonists responded to the government's abuses with outrage, activism and rebellion. They staged boycotts of British goods and organized public protests, mass meetings, parades, bonfires and other demonstrations, culminating with their most famous act of resistance, the Boston Tea Party.

On the night of December 16, 1773, a group of men dressed as Indians boarded three ships that were carrying tea. Cheered on by a crowd along the shore, they threw 342 chests of tea overboard in protest of a tax on the tea. Many American merchants were aghast at the wanton destruction of property. A town meeting in Bristol, Massachusetts, condemned the action. Ben Franklin even called on his native city to pay for the tea and apologize. But as historian Pauline Maier notes, the Boston Tea Party was a last resort for a group of people who had stated their peaceful demands but were rebuffed by the British: "The tea resistance constituted a model of justified forceful resistance upon traditional criteria."

The rest, as they say, is history. Yet it's a history we cannot afford to forget or allow to be rewritten. The colonists suffered under the weight of countless tyrannies before they finally were emboldened to stand their ground. They attempted to reason with the British crown, to plea their cause, even to negotiate. It was only when these means proved futile that they resorted to outright resistance, civil disobedience and eventually rebellion.

More than 200 years later, we are once again suffering under a long train of abuses and usurpations. What Americans today must decide is how committed they are to the cause of freedom and how far they're willing to go to restore what has been lost. Nat Hentoff, one of my dearest friends and a formidable champion of the Constitution, has long advocated for the resurgence of Committees of Correspondence. As Nat noted:

This resistance to arrant tyranny first became part of our heritage when Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty formed the original Committees of Correspondence, a unifying source of news of British tyranny throughout the colonies that became a precipitating cause of the American Revolution. Where are the Sons of Liberty, the Committees of Correspondence and the insistently courageous city councils now, when they are crucially needed to bring back the Bill of Rights that protect every American against government tyranny worse than King George III's? Where are the citizens demanding that these doorways to liberty be opened ... What are we waiting for?

What are we waiting for, indeed? As Thomas Jefferson said, *"I prefer dangerous freedom over peaceful slavery."*

[Edited.]

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