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Bern Porter
Sheila Holtz

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DICTATORSHIP AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Why "Anti-Terrorism" Laws Threaten You

by James R. Elwood & Jarret B. Wollstein
May 2002

"I tell you, freedom and human rights in America are doomed. The U.S. government will lead the American people, and the West in general, into an unbearable hell and a choking life."
Osama bin Laden, October, 2001 (quoted in NewsMax.com 11/1/02)

At 5 am in the morning on September 12, 2001 -- less than one day after the 9/11 Attack -- a half-dozen heavily-armed federal agents raided the home of Dr. Al-Hazmi in San Antonio, Texas. Without any search warrant, the agents ransacked his home, while his wife and young children (6 & 8) were held at gunpoint. Then -- without being charged with any crime -- Dr. Al-Hazmi was shackled and thrown naked into a freezing cold FBI holding cell. Even his eyeglasses and bronchitis medicine were taken away. Next, Al-Hazmi was flown to a New York prison, where he says he was repeatedly beaten while the FBI interrogated him.

One week later, he was finally allowed to talk to an attorney and learned the reason for his arrest: Dr. Al-Hazmi's name (the "Smith" of the Middle East) is similar to that of two 9/11 hijackers, and he had booked flights through Travelocity.com, which some 9/11 hijackers (along with a few million other people) had used.

On September 24th -- 12 days after he was arrested, Dr. Al-Hazmi was released -- without his belongings and without even an apology from the FBI. He says he may now have to quit his job and leave the U.S. because his co-workers no longer trust him. (Source: "Justice Kept In the Dark," Newsweek, 12-10-01, p. 41.)

Since September 11th, over 2,000 people, including many U.S. citizens, have been imprisoned by the FBI and police in the name of "fighting terrorism." Only two of them have been charged with a crime associated with 9/11. Many say they have been denied food and sleep, access to an attorney, and have even been beaten. The FBI has even called for legalizing torture of such "suspects."

In the wake of the horrific 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, America is a changed country. Dozens of "anti-terrorist" laws have already been
enacted by Congress and state legislatures, and many more are on the way. As you are about to learn, these laws are a much greater danger to you than to terrorists.

The USA Patriot Act authorizes an American police state

The centerpiece of the new "anti-terror" laws is the USA PATRIOT ACT (Public Law 107-56). Here is how this law affects you.

Cops can now rob your house or office at will: Under Section 213, police can now secretly break into your home or business if they merely suspect you're involved in any criminal activity involving a computer.

Once they break in, they can seize your records, alter or destroy your computer files, and even plant bugs that report every keystroke you type. They can also secretly seize anything and everything you own, including family heirlooms, your computer, cash, jewelry, and gold. Since the "search" is secret, it will be impossible to legally challenge it -- much less get your property back.

In effect, the USA Patriot Act legalizes home break-ins and robberies by cops nationwide -- not unlike the corrupt LA police Rampart Division which routinely robbed and assaulted citizens they were sworn "to serve and protect."

Big Brother is Watching: Under Section 207(III) the Feds can now eavesdrop on your phone calls, faxes, and e-mail at will -- without any search warrant. Internet Service Providers must turn over your e-mail records and customer information upon government demand. Telephone companies also must turn over detailed phone records, including any credit-card or bank-account numbers used for payments.

According to CBSNews.com (11/21/01), the FBI is developing new "Magic Lantern" software that can record every keystroke you make on your computer. It could be inserted into your PC via the Internet, and may even be capable of real-time monitoring! [Shades of 1984]

Your financial privacy is being wiped out. Section 358 compels U.S. and foreign banks -- along with stockbrokers, credit-card companies, and credit-reporting agencies -- to provide detailed information about you to intelligence agencies on demand. You won't even be notified that this information has been requested.

Section 361 greatly expands the power of the IRS Financial Crimes Center (FINCEN) to collect financial information on you from "non-bank networks" (like check-cashing services and barter-systems). This information will be entered into a new federal database accessible to thousands of cops and bureaucrats, who can use the information to criminally prosecute you or seize your assets. The IRS has already forced MasterCard and American Express to turn over all records of millions of U.S. citizens who have foreign credit cards.

If you are a foreigner who owns U.S. assets, they can be seized upon the mere request of a U.S. prosecutor.

Finally, carrying $10,000 cash in or out of the US (without reporting it) is by itself now considered a federal crime. Your cash will be immediately confiscated.

Anything and everything you own can be seized without trial. Section 302 allows "forfeiture of any assets in connection with the anti-terrorist efforts of the United States." If you contribute even $1 to an organization that the President brands "terrorist," everything you own can be confiscated.

Since September 11th, over $400 million in assets has been seized, including all of the assets of the Global Relief Foundation in Bridgeview, Illinois, which raises some $5 million a year for poor Muslims. According to CBS News, FBI agents removed "furniture and fixtures as well as records." Justice Department officials say they will also go after large contributors to Global and 39 other Muslim charities.
We, in Posibilidad, are out of the box thinkers and activists outrageous enough to believe that when we’re present to the poor, hope abounds. We challenge structural links to violence and poverty. The challenge brings us into conversation with students, church groups and human rights activists.

Posibilidad challenges this reality by bringing faces and stories of the exploited into the thick of conversation. Posibilidad’s Artist in Residence, photojournalist Jim Harney, uses the best of his photography over the last 21 years in this recently developed slide presentation entitled: The Millennium Challenge: An Option for the Poor.

If only I could save the environment and raise money for my youth group.
Souper Bear inspires community caring

I started going to the (Stone) Soup Kitchen with my friend, Bern Porter," said Sheila Holtz. "Bern explained to me that this was the way we would be eating our lunch. There was a definite aura there, an energy of goodness. The whole thing was really kind of open and relaxed fellowship wise." That was in the old building.

Bertie Gilpin thought up the idea and sketched the initial plans for Souper Bear. "It was to point out to people that Belfast does indeed have a soup kitchen," said Bertie. "The bears were already here on display in years past and my husband, Scott, and I thought it would be a good way to let people know there is a soup kitchen and that it has needs."

Erik Hardin, instrumental in the construction of Souper Bear and also an invaluable asset to the Stone Soup Kitchen said, "People are more than welcome to donate time, food, and energy because we're really short-handed on the energy and time part. We have a shoestring staff right now. We could use people's help to prepare food, serve the food, and clean up afterward."

Do volunteers have to commit to a certain duration of time? "You may help out one hour at a time or even longer," said Hardin. "It's your choice. Every minute you can give is appreciated."

Although Sheila Holtz doesn't consider herself a volunteer, Hardin, Scott and Bertie inspired me in my writing and that's really why I came to Maine in the first place."

Holtz agrees with Hardin that there is a lot more to life than making money. "I really haven't been focused on making money for quite some time," said Holtz. "And I think a real great thing about focusing on a higher calling or a deeper inward calling is that the rewards are nonmaterial and yet very profound and much more sustaining than mere money."

"Talking about life," said Scott, "I'd say this has been one of the happiest times of our life in moving here. It's sort of like getting married all over again."

The Souper Bear artists, from left, Erik Hardin, Sheila Holtz, Scott and Bertie Gilpin. McDAVID

The Waldo Independent, Thursday, August 1, 2002 — Page 17.
Souper Bear

St. Francis of Assisi church in Belfast pays the overhead for the soup kitchen which is now located behind door number one at the Belfast Center. Susan Shatel, associate pastor, said St. Francis parishioners give food and monetary donations as well as their time and energies.

Norman Furbush manages the soup kitchen. This devoted, caring man arrives at 5 a.m. six days a week. At 5:05 a.m. I arrived and immediately expressed surprise at all the empty shelves. “Oh, they won’t be empty for long, believe me,” said Furbush. “Cohn Moore (a St. Francis parishioner) comes at 7:30 a.m. with all the donations from Shop ‘n Save. I don’t know what we’d do without Cohn.”

Bread, pastries, desserts, fruit, vegetables and dozens of donuts were quickly unloaded from Moore’s car. As he adeptly replenished the shelves, Furbush exclaimed over his shoulder, “All of this helps a lot of people out.”

Scott and Bertie know about helping people out. “We got involved the first time in 1995,” said Bertie. “We had moved from where our family was and it was just the two of us at Thanksgiving time. We missed having a lot of people around and feeling useful. We volunteered at the soup kitchen once and just felt compelled to continue filling the soup kitchen’s need.”

The Gilpins wound up volunteering five days a week and in time backed off for awhile. It wasn’t long before they saw the need still existed and willingly filled it. “Now we’re backing off again,” said Bertie. “The times we’ve been involved have been to our benefit. It makes up for being away from six kids and all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.”

“I’m grateful that I could be a part of the whole Souper Bear undertaking,” said Hardin. “It was a lot of fun doing it. I enjoy Scott and Bertie and Sheila’s company. We had a lot of fun doing it.”

Hardin spent time lobstering last year but devotes a great deal of his time to the soup kitchen this year. “There are more important things in life than making money,” said Hardin. “I could be out there working on a lobster boat if I chose to. I’m involved in other more important projects and I don’t really have the time to go lobstering. I’m not really making any money right now.” Bertie was quick to add that Hardin “is feeding his soul.”

“That’s right,” said Hardin, “and I’m living off money that I made from lobstering last season.”

“Belfast is a great place and it’s good to be back here,” said Holtz. “I’ve been away for a while working at H.O.M.E. in Otis. I’m taking an indefinite leave to be with Bern and do work for him. I wouldn’t go so far as to call it a guru-disciple relationship but I will say he were away from family and friends and now we’ve made new friends and it’s been wonderful.” Bertie added, “And Souper Bear is sort of like the culmination of it all. Sending him off to the street corner was like sending one of the kids off to kindergarten.”

What is Scott and Bertie’s favorite reason for being in Maine? “Right here,” said Bertie. “Mayo Street, the water, and the people.” Scott added, “We have super neighbors here.” Fifteen years ago the Gilpins didn’t know this part of the country existed let alone all the friends they have made.

“We could pick up the phone,” said Bertie, “and call anyone on the street if we needed anything and know that it would be offered immediately. Belfast is wonderful and Mayo Street is even better.”

Souper Bear holds a pot of stone soup based on the story about people helping each other. “There’s a real stone in the pot,” said Scott. “It’s from our backyard. And there are wooden vegetables exquisitely carved and painted by Leslie Peters. Peters was involved with the soup kitchen when she worked at Chase’s Daily and delivered the restaurant’s food donations.

And so it goes, one person helping another in turn to help someone else.

What are you doing from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.? Perhaps you would like to help set up the dining area at the soup kitchen or help with cleanup at the end of the meal. Perhaps you have a sturdy table or extra chairs that you could donate to the dining area. “Please know,” said Hardin, “volunteers with pick-ups are always appreciated. Once a month, at least, we need to pick up food from the Good Shepherd. And feel free to come in anytime. We could use help for a day or a week or even a couple of hours.”

SEE BEAR FACTS
Section 802 of the USA Patriot Act says "domestic terrorism" includes any illegal acts which are "dangerous to human life" or which are "intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population [or] to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion."

This wording is so vague, that police could brand you a 'supporter of terrorism' simply for protesting an unjust law, taking part in a political demonstration where a fist-fight breaks out, or even writing an article that criticizes the War on Terror! Already, similar laws have been used to arrest protesters at anti-abortion demonstration, seize the assets of some defense attorneys, and even arrest 6-year-old children for making "terrorist threats."

Section 813 further states that such "terrorist acts" fall under RICO (the Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act), which allows police to confiscate everything you own based upon mere "suspicion."

The USA Patriot Act is just the beginning

In the wake of 9/11, scores of new anti-terrorist laws and policies have already been enacted including:

Robbing and assaulting airline passengers. Airports (and many other public places) are now "rights-free zones." Under the eye of armed soldiers, thousands of airline passengers have had legal items like toenail clippers, jewelry, and belts confiscated as potential "weapons." Many are also being molested.

Columnist Rebecca Hagelin reports that a female airport security guard "ran her hands across my breast and up my thighs." Then her 9-year-old daughter was subjected to the same treatment. WorldNetDaily.com publisher Joseph Farah says his 15-year-old daughter was "told to unbutton her pants and roll them down below the beltline." In Atlanta, 72 women have filed suit for sexual molestation by male airport security screeners.

National ID cards and internal passports. The "Drivers License Modernization Act of 2002" (HR 4633) mandates that all state drivers licenses be standardized "smart cards" that would include your Social Security number, digitized photo, and "biometric" identifiers such as your fingerprints or retinal scan. This won't stop criminals or terrorists, who routinely steal or forge IDs.

However, your license will be linked to a national database now being created which will enable the government to control your every movement and track every dollar you spend.

Some officials are even calling for these ID cards to be mandatory for boarding a bus, train, or cruise ship -- or even to rent a car! That would transform your driver's license into an internal passport. Just like in the former Soviet Union, government bureaucrats could prevent you from traveling!

"Star chamber" military tribunals. These tribunals strip away your most basic legal protections. Before these tribunals, you have no presumption of innocence, hearsay evidence can be used to convict you, and there is no independent jury. Instead you are judged by military officers who work for the same boss as the prosecutors trying to convict you. Military tribunals can even order that you be summarily executed -- without appeal.

So far, these military tribunals are supposed to try only foreign "terrorist" suspects. But a Presidential Executive Order could make you subject to them in a heartbeat -- just as Lincoln ordered during the Civil War.
Dictatorship is at our doorstep

Universal surveillance, arbitrary property seizures, imprisonment without trial, "kangaroo-court" tribunals, and summary execution of "suspects" were the hallmarks of the brutal dictatorships in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia -- and continue today in repressive countries like Saddam Hussein's Iraq. These abuses have no place in a free and civilized society.

But now in America, the USA Patriot Act and the other new anti-terror laws and edicts virtually wipe out our Bill of Rights and give government officials absolute power over your life and property. As Lord Acton warned: "Power corrupts -- and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

We can still stop dictatorship

Certainly in the wake of 9/11 and the continuing terrorist threat, government should hunt down and get rid of real terrorists. But vicious attacks on our freedom and privacy will not make our country one whit safer.

There is still time to fight back, as many people -- including some members of Congress -- are starting to do. Join us in insisting as a free and just people, that the "rule of law" enshrined in the Bill of Rights -- which protects the innocent -- must be strictly upheld, and that the new "anti-terrorist" laws be repealed.

Allowing government to destroy our liberty in the name of fighting terrorism will destroy everything that has made America a great, prosperous and decent society -- and give Osama bin Laden and his wretched ilk their final victory.

James R. Elwood is the executive vice-president of ISIL.
Jarret B. Wollstein is a director of ISIL, a prolific writer, and the author of 25 books including "Surviving Terrorism, Protecting yourself, your business and your community from terrorism and martial law."

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For brief news bits, announcements of new Web site features, new products, and updates on the activities of our members, join our email update list. Frequency is approximately weekly. Email us at isol@isol.org if you ever have any questions.
Dear Sheila, I was watching a documentary about Maine in a dream last night. Wow, Sheila it was SO beautiful, bison grazing everyone's yard in Belfast. In the dream, while watching the documentary, I imagined you and Bern erecting an enormous blue bird in Bern's yard. The bird was a blue silt you were explaining, and that with the first rainfall the bird would dissolve. I felt my time was until that rainfall, and it wasn't sad, it was beautiful, and we laughed and laughed in the yard sitting under the blue glow of the bird. Bern looked JUST like Frank Perdue. I'm not shy of any of the parts of my dreams...I was a giggling silly blond girl and you were telling me salvation stories, even though I didn't understand why, or what these salvation stories were that you were going on about. More than anything I remember being above the mountain, but I'm not sure whether it was in my imagination in the dream or in the documentary in the dream, but what difference does it make...I remember being above the mountain, and the bison were shitting on the mountain top and fertilizing a patch of the mountain top for the plants to regenerate after we've all gone. And there was a blanket of mist hiding this from everyone below the mountain. Only I could see this while flying above, and I put my finger to my lips over and over as if to reassure these massive grunting beasts looking up at me in their thick steaming coats that I would not tell a soul of their secret plans of life on Earth without us, over and over, finger to lips to reassure them, and I meant it, and mean it now. I enjoyed laughing with you beneath the blue bird. I enjoyed you telling me salvation stories, even if I didn't learn anything about salvation. I enjoyed the stories, they were lovely stories, thank you.

[WE BURIED OUR VERBAL DYNAMITE]

in ink and paper; concepts
fitting the curves of our hips.
truth lying in my palm
like a cameo, my voice cannot
be quiet anymore in the noise-din
broadcast at us; hunger organizes
our lives keeping us single file as ants;
somewhere
there's music like wings to help us fly.

[ SUGAR-LOAF ]

she knocked me down
with perfume barking
like a chained dog, neck -ripping the chain and post;
I want us to be
like a temple; fineness filled,
ceremonial tea, food and wine;
but she captured me; my
nose rubbed
all over her, and her nose
on me; she stood on her feet balls
thinking soon she'd be a sugar-loaf
and I'd be a saltlick.