



The Deep State's Triumph: 2024 and the Erosion of Liberty

We have become a nation adrift in a sea of government overreach, abuse and corruption.

The following is a sobering account of the challenges we faced in 2024, which were marked by the government's never-ending power grabs and relentless assaults on our civil liberties.

2024 saw a continued rise in government overreach and abuse of power. The militarization of police forces continued unabated, with local departments increasingly resembling extensions of the military. Schools, meant to be places of learning and growth, became more prison-like with the implementation of "safety" measures that criminalize minor infractions and create an environment of fear. The right to private property was further eroded, with the government increasingly empowered to seize assets under various pretexts. The plight of the homeless worsened, with cities criminalizing homelessness and implementing policies designed to make their lives even more difficult. Military veterans, once hailed as heroes, were increasingly treated with suspicion and subjected to surveillance.



John Whitehead

On almost every front this year, the government overreached and abused its powers.

With every new law enacted by federal and state legislatures, every new ruling handed down by government courts, and every new military weapon, invasive tactic and egregious protocol employed by government agents, we were reminded that in the eyes of the government and its corporate accomplices, "we the people" possess no rights except for that which the Deep State grants on an as-needed basis.

Surveillance eroded what little privacy we have left.

The Surveillance State grew even more pervasive. Facial recognition technology expanded into new areas of our lives, with vast amounts of our biometric data collected, often without our knowledge or consent, eroding our anonymity and enabling unprecedented tracking of our movements. Data breaches continued to expose the vulnerability of our personal information.

**Free speech continued to be under attack.**

Protest laws, free speech zones, and other restrictions made it more difficult for citizens to exercise their First Amendment rights. Social media companies, often in collusion with the government, engaged in censorship of viewpoints they deemed unacceptable. This online censorship creates an echo chamber and limits the free flow of information.

The influence of the Deep State and the military-industrial complex continued to grow.

Endless wars abroad drained the nation's resources while doing little to make Americans safer. The military-industrial complex's grip on almost every aspect of American life tightened.

The president became more imperial.

Although the Constitution invests the President with very specific, limited powers, in recent years, American presidents have claimed the power to completely and almost unilaterally alter the landscape of this country for good or for ill. The powers amassed by each successive president through the negligence of Congress and the courts—powers which add up to a toolbox of terror for an imperial ruler—empower whoever occupies the Oval Office to act as a dictator, above the law and beyond any real accountability. The presidency itself has become an imperial one with permanent powers.

The cost of endless wars drove the nation deeper into debt.

Policing the globe and waging endless wars abroad hasn't made America—or the rest of the world—any safer, but it has made the military industrial complex rich at taxpayer expense.

The courts failed to uphold justice.

Time and time again, the Supreme Court failed to right the wrongs being meted out by the American police state. A review of critical court rulings over the past decade or so, including some ominous ones by the U.S. Supreme Court, reveals a startling and steady trend towards pro-police state rulings by an institution concerned more with establishing order and protecting the ruling class and government agents than with upholding the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The rich got richer, and the poor went to jail.

Not content to expand the police state's power to search, strip, seize, raid, steal from, arrest and jail Americans for any infraction, no matter how insignificant, the courts continued their practice of jailing individuals who are unable to pay the hefty fines imposed by the American police state. These debtors' prisons play right into the hands of those who make a profit by jailing Americans. This is no longer a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." It is fast becoming a government "of the rich, by the elite, for the corporations," and its rise to power is predicated on shackling the American taxpayer to a debtors' prison guarded by a phalanx of politicians, bureaucrats and militarized police with no hope of parole and no chance for escape.

Police became even more militarized and weaponized.

Despite concerns about the government's steady transformation of local police into a standing military army, local police agencies continued to acquire weaponry, training and equipment suited for the battlefield. There are now reportedly more bureaucratic (non-military) government civilians armed with high-tech, deadly weapons than U.S. Marines.

Schools turned into prisons.

So-called school "safety" policies, which run the gamut from zero tolerance policies that punish all infractions harshly to surveillance cameras, metal detectors, random searches, drug-sniffing dogs,



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on December 30, 2024

school-wide lockdowns, active-shooter drills and militarized police officers, turned schools into prisons and young people into prisoners.

The government waged a renewed war on private property.

The battle to protect our private property has become the final constitutional frontier, the last holdout against our freedoms being usurped. We no longer have any real property rights. That house you live in, the car you drive, whatever money you manage to keep in your bank account after the government and its cronies have taken their first and second and third cut ... none of it is safe from the government's greedy grasp. At no point do you ever have any real ownership in anything other than the clothes on your back. Everything else can be seized by the government under one pretext or another (civil asset forfeiture, unpaid taxes, eminent domain, public interest, etc.).

In sum, 2024 was a disheartening year for those who cherish freedom.

Yet no matter who sits in the White House, politics won't fix a system that is broken beyond repair.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we are at our most vulnerable right now: the gravest threat facing us as a nation in 2025 is not extremism but despotism, exercised by a ruling class whose only allegiance is to power and money.

About John & Nisha Whitehead:

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His latest books [The Erik Blair Diaries](#) and [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) are available at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.



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