



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on September 20, 2013

Why NSA Surveillance Will Never Foil Mass Murders

The deputy director of the National Security Agency (NSA) must be a magician; in August, he made 53 planned but foiled terrorist attacks disappear.

In July, NSA director Keith Alexander claimed that the wholesale surveillance of American electronic communications had [“disrupted” 54 terrorist plots](#). Later, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Alexander’s deputy, John Inglis, [admitted that in reality only one such “plot” was thwarted](#) thanks to the bulk collection of phone records.



Given their pathological habit of lying — even under oath — it is impossible to know how many, if any, planned attacks on the United States have been avoided. We do know, however, that at least two mass killings described by the Obama administration or its mouthpieces as “domestic terrorism” have happened despite its assertion that the surveillance in keeping us safer.

The first of these atrocities was the Boston Marathon bombing that killed three and injured at least 260 others on April 15, 2013.

The latest such massacre occurred just days ago when decorated former Navy electrician Aaron Alexis killed 12 people and injured three others at an attack at the Washington Navy Yard in the nation’s capitol.

Today, despite promises that we have given up our fundamental liberties in exchange for security, there are 15 people dead, many more injured, and scores of families who must feel as if their sacred freedom was sacrificed in vain.

Did the federal government fail to prevent these tragedies because the NSA and other agencies were monitoring the wrong people? No. These evildoers slipped through the cracks of the surveillance because the federal government is watching everybody, and therefore the individual, legitimately dangerous cases, are going unnoticed.

Rather than devote its immeasurable resources to monitoring those with demonstrably threatening behavior giving rise to actionable “probable cause” as mandated by the [Fourth Amendment](#), the NSA watches everybody — including millions who go about their lives giving no reasonable doubt as to their innocence.

Paradoxically, the president and his congressional clique point to these acts of [“homegrown terrorism”](#) as pretexts for the expansion of the surveillance and the corresponding contraction of civil liberty.

Then, again, perhaps it is no paradox; perhaps the president’s push to collect every movement — virtual and real — under the never-blinking gaze of the federal government has nothing to do with safety at all.

Could it be that selling the necessity of the surveillance state and the accompanying loss of liberty is



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made proportionately easier as the number of “national tragedies” multiplies along with the number of victims?

After each of them, [President Obama addresses the nation](#) promising to bring the perpetrator to justice or to conduct a thorough investigation into how such an unthinkable act happened.

It is unlikely that any investigation, no matter how thorough, will ever discern how evil gets into the heart of man. The federal government is powerful, but it is not powerful enough to unravel the mysterious thoughts that cause a person to snap and commit cold-blooded murder.

What’s within everybody’s capacity to appreciate, however, is that despite secretly monitoring the blameless behavior of millions of Americans, the NSA has used none of this information to truly make this country safer, when that very thing was [purportedly within its power](#).

In the wake of these unconscionable massacres, there may yet be found something good. Perhaps the federal government’s failure to prevent these acts — whether purposeful or negligent — should be enough to convince a majority of Americans to stop buying the “liberty is the only currency that can be traded for safety” lie being told by so many of our elected leaders.

In the meantime, the government goes on abridging the freedom of speech, [prohibiting the free exercise of religion](#), [infringing on the right to keep and bear arms](#), [taking private property and enacting thousands of regulations restricting the legal use of it](#), forcing [Americans to purchase health insurance policies](#) and then [exempting themselves from that law’s economic ravages](#), all the while compounding the tyranny by breaking the back of the middle class with a crushing tax and debt burden that can never be repaid.

The answer to the constant assault on our constitutionally protected liberties is found in the Constitution itself. [The 10th Amendment](#) reserves to the states and to the people all powers not explicitly granted to the federal government. When state legislators begin en masse to appreciate the leverage this provision gives them, then states will once again be the bulwarks of liberty our Founding Fathers intended them to be. And, after the pendulum of power begins to sway back toward the people and the states, the federal government will find that the excuses for the exchange of invaluable liberty for illusory security no longer work.

Photo of response to Navy Shipyard shooting

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