
FUTURE OF FREEDOM

VOLUME 29 | NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 2018

*It is better to light one small candle than to curse
the darkness.*

— *Confucius*

FUTURE OF FREEDOM

★★★

The Future of Freedom Foundation is a nonprofit educational foundation whose mission is to advance liberty and the libertarian philosophy by providing an uncompromising moral, philosophical, and economic case for individual liberty, free markets, private property, and limited government.

Believing in the power of ideas on liberty to shift the course of society toward freedom, our methodology is based on sharing sound principles of liberty with others.

- Our monthly journal, *Future of Freedom*, contains timeless and uncompromising essays on liberty. The price is \$25 for a one-year print subscription, \$15 for the email version.
- Our FFF Daily, which is free for the asking, provides hard-hitting commentary on current events.
- Our Libertarian Angle weekly Internet video show provides viewers with libertarian perspectives on the burning issues of the day.
- Our website, fff.org, contains all the articles and videos we have published since our inception in 1989.

The Foundation neither solicits nor accepts government grants. Our operations are funded primarily by donations from our supporters, which are invited in any amount.

★★★

© Copyright 2018. *The Future of Freedom Foundation. All rights reserved. Please send reprint requests to The Foundation.*

The Future of Freedom Foundation

11350 Random Hills Road

Suite 800

Fairfax, VA 22030

...

www.fff.org · fff@fff.org

...

tel: 703-934-6101 · fax: 703-352-8678

<i>U.S. Policy Toward Cuba Attacked America's Freedom and Values</i>	2
Jacob G. Hornberger	
<i>The Latest Debacle Proves the Need for a Sweeping FBI Investigation</i>	11
James Bovard	
<i>Efficiency Experts for the Welfare State</i>	17
Laurence M. Vance	
<i>The Sanctifying of Plunder</i>	28
Leonard E. Read	
<i>Socialists Masquerading as Liberals</i>	32
James Cook	
<i>The Boomerang Effect</i>	34
Matthew Harwood	

U.S. Policy toward Cuba Attacked America's Freedom and Values

.....
by Jacob G. Hornberger



The decades-long U.S. interventionist policy against Cuba failed to achieve its goal of removing Fidel Castro from power and replacing him with a pro-U.S. regime, similar to the pro-U.S. Batista regime that the Cuban revolution ousted from power in 1959. More important, interventionism against Cuba ended up attacking the freedom and values of the American people.

During the Cold War, U.S. officials claimed that their interventionist policy against Cuba was justified because Cuba posed a grave threat to U.S. national security. Yet not once did Cuba ever attack or invade the United States or even threaten to do

so. Moreover, there was never any possibility that the Cuban military could defeat U.S. military forces in a full-scale war. Throughout the Cold War years, it was always the U.S. government, especially the Pentagon and the CIA, that was the aggressor in the conflict with Cuba.

Consider the brutal economic embargo against Cuba, which exists to this day, more than 25 years after the Cold War supposedly ended. In combination with Cuba's socialist system, the embargo has squeezed the economic life out of the Cuban people, helping consign them to extreme poverty verging on starvation.

Americans have become so accustomed to economic sanctions and embargoes as a tool of U.S. foreign policy that many of them hardly give a thought to how they operate. Sanctions and embargoes target the population of a foreign country with economic suffering, with the aim of bringing about a change in their government or in how their government operates. The idea is that if the civilian population can be made to significantly suffer, either their regime will abdicate in favor of one that is acceptable to U.S. officials, the regime will agree to comply with U.S. dictates, a military coup will take place, or the

civilian population will initiate a violent revolution.

With Cuba, the U.S. government's regime-change objective has never been achieved. To this day, the communist regime that ousted the U.S.-supported Batista regime from power still governs Cuba. But what has been achieved is the continued infliction of economic harm on the Cuban people, along with the continued attacks on fundamental rights of the American people.

Where is the morality of intentionally inflicting harm on the population of a country with the aim of achieving a political objective? That is not what America was supposed to be all about. That is not one of the principles on which our nation was founded.

Proponents of the embargo point to tyrannical actions on the part of the Castro regime to justify the embargo, including its post-revolution executions, seizures of properties and businesses belonging both to Cubans and to Americans, denial of elections, censorship of the press, suppression of dissent, and the adoption of a socialist economic system.

But those are things that took place entirely within Cuba, which is an independent and sovereign state. None of those actions involved a

military attack on the United States. They are matters that are the business of the Cuban people, not the business of the U.S. government.

What about the properties and businesses belonging to Americans that were seized? When an American company does business in a foreign country, it takes its chances. Nationalization is one of the dangers that every business confronts when it operates in a foreign country. If a company doesn't want to take that risk, it should stay at home. When it encounters problems in a foreign land, it should not expect the U.S. government to come bailing it out.

Where is the morality of intentionally inflicting harm on the population of a country?

The same goes for American citizens. If they don't want to take the risk of being arrested, incarcerated, or executed by some foreign regime, they have a simple remedy: Stay at home. If they choose to go abroad, they assume the risk that bad things might happen to them. If they encounter trouble in a foreign land, they should not look to the U.S. government to be their daddy.

Lost in the effort to achieve regime change in Cuba was a much

more important aspect of the Cuba embargo — its infringement on the rights and liberties of the American people, specifically freedom of travel, private property, and economic liberty, which are among the principles on which America was founded. For more than a century, Americans were free to travel wherever they wanted and spend their money any way they wanted. If an American decided to travel abroad, he just did so, without asking for permission from federal officials.

With the embargo, Americans learned that if they traveled to Cuba without official permission and spent money there, they would be arrested, prosecuted, convicted, incarcerated, or fined, not by the Cuban government but rather by their own government. With the embargo, the federal government confirmed its power to control where Americans went and how they spent their money. The irony, of course, is that that type of control was being wielded by the Castro regime with its communist and socialist system.

Assassination

Consider the repeated attempts by the CIA to assassinate Castro, along with the assassination partnership that the CIA entered into with the Mafia. “Assassination” is

really just a fancy word for murder. What moral or legal authority did the CIA have in trying to murder Castro? Remember: Cuba never attacked or invaded the United States.

With the embargo, the federal government confirmed its power to control where Americans went and how they spent their money.

The CIA held that because Castro was a communist, the CIA's attempts to murder him were justified. But since when does a person's political or economic ideology justify snuffing out his life? Does that mean that the CIA wields the legal and moral authority to murder anyone who believes in communism, or is it limited to presidents and prime ministers? How about political leaders who are perceived to be sympathetic to communists or communist regimes?

The CIA had no moral or legal authority to engage in murder attempts against Castro. Perhaps that is why it did everything it could to keep its assassination attempts secret, along with its partnership with the Mafia.

When the CIA's assassination attempts became public, there was little outrage among the American public, which demonstrated what

the Cold War and the U.S. national-security state had done to the consciences of individual Americans. After all, when the country was founded, the Framers did not delegate a power of assassination in the Constitution to the federal government. Murdering people, no matter how despicable their political or economic philosophy might be, was not what America or the American people were all about. In fact, it was the exact opposite: one of America's founding principles was that people are free to believe in anything they want and to advocate anything they want, no matter how odious everyone else might consider it. Another founding principle was that no person anywhere could be deprived of life by U.S. officials without due process of law.

The Framers did not delegate a power of assassination in the Constitution to the federal government.

The fact that the CIA entered into an assassination partnership with the Mafia makes the situation even worse. The Mafia was the premier criminal organization in the world. Among its specialties were murder, torture, rape, and importing heroin into the United States.

That fact that there was little outrage that the CIA would choose the Mafia as a partner in any endeavor, including murder and cover-up, speaks volumes about what the policy toward Cuba has done to traditional American moral values.

Of course, it wasn't just Castro that the CIA targeted for believing in communism. Along with FBI, it also targeted American citizens. The Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the U.S. Communist Party, and the U.S. civil-rights movement were prime examples. No, the CIA and the FBI didn't murder people in those organizations, as they were trying to do with Castro, but they did do everything they could to infiltrate, smear, and destroy them. In fact, while the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, whose membership included prominent Americans from all across the country, included people who were sympathetic to communism and socialism, its objective was simply to reestablish normal relations between Cuba and the United States, something that was anathema to the Pentagon and the CIA.

Even if communism, if fully adopted, would have destroyed America's free-market economic system and maybe even its political system, that still would not justify governmental attempts to murder or de-

stroy the proponents of communism. Most assuredly, freedom can be dangerous, especially given the possibility that people might be induced to embrace a bad idea or a bad philosophy. But the fact that freedom comes with risks does not justify governmental efforts to undermine freedom in the name of saving it. The way to fight bad ideas is not by using force to suppress them but instead by advocating good ideas.

The fact that freedom comes with risks does not justify governmental efforts to destroy freedom in the name of saving it.

Consider all the other foreign coups and regime-change operations that the CIA and the Pentagon engaged in, in the name of fighting communists and communism. The CIA's coups in Iran, Guatemala, and Chile destroyed the democratic regimes in those countries and brought into power brutal right-wing regimes that murdered, tortured, raped, abused, disappeared, and incarcerated thousands of innocent people.

Through it all, the American people were taught to passively accept or even support what was going on. The fear of communism and

communists that the U.S. national-security establishment had inculcated in the American people had stultified the conscience of many of them and paralyzed their sense of moral values.

Ambush, sabotage, and terrorism

In 1961, the CIA engineered a paramilitary invasion of Cuba, without any declaration of war from Congress, as the U.S. Constitution required. Only 20 years before, Americans had been outraged that Japan had initiated a surprise attack on the United States without first declaring war. Yet here was the United States doing the same thing to Cuba, with nary a peep of protest over the U.S. government's surprise, undeclared attack at the Bay of Pigs.

The CIA's plan entailed keeping its role in the invasion secret. It also called for John F. Kennedy to deny the CIA's role in the invasion. Is that what the United States is supposed to be all about — secretly initiating wars of aggression against other nations and having the president lie about the government's role in initiating the invasion?

There were the CIA's acts of sabotage and terrorism inside Cuba. If the communist regime in Cuba had done those things here in the United States, there would have been

tremendous anger and outrage among the American people, and rightly so. But when the U.S. government did them to Cuba, the reaction among many Americans was silence or even support.

When a Cuban airliner was bombed over Barbados, on the way back to Cuba, killing 73 people, including the members of Cuba's fencing team, it had all the earmarks of a CIA anti-communist sabotage and terrorism operation. To this day, there has never been an official investigation in which the CIA is the specific target of the investigation. The CIA's denial that it was involved in that particular act of anti-Cuba terrorism was sufficient to foreclose any possibility of an investigation that made the CIA a target of investigation. Never mind that the CIA has always been notorious for lying, as manifested by the criminal conviction of CIA Director Richard Helms for lies told under oath to Congress, for which he was honored and glorified by his fellow operatives in the CIA.

We also mustn't forget that the CIA's and Pentagon's interventionist policy toward Cuba almost succeeded in snuffing out the lives of tens of millions of Americans. Americans are taught that the Cuban Missile Crisis was caused by the

Soviet Union and the Castro regime. Nothing could be further from the truth. It was caused by the Pentagon and the CIA.

Garnering increased enmity from the Pentagon, Kennedy rejected Operation Northwoods, to his everlasting credit.

After the CIA's surprise attack at the Bay of Pigs met with defeat at the hands of Castro's forces, the Pentagon and the CIA became more determined than ever to oust the Castro regime from power and replace with it another pro-U.S. regime. From the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion in the spring of 1961 to the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962, the Pentagon was exhorting the president to order a full-scale military invasion of Cuba. The Joint Chiefs of Staff even came up with a plan called Operation Northwoods, which they unanimously recommended to him. The plan called for terrorist attacks and plane hijackings that would be carried out by U.S. operatives posing as Cuban communists, which then would have provided Kennedy with the pretext to order an attack on Cuba in "self-defense." Garnering increased enmity from the Pentagon, Kennedy rejected

Operation Northwoods, to his everlasting credit.

Castro was well aware of the Pentagon's and CIA's desire to invade Cuba. He knew that his forces, like all Third World armies, were no match for the U.S. military. Therefore, to deter another invasion of his country and, alternatively, to provide Cuba with the means of defending against an invasion, Castro invited the Soviet Union to install nuclear missiles on the island.

In return for Kennedy's promises, the Soviets removed the missiles and returned them to the Soviet Union.

To obfuscate the defensive purpose of the missiles, U.S. officials and the U.S. mainstream press often refer to the Soviet missiles as "offensive" missiles. The implication is that the Soviet Union and Cuba were threatening to initiate a nuclear attack on the United States.

The truth was that the Soviet missiles were entirely for the purpose of deterrence and defense — to deter the Pentagon and the CIA from invading Cuba again and, if that failed, to have a means of defending against such a U.S. invasion.

Americans have been taught that it was the Soviet Union that

"blinked" during the crisis. That is just not true. It was actually Kennedy who "blinked." The deal that he reached with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev entailed a promise that neither the Pentagon nor the CIA would invade Cuba again. Kennedy also promised the Soviets that he would remove nuclear missiles based in Turkey that were pointed at the Soviet Union. In return for Kennedy's promises, the Soviets removed the missiles and returned them to the Soviet Union.

Cuba had gotten what it wanted — a U.S. presidential guarantee against another Pentagon-CIA invasion. Needless to say, the Pentagon and the CIA were livid. Gen. Curtis LeMay, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, called it the worst defeat in U.S. history. The military brass and the CIA hierarchy considered the president to be weak, a coward, an appeaser, even a traitor for leaving Cuba's "communist dagger" pointed at America's throat permanently in power.

It's a good thing, however, that Kennedy did blink and did not give the Pentagon and the CIA the invasion they wanted. Unbeknownst to Kennedy, the Pentagon, and the CIA, the nuclear missiles had been fully armed and Soviet commanders on the ground had been

given battlefield authority to use them in the event of a U.S. invasion. If Kennedy had succumbed to the enormous pressure that the military and the CIA were putting on him to invade, it is a virtual certainty that nuclear war would have engulfed the United States and the Soviet Union.

Similarities

One of the most interesting aspects of the of the decades-long policy of interventionism against Cuba pertains to two former U.S. government officials, Kendall Myers and Ana Montes, each of whom is now residing in a federal penitentiary. Their crime? Spying for Cuba. While they were working for the U.S. government, they separately and independently delivered classified information to the communist regime in Cuba.

Why is that interesting? Because keep in mind that Cuba had never attacked the United States or even threatened to do so. The aggressor in the Cuba-U.S. conflict had always been the U.S. government, especially the Pentagon and the CIA. Thus, while Americans are not permitted to know what precisely was the classified information that was delivered to Cuba, at worst it had to be information relating to acts of

aggression that the U.S. government was carrying out or planning against Cuba, such as assassination, sabotage, terrorism, embargo-tightening, or other regime-change operations.

The aggressor in the Cuba-U.S. conflict has always been the U.S. government, especially the Pentagon and the CIA.

What motivated Myers and Montes to do what they did? They believed it was morally wrong for the government for which they were working to be waging a war of aggression against a country that had never attacked the United States. Thus, they felt morally bound to help Cuba defend itself from acts of aggression that were being undertaken by U.S. officials against Cuba.

Needless to say, U.S. officials didn't see things that way. That includes the federal judges who issued a life sentence without parole to Myers and a 25-year sentence to Montes. In life under a national-security state, governmental officials are expected to keep the secrets of the regime, even if they consist of murder, coups, and wars of aggression. In a national-security state, "national security" trumps every-

thing, including conscience, as well as such principles as due process of law, freedom of travel, economic liberty, and private property.

Finally, it is worth mentioning an ironic aspect of the U.S. government's decades-long policy of interventionism against Cuba — the similarities between Cuba's socialist economic system and America's welfare-state, regulated-economy system. Such socialist and interventionist programs as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public schooling, a central bank, paper (i.e., fiat) money, economic regulations, trade restrictions, licensure, and income taxation are core elements in both the Cuban and American systems.

It's also worth mentioning that the Pentagon's "judicial" system at Guantanamo Bay more closely resembles that of the Cuban communist regime than that of the United States, given its trials of accused terrorists by military commission, its use of evidence acquired by torture,

its admission of hearsay, its denial of the rights of speedy trial and due process of law, its destruction of the attorney-client privilege, its presumption of guilt, and its preordained verdict of guilty.

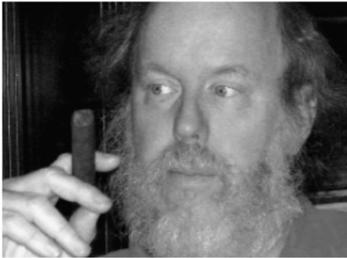
Throughout the long U.S. decades of interventionism against Cuba, the notion has always been that the means justified the end of regime change. Too bad that such means entailed an attack on the freedom and values that once characterized the United States and the American people.

Jacob Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.

NEXT MONTH:
**"Understanding the JFK
Assassination, Part 1"**
by Jacob G. Hornberger

The Latest Debacle Proves the Need for a Sweeping FBI Investigation

by James Bovard



The reputation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation took another pummeling in June, when the Department of Justice Inspector General released a damning report on the FBI's investigation of Hillary Clinton's squirrely email server. Americans learned that the FBI had done backflips to exonerate Clinton and that a top FBI official had openly promised to "stop" Donald Trump from becoming president. The IG report proves that it is time for a sweeping independent investigation of the FBI's abuses of Americans' rights and liberties.

The FBI's investigation of Clinton was spurred by her decision to set up a private server to handle her

email during her four years as Secretary of State. The server in a bathroom of her Chappaqua, New York, mansion was insecure and exposed emails with classified information to detection by foreign sources and others.

Clinton effectively exempted herself from the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The State Department simply ignored 17 pre-2014 FOIA requests for Clinton's emails. State delayed for more than five years answering a simple request from the Associated Press for Clinton's schedules and meetings. The agency insisted that it would require 75 years to disclose emails of Hillary's top aides. A federal judge and the agency's Inspector General slammed the FOIA stonewalling and foot-dragging.

Clinton's private email server was not publicly disclosed until she received a congressional subpoena in 2015. A few months later, the FBI Counterintelligence Division opened a criminal investigation examining the "potential unauthorized storage of classified information on an unauthorized system," as one agent declared. The IG report recaps how Attorney General Loretta Lynch swayed FBI Director James Comey to mislead the public by denying that a criminal investi-

gation involving Hillary Clinton had commenced; instead, it was referred to simply as a “matter.”

The “investigation” (1)

The IG report gives the impression that the FBI treated Hillary Clinton and her coterie like royalty — or at least like personages deserving endless deference. When Bleachbit software or hammers were used to destroy email evidence under congressional subpoena, the FBI treated it as a harmless error. The IG report “questioned whether the use of a subpoena or search warrant might have encouraged Clinton, her lawyers ... or others to search harder for the missing devices [containing email], or ensured that they were being honest that they could not find them.” Instead, FBI agents worked on “rapport building” with Clinton aides.

The report noted, “We found [Paul Combetta’s] actions in deleting Clinton’s emails in violation of a Congressional subpoena and preservation order and then lying about it to the FBI to be particularly serious. We asked the prosecutors why they chose to grant him immunity instead of charging him with obstruction of justice, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1505, or making false statements, in violation of 18 U.S.C.

§ 1001.... [They] believed prosecuting Combetta would not ‘serve a federal interest.’” This was one of many twists in the investigation vivifying that truth was not a “federal interest.”

The IG report gives the impression that the FBI treated Hillary Clinton and her coterie like royalty.

FBI investigators even shrugged off brazen deceit. An unnamed FBI agent on the case (identified in the report as “Agent 1”) responded to a fellow FBI agent who asked how an interview went with a witness who worked with the Clintons at their Chappaqua residence: “Awesome. Lied his ass off. Went from never inside the scif [sensitive compartmented information facility] at res [residence], to looked in when it was being constructed, to removed the trash twice, to troubleshot the secure fax with HRC a couple times, to everytime there was a secure fax i did it with HRC. Ridic.” When his colleague replied that it “would be funny if he was the only guy charged n this deal,” Agent 1 replied, “aint no one gonna do sh—” with respect to filing charges.

A top FBI agent grouched that, from the beginning, the Clinton in-

vestigation showed “no control and horrible decisions and chaos on the most meaningless thing I’ve ever done with people acting like f*** 9/11.” Four months later, he groused about “alot of work and bullsh– for a political exercise.” He later messaged colleagues about “a sh–ty task, in a sh–ty environment. To look for something conjured in a place where you cant find it, for a case that doesnt matter and is predestined.... DOJ comes in there every once in awhile and takes a wishy-washy, political, cowardice stance.”

FBI officials have been accused of using 302s to fabricate evidence of criminal wrongdoing.

Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) complained that FBI investigators treated Clinton and her associates far more leniently than they have Trump campaign officials: “Voluntariness and consent in the former were replaced with search warrants, subpoenas, and other compulsory processes in the latter. Many of the investigators and supervisors were the same in both investigations but the investigatory tactics were not.”

The FBI apparently failed to make any audio or video recordings of its interviews with Clinton aides and staffers. Perhaps the most fre-

quent phrase in the IG report is “According to the FD-302 ...” This refers to the memo an FBI agent writes after interviewing targets or witnesses in an investigation. Relying on Form 302s (instead of recording interviews) maximizes the discretion of FBI officials, allowing them to frame issues or create a narrative or buttress charges of lying to a federal agent. FBI officials have been accused of using 302s to fabricate evidence of criminal wrongdoing. (The FBI’s refusal to tape-record interviews or confessions is increasingly harming its credibility with juries, partly explaining the sharp fall in the number of FBI referrals that produce convictions.)

The “investigation” (2)

The FBI waited until the end of the investigation to interview Clinton and had decided to absolve her “absent a confession from Clinton,” the IG report noted. There was no recording and no transcript; instead, a 302 report allowed FBI Director James Comey to proceed with the pre-ordained “not guilty” finding. Clinton had received numerous classified emails (some of which were marked with a “C”) on her private email server. The IG report notes, “According to the FD-

302 from Clinton's interview, Clinton told the FBI that she did not know what the '(C)' meant and 'speculated it was a reference to paragraphs ranked in alphabetical order.'"

Anti-Trump texts spurred the IG to refer five FBI employees to the FBI for possible disciplinary penalties.

The IG noted, "Witnesses told us, and contemporaneous emails show, that the FBI and Department officials who attended Clinton's interview found that her claim that she did not understand the significance of the '(C)' marking strained credulity. [FBI] Agent 1 stated, 'I filed that in the bucket of hard to impossible to believe.'" Comey told IG investigators that "by her demeanor, she was credible and open and all that kind of stuff." But a video recording of the showdown would have been invaluable to Americans who doubted Clinton and the FBI. One of the FBI agents who interviewed Clinton texted to a colleague afterwards that he was "done interviewing the President," as if the FBI assumed her election was a foregone conclusion. Prior to the interview, Lisa Page, a top FBI attorney texted her colleagues, "She

might be our next president. The last thing you need [is] us going in there loaded for bear."

The IG report deals briefly with a kerfuffle over the FOIA release of Clinton Foundation documents a week before the 2016 election. Regrettably, the IG overlooked the FBI's horrendous record on FOIA compliance; even former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe now bewails that the FBI is a perpetual FOIA violator. A federal judge slammed the agency for claiming it would require 17 years to fulfill a FOIA request on surveillance of anti-war activists in the 1960s. The FBI also makes ludicrous redactions to FOIA releases — such as deleting the names of Clark Kent and Lois Lane from a theatrical adaptation of *Superman* because disclosing them would "constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

Anti-Trump texts spurred the IG to refer five FBI employees to the FBI for possible disciplinary penalties. "We'll stop" Donald Trump from becoming president, lead FBI investigator Peter Strzok texted his mistress/girlfriend, FBI lawyer Lisa Page, in August 2016. One FBI agent labeled Trump supporters as "retarded" and declared "I'm with her" [Hillary Clinton]. Another FBI

employee texted that “Trump’s supporters are all poor to middle class, uneducated, lazy POS.” One FBI lawyer texted that he was “devastated” by Trump’s election and declared “Viva la Resistance!” and “I never really liked the Republic anyway.” The same person was the “primary FBI attorney assigned to [the Russian election-interference] investigation beginning in early 2017,” the IG noted.

A real investigation

The IG report shows how unjustified secrecy and arbitrary power helped ravage the credibility of Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign and the FBI, and it spurred predictable demands that the FBI must behave in a strictly nonpartisan manner. That is an ideal that is likely to be realized nowhere except in newspaper editorials. The sweeping discretionary power the FBI captures from enforcing thousands of federal criminal laws is destined to be abused.

The first step to reining in the FBI is to open the agency’s files. Oversight is often a mirage, thanks to FBI spurning of congressional subpoenas and other information demands. Federal judges have been riled by FBI false testimony and withholding of evidence in major

court cases ranging from Ruby Ridge and Waco, to the Orlando Pulse massacre and the Bundy Ranch showdown. The FBI has perennially exempted itself from the Freedom of Information Act.

It has been more than 40 years since a Senate committee (headed by Frank Church) had the gumption and the sway to reveal the stunning details and breadth of FBI misconduct. It is time for another independent investigation with the courage and the clout to compel full disclosure from the most powerful domestic government agency. Investigators should receive all the crowbars they need to pry open FBI records.

**Federal judges have been riled by
FBI false testimony and
withholding of evidence in major
court cases.**

Democracy is a mirage when governments blindfold citizens. Fifty-four years ago, the Supreme Court declared that “one person, one vote” is the law of the land. But, as the IG report is likely to show, the new de facto standard for American elections is “one agency, one veto” — at least regarding bureaucrats’ right to pull strings to favor a candidate.

The Founding Fathers never intended a secret police force to be an independent fourth branch of the federal government. As James Madison warned in 1788, “Wherever the real power in a Government lies, there is the danger of oppression.” And as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wisely warned in 2012, “Lack of transparency eats away like a cancer at the trust people should have in their government.”

James Bovard is a policy advisor to The Future of Freedom Foundation

and is the author of a new ebook, Freedom Frauds: Hard Lessons in American Liberty, published by FFF, Public Policy Hooligan, Attention Deficit Democracy, and eight other books

NEXT MONTH:
“Karl Marx and the Great Socialist Revival”
by James Bovard

And what of the old-fashioned idea of Christian charity? Once, it was a function of the church to minister to the needs of the genuinely poor and sick. One of the worst by-products of state welfarism has been the paralysis of our impulse toward charity. For not only has the state usurped this function of the church, and seized our means to be charitable, it has stolen our will to be charitable, too.

— Anna Dillenberg

Efficiency Experts for the Welfare State

by *Laurence M. Vance*



Bordered by two oceans, encompassing 3.8 million square miles, and populated by more than 325 million people, the United States is a vast country. But although the United States is not yet a cradle-to-grave welfare state like many European countries, it is also a vast welfare state.

There are in the United States about 80 means-tested welfare programs. These are programs that provide benefits or payments on the basis of the beneficiary's income or assets. U.S. welfare programs provide cash, food, housing, utility subsidies, medical care, and social services to poor, disabled, and lower-income Americans. Total annual spending on these programs is more than \$1 trillion, with more than 75 percent of the funding

coming from the federal government. Welfare continues to be the fastest-growing part of government spending. The United States spends about sixteen times as much on welfare as it spent in the 1960s, yet the federal poverty rate remains nearly unchanged.

Welfare programs

More than 5 million low-income households in the United States receive federal rental assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. Most recipients of federal housing assistance pay 30 percent of their adjusted income toward rent. The government pays the rest of the rent up to a certain amount.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP [formerly known and still referred to as food stamps]) is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Recipients of food-stamp benefits receive a deposit on an EBT card each month that can be used only for prepackaged food items. Although SNAP is a federal program, it is operated by the 50 states. Today, about 13 percent of the population is on food stamps.

Medicaid is government-funded health care for poor Americans

of any age and people with certain disabilities. It is the largest federal domestic program (after Social Security and Medicare) and the primary source of health-insurance coverage for low-income populations and nursing-home long-term care. Medicaid is jointly financed by the federal government and the states but designed and administered by the states within federal guidelines. Medicaid covers more than 70 million Americans at an annual cost of almost \$600 billion.

The most egregious of the means-tested welfare programs is the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, which replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in 1996. The TANF program distributes cash directly to welfare recipients to spend however they please. States receive block grants from the federal government to design and operate TANF programs. In an average month, approximately 3.5 million Americans receive TANF benefits. The majority of poor families with children receive some form of cash assistance from the government.

Other means-tested welfare programs include the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); the Children's Health

Insurance Program (CHIP); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Head Start; Healthy Start; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); the National School Lunch Program (NSLP); the School Breakfast Program (SBP); the Special Milk Program (SMP); the Elderly Nutrition Program; the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP); subsidized low-income phone service; and Pell grants for college students.

Some welfare programs aren't means-tested at all, such as Unemployment Compensation, which is overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor and administered by the states. It provides "unemployment benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own, and meet certain other eligibility requirements."

The TANF program distributes cash directly to welfare recipients to spend however they please.

Other welfare programs are not generally recognized as such — such as Medicare and Social Security — because they are funded by payroll taxes. But in neither case does the amount of taxes collected fully pay for the program. There is also absolutely no relation between the

amount of taxes paid and the amount of benefits received. To those should be added refundable tax credits, which give people tax “refunds” of money that they never paid in.

Welfare reform

Back in April, Donald Trump signed the Executive Order Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility. Among other things, it states that “it shall be the policy of the Federal Government to reform the welfare system of the United States,” “reduce the size of bureaucracy,” “streamline services to promote the effective use of resources,” “reduce wasteful spending by consolidating or eliminating Federal programs that are duplicative or ineffective,” “enforce work requirements that are required by law,” and “strengthen requirements that promote obtaining and maintaining employment in order to move people to independence.” The executive order directs the secretaries of the departments of the Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Education to

- review any public assistance programs of their re-

spective agencies that do not currently require work for receipt of benefits or services, and determine whether enforcement of a work requirement would be consistent with Federal law and the principles outlined in this order.

- review any public assistance programs of their respective agencies that do currently require work for receipt of benefits or services, and determine whether the enforcement of such work requirements is consistent with Federal law and the principles outlined in this order.

Trump signed the Executive Order Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) applauded the president’s executive order: “Combining work requirements with work supports is an effective strategy for helping Americans move from welfare into the labor force.” The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank headquartered in Washington, D.C., maintained that the president was “right” to address the pressing

issue of welfare reform and offered “four specific actions the Trump administration and Congress” could take, including strengthening work requirements, “to achieve the president’s objectives and ensure the welfare system helps the people it serves rather than hurting them.”

Also back in April, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) secretary and former Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson announced a new plan that would require Americans receiving federal housing assistance to contribute more of their income toward rent and give public-housing authorities permission to impose work requirements on tenants. HUD proposed increasing the minimum rent paid by rental-assistance beneficiaries, excluding those 65 and older and those with disabilities, from \$50 to \$150. Carson said the “current model of public housing is unsustainable, in both dollars and common sense.” The current system creates “perverse incentives, including discouraging these families from earning more income and becoming self-sufficient.” Revamping rental policies would give property owners, housing authorities, and residents a system that is “simpler, less invasive and more transparent.” A month later, Carson

backed off on HUD’s plan to triple the minimum rent paid by rental assistance beneficiaries because the proposal to increase the minimum rent was no longer “urgent,” owing to a congressional increase in the HUD budget.

Changes were needed in the bill to create more “effective” and “reasonable” work requirements for the food-stamp program.

The initial farm bill (H.R.2) released in April by the House Agriculture Committee sought to reform the food-stamp program by encouraging persons capable of working to work or participate in other activities in order to receive food-stamp benefits. The Heritage Foundation didn’t think the reforms went far enough and recommended five steps Congress could take to encourage work in the food-stamp program. Changes were needed in the bill in order to create more “effective” and “reasonable” work requirements for the food-stamp program. The former administrator of New York’s food-stamp program, who is now a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), another conservative D.C. think tank, believes that the significant flaw of the food-stamp program is

that it “does not sufficiently emphasize work.” He praises the farm bill for helping to improve the food-stamp program “by encouraging work and earnings to fight poverty at its roots.” The bill’s “reforms are a good way to help people in need find and retain employment” and “are an important step toward realizing SNAP’s proper mission as an antipoverty program.”

“A work requirement would help states focus their limited resources on the truly needy.”

At the beginning of the year, the Trump administration issued new guidelines through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that allow states to impose work requirements for able-bodied persons to receive Medicaid. It followed interest in Medicaid work requirements by House Republican lawmakers from different factions and several Republican governors. “The Medicaid expansion has created a perverse incentive for states to provide benefits to able-bodied adults at the expense of the elderly, the blind, and the disabled,” said Rep. Gary Palmer (R-Ala.). “A work requirement would help states focus their limited resources on the truly needy.” Conservatives are also upset

that judges have overturned some state bans on Medicaid’s covering transgender medical procedures.

The TANF program was reauthorized in 2006. Since 2010, it has been kept operating by continuing resolutions. In May, after the House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means released a discussion draft to reauthorize the program, Angela Rachidi, a research fellow with AEI, authored an article on the program (“A Way Forward on TANF”) in which she maintained that “it’s time to fix the things that have not worked well in TANF, and strengthen those that have.” Although she praised the “key positive changes” proposed by the House Ways and Means TANF discussion draft for its “positive improvements,” she also expressed concern that the “lack of evidence to support change in work activities,” “lack of research support,” and “outcome measures” were not “enough to hold states accountable.” She concluded that the discussion draft “is a good starting place to re-focus TANF on employment and make many needed changes to the law.”

The Republican-controlled Congress last year passed a joint resolution (H.J.Res.42) “disapproving the rule submitted by the Department

of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment-compensation applicants.” This legislation makes it tougher for applicants to qualify for unemployment-compensation benefits by making it easier for states to require drug testing for benefit recipients.

Republicans want to save and preserve Medicare and Social Security. According to the latest Republican Party platform,

We intend to save Medicare by modernizing it, empowering its participants, and putting it on a secure financial footing.

As the party of America’s future, we accept the responsibility to preserve and modernize a system of retirement security forged in an old industrial era beyond the memory of most Americans. Current retirees and those close to retirement can be assured of their benefits. Of the many reforms being proposed, all options should be considered to preserve Social Security.

The GOP’s new tax-reform plan increases the amount of refundable tax credits. Republicans are more concerned about eliminating the complexity, fraud, and improper

payments in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program than in eliminating the program itself.

Welfare tests

Although most welfare programs are means-tested, there are some other tests that welfare should be subjected to: the Constitution test, the government test, and the market test. Is welfare constitutional? Is providing welfare the proper role of government? Is the free market able to provide for those in need?

There are other tests that welfare should be subjected to: the Constitution test, the government test, and the market test.

The Constitution grants to Congress the power to do only about thirty things. Most of those powers are listed in the 18 paragraphs found in Section 8 of Article I on the legislative branch. Elsewhere in the Constitution, Congress is given the authority to do very little. Everything else is reserved to the states — even without the addition of the Bill of Rights and its Tenth Amendment. As James Madison, the father of the Constitution, explained in *Federalist* No. 45, “The powers delegated by the proposed

Constitution to the Federal Government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State Governments are numerous and indefinite.” As much as the majority of Americans may wish it so, the Constitution does not authorize the federal government to institute welfare programs, operate welfare programs, fund welfare programs, or give the states block grants to operate welfare programs.

In a free society, the only possible legitimate functions of government are defense, judicial, and policing activities.

In a free society, the only possible legitimate functions of government are defense, judicial, and policing activities. As libertarian theorist Doug Casey has explained, “Since government is institutionalized coercion — a very dangerous thing — it should do nothing but protect people in its bailiwick from physical coercion. What does that imply? It implies a police force to protect you from coercion within its boundaries, an army to protect you from coercion from outsiders, and a court system to allow you to adjudicate disputes without resorting to coercion.” But as he points out, “the U.S. Government is only

marginally competent in providing services in those three areas. Instead, it tries to do everything else.”

There is no justification for any government action beyond keeping the peace, prosecuting and punishing those who initiate violence against person or property, providing a forum for dispute resolution, and constraining those who would attempt to interfere with people’s peaceful actions. It is not the proper role of government to administer welfare, provide public assistance, fight poverty, maintain a safety net, have entitlement programs, ensure that everyone receives a guaranteed basic income, assist the disabled, create jobs, aid the needy, help the disadvantaged, or subsidize anyone’s wages, housing, or health care. In a free society, there is simply no justification for any government action beyond keeping the peace, prosecuting and punishing those who initiate violence against person or property, providing a forum for dispute resolution, and constraining those who would attempt to interfere with people’s peaceful actions.

There is no question that, as Doug Casey has also said, “Everything that needs doing can and will be done by the market, by entrepreneurs who fill the needs of other

people for a profit.” But the market can also allocate resources to those in need. It is well known that lawyers do pro bono work. But generosity is a hallmark of Americans in general. According to the Giving USA Foundation, “Americans gave \$410.02 billion to charity in 2017, crossing the \$400 billion mark for the first time.” And “giving by individuals represented 70 percent of total giving.” When a natural disaster strikes somewhere in the world, Americans regularly open their wallets and purses.

Government charity crowds out genuine charity. Americans would no doubt give more of their money to individuals and charitable organizations if Uncle Sam weren't so generous with the taxpayers' money. All Americans should be able to keep the entirety of the fruits of their labors and give or not give to those in need as they see fit. But charity must be voluntary. A free society includes the freedom to be generous or stingy, benevolent or miserly, charitable or uncharitable. But that is up to each individual American to decide.

When it comes to the tests of the Constitution, the proper role of government, and the free market, welfare fails all three tests.

Republicans and conservatives

Because welfare is clearly unconstitutional, because it is an illegitimate function of government, and because charity can be provided by the free market, what are we to make of Republican and conservative welfare-reform plans? The conclusion is inescapable: Republicans and conservatives are efficiency experts for the welfare state. They may talk about the Constitution, limited government, and the free market, but that's all it is: just talk.

Government charity crowds out genuine charity.

The problem with welfare programs is not that they need to have work requirements, more restrictions, drug testing, or lower subsidies and be reformed, modernized, more effective, and more efficient. The problem with welfare is simply that it is immoral to take money from some Americans and give it to other Americans.

Republicans and conservatives have no philosophical objection to the existence of any welfare program. Their attitude toward welfare is the same as their attitude toward government grants, programming by NPR, and actions undertaken by

Planned Parenthood. It is only when grant money is doled out for outrageous things, NPR promotes progressive causes, or Planned Parenthood performs abortions that Republicans and conservatives get upset.

Republicans and conservatives are welfare statist just like Democrats and progressives.

Republicans and conservatives are welfare statist just like Democrats and progressives. They all believe that government should take money from some Americans and redistribute it to other Americans, after it is filtered through the government bureaucracy.

Libertarians

In contrast to Republicans and conservatives there are the libertarians. They believe that as long as a man doesn't infringe upon the liberty of others by committing, or threatening to commit, acts of fraud, theft, aggression, or violence against their person or property, the government should leave him alone to pursue his own happiness, engage in commerce, make his own choices, take part in economic enterprises, keep all of the fruits of his labor, and accumulate wealth — all

without license, permission, regulation, or interference from the state.

Libertarians reason that —

- It is immoral for the government to redistribute wealth.
- No one is entitled to receive welfare benefits no matter what his situation or how much he needs the money.
- It is wrong to take money from those who work and give it to those who don't.
- “The rich” have no legal obligation to help “the poor,” no matter how much money some government bureaucrat or private busybody thinks that “the rich” ought to hand over.
- If welfare programs had work requirements, more restrictions, drug testing, and lower subsidies, they would still be unconstitutional.
- If welfare programs were reformed, modernized, more effective, and more efficient they would still be illegitimate.
- If welfare were given only to those who “deserved” it, it would still be immoral.
- Charity should always be private and voluntary.

Libertarians alone consistently maintain that providing welfare of any kind is an unconstitutional and illegitimate function of government. Therefore, no Americans whatsoever — whether they are single mothers, pregnant, children, hungry, disabled, sick, elderly, unemployed, disadvantaged, or poor — should receive any welfare benefits from the government of any kind or for any reason. The government has no resources of its own. Everything it has to give to some Americans has first been involuntarily transferred out of the pockets, purses, and bank accounts of other Americans.

The simple difference between Republicans and conservatives and libertarians when it comes to welfare is that Republicans and conservatives want to make the welfare

state more efficient and libertarians want to dismantle it. Who, then, are the real believers in the Constitution, limited government, and the free market?

Laurence M. Vance is a columnist and policy advisor for The Future of Freedom Foundation, an associated scholar of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, and a columnist, blogger, and book reviewer at LewRockwell.com. Send him email: lmvance@laurencemvance.com. Visit his website at: www.vancepublications.com.

NEXT MONTH:
“Canons of Libertarianism”
by Laurence M. Vance

Instead of liberty, the favorite watchword [has become] liberation. Under this banner march the tyrannies of our time, from Soviet Russia with its wars of national liberation to the kaleidoscope of coercive political programs in America which invoke the mirage of liberation. The twentieth century has been a century of liberation — of a war on freedom fought in the name of freedom.

The irony of America's present course is that in the name of freedom from restraints, every source of independent power and morality is being undermined; in the name of freedom from work, want, and scarcity, the constitutional framework of liberty is being dismantled, attacked, and perverted past recognition. Beyond the irony stands the very real tragedy that in the name of freedom we are being led inexorably toward oppression and slavery.

— Bruce D. Porter

The Sanctifying of Plunder

by Leonard E. Read



The law ... has converted plunder into a right, in order to protect plunder.

— Frédéric Bastiat

The commandment “Thou shalt not steal” would be far better kept today had not theft assumed various disguises under which its practice has been generally sanctified. The gilding of an evil gives it a virtuous face — a Mr. Hyde’s ugliness covered by a comely Dr. Jekyll mask. Why such subterfuge? To be thought of as a thief by others or to so regard oneself is utterly revolting to all but stunted mentalities; so, we try to sanctify our plunder!

The sanctification of plunder is as old as the history of man. If thievery was indeed the first labor-saving device, it was developed out

of sheer ignorance. Survival is a laudable objective; therefore, if thievery is thought to be the only means to that good end, it must perforce be good. Thus is plunder sanctified by those who know no better.

Many tribal societies have practiced plunder, raiding their neighbors, taking home all the loot they could garner. But we can hardly be critical of them without criticizing ourselves. Perhaps no other book has more wisdom between its covers than the Holy Bible. Yet we find written there about twenty-three centuries ago, “Men do not despise a thief, if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.” This was written centuries later than “Thou shalt not steal.” How can any practice be more sanctified than by biblical endorsement! However, we must understand the times lest we render too harsh a judgment.

Move on another fifteen centuries to St. Thomas Aquinas:

The superfluities of the rich belong by right to the poor.... To use the property of another, taking it secretly in case of extreme need, cannot, properly speaking, be characterized as theft.

Seven centuries ago, at the time of Aquinas, who were the rich? They were plunderers, the feudal lords who lived off the serfs — the poor. In all justice, what the lords possessed belonged less to them than to the serfs from whom they had taken it. Considering the politico-economic darkness in medieval times, it is understandable how a religious leader might sanctify plunder by those who had been plundered. The axiom “Thou shalt not steal” was but an ancient flash of light with no sustaining source of energy.

There is no need for further illustrations of plunder sanctified. Every age and all civilizations abound with examples of this primitive trait of gilding evil that it may appear virtuous, a weakness which prevails to this day. There were some excuses in times past, prior to a knowledge of free-market phenomena. But what of the present? How do we now sanctify plunder?

Today, whichever way the majority votes is generally conceded to be the criterion for what’s right and wrong. Once this nonsensical foundation of morality is accepted — approval by the majority — plunder is legalized and thus sanctified. Legislation, being a collective action, leaves hardly anyone with a sense of

guilt. Why? The evil is depersonalized. Comparable is the mob that hangs Joe Doakes. The mob did it! The truth? Each of the lynchers committed the murder precisely as each person who is a party to legal plunder is guilty. Yet, the collective action affords each participant a false sense of absolution.

There is required of you and me a far better understanding of the freedom philosophy than we now possess.

Legal plunder in the U.S.A. today, in dollar amount, is many thousands of times greater than, say, at the time of Aquinas or even during the lives of our Founding Fathers. In those days someone stole a pig or chicken or some other small item, not because thieves were more scrupulous then than now, but simply because no one owned very much. However, my guess is that the proportion of all private property which is stolen or plundered is substantially the same today as in the past. What has changed, aside from the method of sanctification? The total quantity of property owned is thousands of times greater now than before. There is incomparably more to plunder, that’s all. The propensity to

plunder — to live off the fruits of the labor of others — appears to be as persistent a trait as it is evil. In the light of free market, private ownership, limited government practices with their moral and spiritual antecedents — of which the American people have had a remarkable sampling — how is this possible? I am now beginning to understand. This way of life has been but a flash of enlightenment, as dimly perceived as “Thou shalt not steal.” The freedom philosophy, with but few exceptions, is no better understood than was the commandment against theft of more than thirty centuries ago. No intellectual muscle in either case, no sustaining force. With few exceptions, the masses of people in this and other “advanced” countries have not correlated the fantastic outburst of creative energy with the practice of freedom. José Ortega y Gasset pinpoints this failure:

The world which surrounds the new man from his birth does not compel him to limit himself in any fashion, it sets up no veto in opposition to him; on the contrary, it incites his appetite, which in principle can increase indefinitely. Now it turns out — and this is

most important — that this world of the XIXth and early XXth centuries not only has the perfections and the completeness which it actually possesses, but furthermore suggests to those who dwell in it the radical assurance that to-morrow it will be still richer, ampler, more perfect, as if it enjoyed a spontaneous, inexhaustible power of increase.... They believe in this as they believe the sun will rise in the morning. The metaphor is an exact one. For, in fact, the common man, finding himself in a world so excellent, technically and socially, believes it has been produced by nature, and never thinks of the personal efforts of highly endowed individuals which the creation of this new world presupposed. Still less will he admit the notion that all these facilities still require the support of certain difficult human virtues, the least failure of which would cause the rapid disappearance of the whole magnificent edifice.

Is there a remedy? Yes, but the price gives the appearance of being too high. First, there is required of

you and me a far better understanding of the freedom philosophy than we now possess and, to top it off, brilliant explanations of its efficacy. In a word, show the correlation between the abundant life and freedom so attractively that others are bound to take heed. Actually, this is not a high price — it is the very least we should do for ourselves, if not for others. Second, let us begin to call this practice of “robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul” by its right name: legalized plunder. Frédéric Bastiat gave us the measuring rod more than a century ago in *The Law*:

See if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. *See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime.* [Italics added] This question of legal plunder must be settled once and for all, and there are only three ways to settle it:

1. The few plunder the many.
2. Everybody plunders everybody.
3. Nobody plunders anybody.

We must make our choice among limited plunder, universal plunder, and no plunder. The law can follow only one of these three.

Finally, there must be a recognition that might — majority rule — does not make right. Counting noses is no way to decide moral, ethical, or economic matters. This accomplished, plunder will lose its legal backing and, thus, its sanctification.

Let the law defend the rightful owner of property rather than the thief. Let freedom prevail!

Leonard Read (1898–1983) was founder and president of The Foundation for Economic Education. This is an excerpt from his book Castles in the Air.

Socialists Masquerading as Liberals

by James Cook



The *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* (a left-wing newspaper) featured a quotation on the Sunday editorial page that claims that without intensive regulation “capitalism is a menace to society.” From the end of the Civil War in the United States to World War I federal government regulations barely existed. This laissez-faire capitalism catapulted living standards upward and generated a host of new products and services that fostered the good life in America. At the same time, unbridled capitalism eliminated starvation within the United States and greatly extended lifetimes. Capitalism and progress are synonymous. Socialism and starvation are also synonymous.

Nor is it capitalism that has murdered 200 million people. It’s the socialist philosophies promoted by the radical Left. The liberals in this country adored Fidel Castro and the murderous Che Guevara. They are having a tough time swallowing Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela and they avoid trying to explain why socialism doesn’t work there. The Left never learns from real-life events.

Liberals like to claim they are not socialists. However, they want the government to run things and control the free-market system. Unfortunately, there is no halfway between capitalism and socialism. There is only a gradual transition from capitalism to socialism. The mixed economy is a slippery slope to big government and collectivism.

The great economist Ludwig von Mises stated it succinctly:

Capitalism is essentially a system of mass production for the satisfaction of the needs of the masses. It pours a horn of plenty upon the common man. It has raised the average standard of living to a height never dreamed of in earlier years. It has made accessible to millions of people enjoyments which a few generations ago

were only within the reach of a small elite.... Capitalism needs neither propaganda nor apostles. Its achievements speak for themselves. Capitalism delivers the goods.... The issue is always the same: the government or the market. There is no third solution.... A society that chooses between capitalism and socialism does not

choose between two social systems; it chooses between social cooperation and the disintegration of society. Socialism is not an alternative to capitalism; it is an alternative to any system under which men can live as human beings.

James Cook is the founder of Investment Rarities Incorporated.

I am quite prepared to concede that public peace is a great good, yet I do not want to forget that every nation that has ended in tyranny has come to that end by way of good order. It certainly does not follow from this that people should scorn public peace, but neither should they be satisfied with that and nothing more. A nation that asks nothing of government but the maintenance of order is already a slave in the depths of its heart; it is a slave of its well-being, ready for the man who will put it in chains.

— Alexis de Tocqueville

The Boomerang Effect

by *Matthew Harwood*

Tyranny Comes Home: The Domestic Fate of U.S. Militarism by Christopher J. Coyne and Abigail R. Hall (Stanford University Press, 2018); 264 pages.



On the evening of July 7, 2016, Micah Xavier Johnson turned a protest against police brutality into a bloodbath. Angry at police killings of black men nationwide, the Army reservist and Afghan war veteran decided to take matters into his own hands. Across four and a half hours, Johnson terrorized downtown Dallas, murdering five officers and injuring nine more and two civilians. Dallas Police Chief David Brown saw no other option, and in the early

morning hours of July 8, 2016, something unprecedented happened: an American police force killed an armed suspect with an explosive-rigged robot.

The use of the bomb robot to kill Johnson once again raised questions about the continuing militarization of American policing. As Peter Singer, a fellow at the New America Foundation, told the *Guardian*, the only other time he remembers something similar happening was overseas sometime in the early days of the “war on terrorism.” A soldier he interviewed had turned a MARC-bot into a weaponized unmanned ground vehicle — in other words, a weaponized drone. “They duct-taped an explosive and you can figure out the rest. You can see the parallels here,” Singer said, referring to Johnson’s extraordinary demise.

What happened in Dallas that summer night in 2016 is a perfect illustration of what Christopher J. Coyne of George Mason University and Abigail R. Hall of the University of Tampa call “the boomerang effect” in their disturbing book, *Tyranny Comes Home: The Domestic Fate of U.S. Militarism*. According to Coyne and Hall, the boomerang effect is how U.S. militarism abroad returns home to infect domestic politics and policy.

For the boomerang effect to occur, argue Coyne and Hall, several domestic factors must be in place. When a country such as the United States is perpetually at war, the national government centralizes power to the detriment of state and local government, since foreign policy is the national government's domain. Bureaucracy grows — just think of the formation of the national-security state after World War II or its expansion after 9/11, particularly in the form of the Department of Homeland Security, the largest cabinet department after Defense and Veterans Affairs.

A toxic mixture of fear and nationalism gains a stranglehold over many citizens, who are willing to pay any price to be kept safe from the hordes — fascists, communists, terrorists — who want to destroy our way of life. The separation of powers breaks down as judges defer to the state on national-security grounds and legislators worry about seeming unpatriotic, particularly with service members' lives on the line overseas, if they question the jingoism emanating from the White House or their colleagues in Congress.

“With the door open for the expansion of government power,” write Coyne and Hall, “the methods of social control originally devel-

oped for use abroad are able to be imported for domestic use.” They argue that this happens through three complementary, if over-academically named, channels.

Social control

The first is the “human-capital channel,” which means that intervention requires certain kinds of people to carry it out. They must be social engineers, think the neoconservatives of the Bush administration in Iraq, believing they can manipulate an entire society and push them toward the intervenors' goals. They must have a sense of superiority, generally a belief that they know what's right for other societies. This arrogance, combined with a lack of compassion for the target population, allows the interventionists to engage in horrifying deeds — surveillance, incarceration, torture, mass killings — in the belief that the ends justify the means. Finally there is the belief in state control as the only proven method of civilizing people.

There is the belief in state control as the only proven method of civilizing people.

The bureaucrats and service members then come home from

their imperial missions, which Coyne and Hall describe as the “organizational dynamics channel,” and find jobs in the defense sector or law enforcement, where they can ply their unique tradecraft. As Coyne and Hall note, “[Of] the 108 three- and four-star generals who retired between 2009 and 2011, 70 percent accepted jobs with private defense contractors or consultants.” Police departments and other law-enforcement organizations often provide preference points to applicants with military service. Currently one out of five police officers is a veteran, according to the Marshall Project, a disconcerting fact, considering service members are taught to be killing machines, not peace officers.

Dragnet surveillance, militarized policing, drones, and torture have all found their way back home.

The last related channel is the “physical-capital channel,” which is an academic way of saying war breeds technological innovations that make it easier to control and kill people. The innovations are then imported home for use against the domestic population. Examples abound, but nothing highlights it better than the iconic photo from

the Ferguson protests in August 2014, where a police sniper, perched on a mine-resistant vehicle, trained his rifle sights on a protester.

Coyne and Hall round out the book by showing how the boomerang effect explains how dragnet surveillance, militarized policing, drones, and torture have all found their way back home to the United States. In each section, Coyne and Hall connect the dots, unearthing the fascinating history that gives their theory explanatory power.

The U.S. surveillance state, according to Coyne and Hall, is a direct outgrowth of the United States’ criminal war against the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. In 1900, the Division of Military Information, under Capt. Ralph Van Deman, was established to produce actionable intelligence on Filipino insurgents to destroy the resistance to U.S. occupation. In 1917, Deman would helm the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), which operated domestically to protect the U.S. government from German spies and saboteurs during World War I. The MIS would expand, becoming the Military Intelligence Division (MID).

One MID unit, known as MI-8, partnered with Western Union to surveil communications coming

over the telegram company's domestic cables. In 1929, Secretary of State Henry Simpson shut down MI-8 because of Republican outrage over the government's surveillance apparatus. But its capabilities would live on through different organizations, such as the Signal Intelligence Service and the Armed Forces Security Agency, culminating in the creation of the National Security Agency in 1952.

Cops

The rest of Coyne and Hall's cases of domestic liberty lost revolve around police. It is not surprising that, like the creation of the U.S. surveillance state, the militarization of police can also be traced back to the U.S. occupation of the Philippines. To pacify the islands, the U.S. government created the Philippine Constabulary to police the population. Many of the veterans returned home and went into law enforcement, including August Volmer, who is known as the "father of modern policing." Volmer, note Coyne and Hall, believed police departments should be run like the Army.

Another veteran of the Philippine occupation was famed anti-war activist Gen. Smedley Butler. In 1924, Butler became Philadelphia's

newest police chief, and he immediately used what he had learned to raid speakeasies and other "'vice' enterprises" during Prohibition. His "methods and tactics honed abroad," write Coyne and Hall, "were brought home and employed to combat black markets resulting from alcohol prohibition, with U.S. citizens as the primary enemy."

The militarization of police can be traced back to the U.S. occupation of the Philippines.

Throughout the rest of the book, Coyne and Hall convincingly document how U.S. militarism has affected domestic law enforcement. There is the creation of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1967, the brainchild of former marine John Nelson, who modeled them on the Marine Corps' ultra-aggressive elite Force Recon unit to subdue rioters. Then there's the Pentagon's 1033 program, which supplies military-grade gear and weaponry to local police departments free of charge. The program, initially started in 1990 under another name to help law enforcement fight the war on drugs, has evolved to supply law enforcement with the tools they sup-

posedly need to fight the jihadist next door as the war on terrorism blurs the boundaries between where the battlefield begins and ends.

Finally, there are the military veterans who come home and become cops. While a good portion of these men and women can distinguish between warfare and domestic policing, Coyne and Hall note that even the International Association of Chiefs of Police is concerned that returning veterans use the tactics they learned overseas on American citizens and civilians. A battlefield mentality, as displayed by police in Ferguson four years ago, is a recipe for catastrophe as race relations in America continue to deteriorate.

Anti-militarism

Aside from chronicling the deleterious consequences of American imperialism on the home front, Coyne and Hall's big contribution is demonstrating how anti-imperialism and civil libertarianism are mutually reinforcing ideologies that need each other. Their thesis shows that civil libertarians don't have to worry only about wartime repression. The methods and technologies developed and perfected overseas to subdue foreign populations will eventually return to our shores, as if almost to restore karmic balance.

Coyne and Hall naturally try to sketch a way out of the boomerang effect. If Americans want to break the boomerang in two, they believe, we must rediscover or revitalize the country's proud anti-militarist tradition. They are no doubt correct, but I have no confidence that such a movement will arise any time soon.

Americans must rediscover or revitalize the country's proud anti-militarist tradition.

Many, if not most, Americans believe that the U.S. military fights "them" over "there" so that "we" don't have to fight them "here" on American shores, even though that belief doesn't withstand a shred of scrutiny. The belief, however, is the founding myth of Pax Americana, the laughable assertion that the United States does only what's necessary in defense of liberal norms and our very freedom. Recent events explode such fairy tales and clearly show why Americans aren't anywhere near giving up on empire.

Currently, the U.S. government supplies arms and intelligence to Saudi Arabia, which uses them to wage a criminal war against Yemen's civilian population. As I write this, the Saudi-United Arab Emirates coalition is planning to attack

Hodeida, a critical port city in Yemen, where the majority of international aid enters the country. This will only make the world's worst "humanitarian crisis" into an even worse horror show. As the *National Catholic Reporter* reports,

Eighty percent of Yemen's 29 million citizens rely on humanitarian assistance to survive. Eighteen million people have no reliable access to food. Eight and a half million people have no idea where their next meal will come from. One and a half million people are living on the brink of famine. Sixteen million people have no access to basic water or sanitation. The same number lack access to basic health care. In April, the country had nearly 1 million cases of cholera. Measles and malnutrition are devastating a generation of children.

If the attack goes as planned with American complicity, can we not expect a new generation of young Yemenis who want revenge against the United States for its financing of war crimes? And if a Yemeni terrorist were to successfully attack the United States, can we not

expect a more direct U.S. intervention in Yemen, cheered on by an American population also intent on revenge? Will this or other fronts in America's war on terrorism not produce a new generation of bureaucrats and service members dedicated to the discipline of social control, who will eventually come home and look for work in the national-security state or local law enforcement?

Modern-day Americans have sold their soul for empire, and we are all reaping what they have sown.

Unless America changes direction, blowback, the term coined by Chalmers Johnson for what happens when U.S. covert and illegal actions overseas detonate in our faces, combined with the boomerang effect, the concept described in the Coyne-Hall book, will continue to militarize our society until our civil liberties, already seriously eroded, are nothing more than parchment rights, and anti-imperialists and civil libertarians will continue to be sneered at as un-American and unpatriotic. Modern-day Americans have sold their soul for empire, and we are all reaping what they have sown, as Coyne and Hall show in *Tyranny Comes Home*.

Changing course is difficult, especially in a society in which so many people adore militarism and empire and believe that the U.S. government has a messianic duty to dominate and rule the world. But while difficult, moving in a different, more positive direction certainly isn't impossible.

Matthew Harwood is a writer living in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. His work has appeared in The American Conservative, the Guardian, Reason, TomDispatch, and others. He is managing editor at the American Civil Liberties Union.

There is no warrant in logic or morals for trying to place the authority of religion behind measures of social and economic collectivism. Indeed, there is a much stronger case for arguing that the sense of individual responsibility — which is a key indispensable factor in making it possible for the individual to distinguish between right and wrong — is best assured under a system in which the human being is mainly committed to his own care and required to make his own decisions.

— William Henry Chamberlin

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM FOUNDATION

Our work advancing freedom depends on the financial support we receive from people who share our commitment to the moral, philosophical, and economic principles of a free society. Since The Future of Freedom Foundation is a 501(c)(3) educational foundation, donations are tax-deductible.

.....

Donations can be made on our website

— www.fff.org/support —

or by calling us at 703-934-6101.

.....

Here are ways that you can support our work:

1. A donation, with check or credit card.
 2. A donation in any amount you choose by means of a recurring monthly charge to your credit card.
 3. A donation of stock, the full market value of the stock being tax-deductible.
 4. Naming The Future of Freedom Foundation as a beneficiary in your will or living trust, charitable gift annuity or trust, or life-insurance policy.
-

Over the years, planned giving has played an important role in sustaining our operations.

*Thank you for your support of our work
and your commitment to a free society!*



THE FUTURE
of
FREEDOM FOUNDATION

11350 Random Hills Road
Suite 800
Fairfax VA 22030

★★★

www.fff.org

fff@fff.org

Tel: 703-934-6101

Fax: 703-352-8678