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Heading Towards the Police State

by Bart Frazier

The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground.

— Thomas Jefferson

Every year the United States becomes less free; the state controls more of our lives, takes more of our money, and takes from us more choices of how we are to live our lives. This is not the result of some government plot to establish a dictatorship but simply the natural progression of the state. Unless freedom is defended diligently, it disappears and is replaced by the police state.

Freedom is simply the ability to do what one chooses within the framework of justice. Individuals should be free to do what they choose as long as they don't infringe the rights of others in the process. The reason that governments are established is to punish people who do violate the rights of others.

In such a society, many choices that people make may be repugnant to others, yet not violate their rights. Abusing drugs or engaging in prostitution are activities that many people abhor; yet if voluntary, they are activities that government has no place preventing. No one's rights are being harmed.

The U.S. government now illegitimately violates our rights in too many areas of our lives to be counted. It regulates us, spies on us, tortures us, controls our livelihood, indoctrinates our children, taxes our income, controls what we ingest, and restricts our travel.

It squeezes us, twists us, and wrings us to the point we can't take it anymore, and then it stops. Like a child testing its boundaries, the state pushes until it is pushed back. Why doesn't the state just go all the way and take everything — codify and dictate all aspects of our lives? Because it stops when we let it be known that enough is enough.

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson put to paper the reasons that the colonists rebelled against their own government. Among those reasons is one especially pertinent to the federal government of today: "He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance."

Would not the Founders be absolutely repulsed by the government that we have allowed to metastasize under our watch? Wouldn't they be utterly astounded by the fact that the federal government is the nation's largest employer? Are there not swarms of federal officers harassing us?

Here we are, more than 200 years later and we are debating the merits of torture, the soundness of empire, and how much must be sacrificed so that we may secure our "safety."

What is safety without freedom? It is the life of a man in a jail cell, free from the cares of the world, without responsibility and without choice.

If liberty is the price of safety, I don't want to be safe. I want to be free.

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