



THE TROUBLE WITH SECRETS

The Foundation

"Arbitrary power is most easily established on the ruins of liberty abused to licentiousness." --George Washington

Editorial Exegesis

"Channelling Joan of Arc with a side of Henry David Thoreau's civil disobedience, Edward Snowden revealed his identity this week as a martyr on behalf of 'an existential threat to democracy.' ... His unlikely career path took him from community college washout to NSA security guard to Central Intelligence Agency IT specialist to consultant with the defense contractor Booz Allen



That's a lot of security clearances.

Hamilton. Only in America. Mr. Snowden maintains that he has 'no intention of hiding who I am because I know I have done nothing wrong.' He knows that's not true, as his pre-exposure flight from the U.S. reveals. His legal problem is that he accepted a security clearance that makes it a crime to disclose unauthorized national secrets. If he did discover surveillance abuses, he could have gone to the multiple layers of oversight including congressional committees. ... Mr. Snowden seems to understand his legal jeopardy, even if he calls it unjust, because he says he will seek political asylum, perhaps in Iceland. It is certainly instructive that the liberal-libertarian alliance opposing data-mining has adopted as a hero a man who flees to a Special Administrative Region of China to portray America as a totalitarian dystopia.

Perhaps he should try his luck with the Communist Party in Guangzhou. ... Though a recently hired consultant, Mr. Snowden evidently had wide access to sensitive documents including Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court rulings. The Government Accountability Office reports that 4.8 million federal employees and contractors hold clearances, without 'clearly defined policy' for determining which positions need them, leading to 'inconsistent and improper' designations. It's also time to heed the warning of the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan that the government keeps far too many secrets. Then perhaps it will be able to do a better job of protecting what really should be secret." --[Wall Street Journal](#)

Upright

"According to the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, a total of 642,831 people were approved for Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret clearances in FY 2010 alone. ... Even more amazing are the words immediately preceding that: 'The number of clearances approved could not be obtained for FY 2009.' So the same government that presumes the right to know my phone calls, my emails and my MasterCard purchases doesn't know how many security clearances it issued in a given year. The rationale given by defenders of this system over the last few days ... would seem to apply here: When 4 million people have security clearances, and another 1,800 people are getting new security clearances every day, the government doesn't even have time to comb through them before it lets them comb through you. ... One reason for the citizenry not to entrust its personal information to the government is that the big, bloated, blundering government is stupid enough to entrust it to Edward Snowden, as it was previously stupid enough to entrust it to Bradley Manning (the Wikileaks leaker)." --columnist Mark Steyn

"Barack Obama wasn't an average citizen before moving into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. He was a senator. He was on the Foreign Relations Committee and had access to classified information -- all the more reason to believe that he knew that the terror threat was not cynical 'fear mongering' by President Bush. ... [W]hen Bush engaged in data mining, he was 'undermining our constitution and our freedoms.' When Obama does it, he is 'striking the right balance' between security and freedom. ... The president assures us that 'no one is listening to our phone calls,' and that may be true. But this administration also assured us that no sweeping data collection on American citizens was going on, that the IRS was not unfairly singling out conservatives, that the Justice Department had not attempted to prosecute journalists, and that the Benghazi attack was the response to a video." --columnist Mona Charen

"Despite the massive amount of information the government is capable of gathering, the Tsarnaev brothers were still able to perpetrate a terrorist attack in Boston, even as the intelligence community had Russian intel on Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Terrorists were able to kill four Americans in Benghazi on the anniversary of September 11. Maj. Nidal Hasan was able to kill 13 and wound 32 of his fellow soldiers at Fort Hood, despite the fact that military officials were aware of his increasing radicalization and his exchanges with Anwar Awlaki. The common thread? Political correctness and willful blindness. ... [W]hat is needed is the balance that must be found between protecting American lives and protecting their rights. Part of that balance could be achieved by taking the Islamic nature of the threat far more seriously than the Obama administration does now." --columnist Arnold Ahlert

"Whenever an administration is caught, as it were, with its hand in the cookie jar, the chief executive wants to have plausible deniability. That's why he doesn't make it a habit to write a memo that reads: 'Dear IRS: I'm in the middle of a re-election campaign. Please do everything in your power to shut down the ability of conservative groups to raise money ... at least until November 7th. Much

appreciated. Regards from Michelle and the kids. See you at the Easter egg hunt. Sincerely, President Barack H. Obama.' Instead, what these guys do is have a trusted lieutenant like Valerie Jarrett or David Axelrod let it be known in the appropriate circles that the boss would like to see certain things take place, and then, with the cooperation of stooges like Attorney General Eric Holder or IRS attack dogs Doug Shulman and Lois Lerner, those things just miraculously happen. And not even the FBI can find an Obama fingerprint anywhere, not that they're likely to look too hard." --columnist Burt Prelutsky

Insight

"None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." --Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

"If I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible what was the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: 'Men had forgotten God; that is why all this has happened.'" --author and Russian dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008)

Demo-gogues

Indeed we do have problems: "[I]f people can't trust not only the executive branch but also don't trust Congress and don't trust federal judges to make sure that we're abiding by the Constitution, due process and Rule of Law, then we're going to have some problems here." --Barack Obama

Belly laugh of the week: "[I]f you talk to us [Democrats], it turns out we're pretty common-sense folks. We don't think government can do everything. We don't think that top-down solutions are the right way to go. We believe in the free market. We believe in a light touch when it comes to regulations. We don't want to tax all businesses out of business. But we do think that there's a role to play for government." --Barack Obama

She's got amnesia: "I don't remember saying that everybody in the country would have a lower

premium, because everybody in the country doesn't have health insurance. So how could it be lower?" -- Nancy Pelosi, rebutting reports of rising premiums thanks to ObamaCare

But just last year: "[E]verybody will have lower rates." --Nancy Pelosi, July 1, 2012

Nothing to see here: "Based on everything I've seen, the [IRS] case is solved. And if it were me, I would wrap this case up and move on to be frank with you." --Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD)

The BIG Lie: "The difference between this [NSA] program and the Bush program [is that] the Bush program was not sanctioned by law; this is pursuant to law. I think that's a very important distinction that some people don't draw, but they ought to draw." -- Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)



Dezinformatia

Principle? "I opposed [the Patriot Act] when Bush was president, I oppose it with President Obama being there. I trust President Obama, but it's a bad precedent 'cause he won't be president forever. I am opposed to government overreach and government infringing upon the privacy of citizens." --MSNBC's Al Sharpton

That's racist! "The IRS is being used in exactly the same way as they tried to use the president's birth certificate. You see, for Republicans like Darrell Issa, who knows something about arson, the IRS now

stands for something inflammatory. Those three letters are now on fire with political corruption and malfeasance, burning hot. ... And, despite the complete lack of any evidence linking the president to the targeting of tea party groups, Republicans are using it as their latest weapon in the war against the black man in the White House." --MSNBC's Martin Bashir

Total non sequitur: "[Rudy] Giuliani attacked POTUS last night for Benghazi so I am forced to remind Giuliani how many firefighters were killed on 9/11 because of him." --MSNBC's blowhard Lawrence O'Donnell

Willfully blind: "We actually don't have a problem with government debt, not yet. But, you know, people are worried about the rise. And of course, you can throw around big numbers. The fact of the matter is that the U.S. is a \$16 trillion a year economy and the numbers are not that overwhelming as they sound if you just give the raw numbers." --New York Times columnist Paul Krugman

Sycophants: "[L]ook at the glass half full for a minute. If Romney and Ryan had been elected, things would be so much worse. The president has the veto pen. ... [H]e's going to stop anything bad from happening." --MSNBC political analyst Jonathan Alter

Newspulper Headlines:

The Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations: "Woo! A Third of Americans Are Happy With the Economy -- and That's Good News" --NationalJournal.com

Out on a Limb: "Attorney General Eric Holder Is Not Up to the Task" --The Washington Post

Questions Nobody Is Asking: "Is Obama's Charm Offensive Over?" --RollCall.com

Bottom Story of the Day: "Hillary Clinton Sends Her First Tweet" --USA Today website

(Thanks to [The Wall Street Journal's James Taranto](#))

Village Idiots

Ya think? "I'm a little concerned that things have gotten a little -- a little out of whack. I think we can do a better job than we have. We can reform those regulations, reform those guidelines to better reflect that balance." --Attorney General Eric Holder

No doubt: "I'm proud of the work that I've done." -- Eric Holder

Non Compos Mentis: "I'm a Christian. But Muslims are misunderstood. Intentionally misunderstood. We should all be more like them. They make sense, especially with their children. There is no other group like the Black Muslims, who put so much effort into teaching children the right things, they don't smoke, they don't drink or overindulge in alcohol, they protect their women, they command respect. And what do these other people do? They complain about them, they criticize them. We'd be a better world if we emulated them." --Bill Cosby

Government investing for the win: "We're going to have a few more bankruptcies. Sometimes it'll be like Solyndra where you get 3 cents on the dollar. Others, it'll be 80 cents, or something like that. If you look at what got started and what became bankable, was it successful? Yes. We were more successful than Wall Street. So come on, guys." --former Secretary of Energy Steven Chu

Obama's America: "That fundamental American promise that so many of us grew up with -- that no matter where you start out, with hard work, you can build a decent life for yourself and an even better life for your kids -- that promise unfortunately is no longer within reach for too many families in our country." --Michelle Obama

Short Cuts

"At this point the only way to prevent people from hearing your conversations is to have them on MSNBC." --Rep. Steve Stockman (R-TX)

"We wanted a president that listens to all Americans -- now we have one. ... If Obama wants to put this snooping thing to good use, how about spying on the IRS next time they throw a \$4 million party." -- comedian Jay Leno

"Anyway, I'm putting 'NSA: Do not read this email' at the top of all my emails, because I assume there is some sort of opt out on this thing." --humorist Frank J. Fleming

"Congress heard testimony from real people who'd been targeted by the IRS because they'd sought exemption for their conservative groups. The IRS questions were so intrusive. The only organizations they didn't red flag were the ones that have a red flag." --comedian Argus Hamilton

"A new report just came out. It says someone close to the president knew about the IRS scandal and kept his mouth shut. In other words, we can rule out Joe Biden." --comedian Conan O'Brien

"Generally, when it comes to White House scandals such as Watergate and Iran-Contra, the relevant questions are what the president knew and when he knew it. However, when it comes to Obama ... the questions appear to be what did Obama not know and when did he not know it?" --columnist Burt Prelutsky

"Addressing Ohio State University's 2013 graduates last month, Obama mocked people who 'warn that tyranny is always lurking just around the corner.' As he explained in another speech a month earlier, 'suspicion about government' makes no sense because 'the government is us.' If so, the government should be replaced, because none of us knows what we're doing." --columnist Jacob Sullum

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis!

Nate Jackson for *The Patriot Post* Editorial Team