



IS SNOWDEN A PATRIOT OR A TRAITOR?

"Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. What is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?" --James Madison

Intense debate continues to rage over the legality, constitutionality and morality of the National Security Agency's data collection, as well as the status of Edward Snowden, the contract employee who leaked the documents to a British newspaper last week. Is he a Patriot or a traitor?



(Regarding the program itself, read Mark Alexander's essay, [It's the Profiling, Stupid!](#) One noteworthy addition to the essay is that the administration's surveillance seems to have excluded mosques, which are often jihadi programming centers. Target conservatives with the IRS, but don't mess with Muslims.)

Snowden is a 29-year-old former contract employee of Booz Allen Hamilton, which in turn provided technical service to the NSA. He also spent time previously working for the CIA. Though he worked as a computer technician in several positions with some level of security clearance, he never completed high school, dropped out of community college and overstated his pay grade at Booz Allen Hamilton by about 40 percent, calling into question his veracity. He

was also a Ron Paul donor who was reportedly disappointed to discover that Barack Obama didn't fix everything upon taking office.

He opined to the UK's Guardian newspaper, "I can't in good conscience allow the U.S. government to destroy privacy, Internet freedom and basic liberties for people around the world with this massive surveillance machine they're secretly building." No question he put his money where his mouth is, giving up a comfortable life with a (we suppose) secure job to stand for his convictions. Then again, he argues, "I have done nothing wrong." That must be why he fled to Hong Kong -- a rather ironic choice for a lover of "privacy, Internet freedom and basic liberties" given that the city is a Special Administrative Region of Communist China.

If conscience was such a problem, Snowden could have taken any number of other jobs. He also had much better options than the Leftmedia to make his concerns known. If not the chain of command in place within the NSA, he likely would have received a fair hearing by approaching a senator opposing the NSA's programs.

Perhaps something can be learned from Snowden's choice of Glenn Greenwald as the journalist to whom he would leak: Greenwald is a well-known hard-left attack dog and supporter of U.S. Army Pfc. Bradley Manning, currently facing court martial for having aided our enemies by leaking to WikiLeaks the largest trove of classified documents in U.S. history.

Snowden claims that he was motivated by a self-defined mission of "transparency," and that "I don't want the story to be about me." Yet he effectively made himself the issue anyway, rather than the potentially unconstitutional actions of the Obama administration. His leak also served as a diversion from the other scandals at the IRS, the Justice

Department and the State Department. In fact, Obama benefits from so many things happening at once because focus is scattered -- almost, one might say, as if through a PRISM (the name of the NSA's email-tracking program).

There are 4.8 million federal employees and contractors that hold security clearance. Some 1.2 million hold top-secret clearances -- and a third of those are private contractors. This amounts to unprecedented access to highly classified information, likely as a result of the pressure to have enough analysts to direct intel to the right folks. There is currently a push in Congress to move classified contractors to government positions where they might be better monitored -- you know, like IRS agents in Cincinnati.

No one seems to know (or at least no one is saying) how an employee in Snowden's position could gain access to the classified court orders he released to the media. Did he have help higher up? Either way, never mind algorithms to comb through the phone records of every American -- the NSA clearly has difficulty determining which of its own employees can or can't be trusted, even with a team dedicated to that task. And that's a big problem with the apparatus itself.

This Week's 'Braying Jackass' Award

"I don't have to listen to your phone calls to know what you're doing. If I know every single phone call you've made, I'm able to determine every single person you talk to; I can get a pattern about your life that is very, very intrusive. The real question here is what do they do with this information that they collect that does not have anything to do with al-Qa'ida? ... But this idea that ... we're going to trust the president and vice president of the United States that we're doing the right thing -- don't count me in on that." -- then-Senator Joe Biden in 2006

Don't count us in on trusting this president or vice president, either.



Government and Politics

News From the Swamp: What IRS Scandal?

Congressional Democrats are eager to wrap up the investigation into the IRS's abuses of power despite the mounting evidence against the agency. Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), ranking member of the House Oversight Committee, declared the investigation "solved," adding that "if it were up to me, I would wrap this case up and move on." After his staff conducted interviews with IRS employees in its the Cincinnati office, Cummings claims that a self-professed "conservative Republican" gave the order to apply extra scrutiny to Tea Party and other conservative groups seeking non-profit status. He was also quite adamant that his interviews proved that neither the Washington, DC, office nor the White House was involved, thus perpetuating the discredited belief that the scandal was the work of rogue employees.

Thankfully, it's not up to Cummings. And contrary to his claims, it seems that Holly Paz, the director of the IRS Rulings and Agreements office, [may have been fired](#). She worked in Washington, DC, and oversaw the agents involved in the scrutiny.

Meanwhile, FBI Director Robert Mueller doesn't seem to know anything about the FBI investigation -- who's in charge, how many people are on the case, where it stands -- [he knows nothing](#).

A taped 2012 phone conversation surfaced this week in which IRS agent Sherry Wan lectured a woman from the non-profit group Pro-Life Revolution about what her organization can and cannot do to receive a tax exemption, providing more evidence of the IRS's double-dealing with conservative groups. Wan told the woman to "keep your faith to yourself." This is fundamentally incorrect advice. Religious groups don't risk losing tax-exempt status by proselytizing -- just ask any church. The effort to discover who was giving the orders to persecute conservative groups at the IRS continues, but it seems clear that Wan was comfortable executing those orders.

Other IRS employees also were taking their direction from someplace outside the law in dealing with the National Organization for Marriage (NOM). Someone at the agency shared NOM's confidential tax information and donor information with the grossly misnamed Human Rights Campaign, which subsequently harassed and threatened NOM members and donors. NOM was able to prove conclusively through a computer forensics investigation that the leak occurred from within the IRS and therefore demanded redress. The IRS stonewalled by insisting that the law prohibiting disclosure of confidential tax information also prohibits disclosure of information about who disclosed that information. Such circular double-talk is worthy of the Soviet politburo.

Exit question amid the scandal: Why is the IRS [training with AR-15 rifles](#)?

Hope 'n' Change: ObamaCare Premiums and Death Panels

Recall the halcyon days of 2008 and 2009 when Barack Obama promised, "If you already have health insurance, the only thing that will change for you under this plan is the amount of money you will spend on premiums. That will be less." Good times, good times.

Along with just about every other lofty promise that came with the Unaffordable Care Act, this one has come crashing back to earth. A recent California [report](#) on premiums in the Golden State seemed to

show that costs would be lower than expected.

Actually, the truth is that premiums will cost as much as *146 percent more* than today. The reason is that California, as The Wall Street Journal [put it](#), "goosed the data" and "wasn't comparing apples to apples."

Meanwhile, the IRS issued a final ObamaCare regulation last week that assumes that the *cheapest* family health insurance plan will cost \$20,000 a year by 2016. And the House Energy and Commerce Committee just published a report called "The Looming Premium Rate Shock" detailing that some premiums could *quintuple*. In fact, [Politico reports](#), "Dozens of lawmakers and aides are so afraid that their health insurance premiums will skyrocket next year thanks to Obamacare that they are thinking about retiring early or just quitting."

As premiums rise, however, leftists are [bending over backwards](#) to explain that it's no big deal because everyone will be better off -- well, except for the millions paying more for insurance, or the 31 million people who [still won't have insurance](#). Funny, but we don't remember hearing any of that in 2009 or even 2012.

The BIG Lie

"Competition and choice are pushing down costs in the individual market, just like the law was designed to do." --Barack Obama just last week in California



Medicare Insider Trading

"Hundreds of federal employees were given advance word of a Medicare decision worth billions of dollars to private insurers in the weeks before the official announcement, a period when trading in the shares of those firms spiked," [reports The Washington Post](#). Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) said that his office found 436 Department of Health and Human Services employees who had knowledge of the decision as long as two weeks before it became public. How much money did those employees make by trading on this information?

The bottom line is that big government equals unaccountable government. That's exactly why ObamaCare was rammed through.

On the Immigration Front: Senate Clears Bill for Debate

The so-called Gang of Eight immigration reform bill passed 82-15 in a cloture motion this week. The bill is now open for floor debate, and supporters hope to pass it before the Independence Day recess. Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) failed to win passage of an amendment establishing a series of border security measures that would serve as metrics for proceeding with the legalization and eventual citizenship of the 11 million-plus illegal aliens currently in the country. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said Cornyn's plan would be too expensive and that it threatens the proposed structure for triggering various stages of legalization.

Marco Rubio of Florida made clear that for him border security is not conditional for legalization. He told Univision, "First comes the legalization. Then come the measures to secure the border. And then comes the process of permanent residence." To be sure, Rubio has always supported the idea of border security triggers only after the illegals have been granted legal status. It's just that in the early days of the debate, when he appointed himself the GOP's front man on immigration, he tried to straddle the fence between strengthening the border to prevent more illegal immigration and gaining votes among Hispanics. Now, seemingly comfortable in the belief

that he can afford to lose conservative support in exchange for a broader base of moderate voters in any future presidential run, Rubio is casting aside the double-speak.

New and Notable Legislation

The Senate passed a five-year, *half-trillion-dollar* farm bill this week, 66-27. The package includes agricultural projects for rural communities, international food aid, and environmental protections for certain lands. As we reported last week, a vast portion of the bill also funds the food stamp program, which now includes one of every seven Americans. Many subsidies for sugar, corn, wheat and a number of other major crops survived attempts to curb or eliminate them. The House will begin debating its own version of the bill this month.

Economy

Around the Nation: A Hybrid Penalty

North Carolina joined nearly a dozen states in considering a special fee on hybrid vehicles, reasoning that those owners aren't paying their fair share of gasoline tax proportionate to their usage of the roads. As contemplated in the state senate's version of next year's budget, hybrid owners would have a \$50 surcharge added to their annual registration fee, while plug-in vehicle owners would see a \$100 addition. The current base registration fee in North Carolina is \$28, although certain jurisdictions charge a few dollars more to subsidize local mass transit.

Hybrid owners, of course, feel unfairly penalized for saving the environment, but the state's rationale is sound. Moreover, while gasoline tax revenues have dropped seven percent from 2004 to 2010 according to figures from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the cost of building and maintaining roads surged. Yet a tax on miles driven that proponents of alternative-fuel vehicles prefer comes with concerns about privacy and economic impact to industries like tourism. North Carolina briefly considered such a tax in 2008 as a replacement for the gas tax but chose to retain the status quo.

So, as some conventionally powered vehicles continue their parity in fuel efficiency with hybrids -- while averting the environmental damage implicit in the manufacture of hybrid vehicle batteries -- the status symbol aspect of hybrids may become even pricier.

Judicial Benchmarks: A Win for Raisin Farmers

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals faced an all-too-familiar scenario this week: rebuke by the U.S. Supreme Court. In a unanimous decision, the High Court [ruled](#) that the Ninth Circuit can, indeed, rule on a constitutional challenge to an FDR-era law that forces farmers to hand over a percentage of their crop to the federal government in exchange for, well, nothing. The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 aimed to inflate agricultural prices by limiting supply. To aid in this cause, Uncle Sam continues to help himself to a percentage of farmers' crops, using the seized goods for "noncompetitive" ends, such as school lunches.

California raisin farmers Marvin and Laura Horne challenged the law, however, claiming it violates the [Fifth Amendment](#) prohibition against taking private property for public use without "just compensation." A federal district court rejected this claim, comparing the seizure to "an admissions fee or toll -- admittedly a steep one." On appeal, the Ninth Circuit also rejected the Hornes case, saying that the court has no jurisdiction to rule on the Takings Clause and that before suing to receive compensation the Hornes must first pay the \$700,000 fine levied by the government for their refusal to hand over the crops.

The Supreme Court disagreed. Writing for the unanimous Court, Justice Clarence Thomas said the Ninth Circuit *can* rule on the constitutionality, and it "makes little sense" to require the Hornes to pay the fine only to "turn around and sue for recovery." The case now returns to the Ninth Circuit for consideration. Still, the decision is a significant one for farmers facing seizure of their property thanks to "progressive" Depression-era government controls that are the antithesis of free enterprise.

Security Warfront With Jihadistan: Syria Crosses 'Red Line'

The White House has determined that Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime did in fact use chemical weapons against rebel fighters, killing at least "100 to 150 people." The overall death toll exceeds 90,000. Now, Barack Obama is forced to do something about his foolish "red line" that he set for U.S. involvement in the Syrian civil war. The timing is certainly striking, given the recent winning streak of Assad's forces, strengthened by Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

The official White House statement says, "Any future action we take will be consistent with our national interest, and must advance our objectives, which include achieving a negotiated political settlement to establish an authority that can provide basic stability and administer state institutions; protecting the rights of all Syrians; securing unconventional and advanced conventional weapons; and countering terrorist activity." Yet Obama's decision to aid Syrian rebels is problematic because many of them are jihadis either in or associated with al-Qa'ida. How does aiding terrorists counter their activity?

Furthermore, it appears that the commander in chief doesn't even have a plan to back up his announcement, but will "discuss" what to do with our allies at next week's G8 summit. As Fox News contributor Charles Krauthammer put it, "You would think they would have actually considered what you do on the day the red line is crossed."

Department of Military Correctness: Obama's Double Standards

That the Obama administration doesn't believe in religious liberty has long been clear. Rep John Fleming (R-LA) submitted an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would require "the Armed Forces to accommodate 'actions and speech' reflecting the conscience, moral principles or religious beliefs of the member." In other words, reaffirm religious liberty for those in uniform. In response, the White House issued a statement noting that the commander in chief "strongly objects" to the

amendment because it would have a "significant adverse effect on good order, discipline, morale and mission accomplishment."

Where was that concern when Barack Obama repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"? Sexual advances and tension have far more adverse effects on "good order, discipline, morale and mission accomplishment" than religious discussions or [having a Bible on a desk](#) -- or, for that matter, [conservative books and stickers](#). No, the real reason Obama "strongly objects" is that Christianity doesn't fit with his ideology, and it therefore must be suppressed.

Another Obama double standard is continual jetting around in Air Force One to campaign fundraisers and [lavish \\$100 million vacations to Africa](#) while Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh warns that they're dealing with a "hollow force" of inactive combat units. "Anytime you've got airplanes sitting on a ramp" and not flying, he said, the aircrews are "going to tell you, it's a hollow force." And if the Air Force loses "10 percent off everything," he adds, that means about 33,000 active duty Airmen and 700 planes. Why? Well, Obama blames the so-called ["Republican Sequester."](#)

In 2011, Obama threatened to veto any attempt to undo his sequester. But now he's reversed himself, and says he'll veto spending bills that *don't* undo it.

U.S. Army Birthday and Flag Day 2013

Today is the 238th birthday of the United States Army, born in 1775 of the desire to defend [Essential Liberty](#) and spread its flame. As the Army and its fellow service branches continue to lead the way in defending Liberty, let us not forget to pray for these brave Patriots standing in harm's way and their families awaiting their safe return.

Today is also Flag Day. Our flag is a beacon of Liberty, a symbol of hope for all people who "hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure

these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed -- that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it..." On this Flag Day, we American Patriots display and pay homage to our national flag.

To purchase the highest quality American-made U.S. flags available, please visit [The Patriot Post Shop](#). We also have information on [etiquette and protocol](#).



On June 14, 1775 the Continental Army was established by a resolution of the Second Continental Congress. The first Commander in Chief was General George Washington. On June 14, 1777, the Second Continental Congress adopted by resolution, the flag of the United States.

Surviving the harsh winter of Valley Forge in 1778, General Washington issued orders "that Divine service be performed every Sunday at 11 o'clock, in each Brigade which has a Chaplain. Those Brigades which have none will attend the places of worship nearest to them. It is expected that officers of all ranks will, by their attendance, set an example for their men. While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to laud the more distinguished Character of Christian. The signal instances of Providential goodness which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labors with complete success demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the Supreme Author of all good."

Culture Village Academic Curriculum: Valedictorian Silenced After Going Off-Script

It's a scene repeated in thousands of high school graduations across America: the top-ranked student receives the honor of representing the graduates in a

featured speech. But Remington Reimer's address to his Joshua High School classmates in Texas is now much more famous for what was not heard than what he actually said.

After noting this was the first time many of his classmates ever heard him speak, the reserved Reimer went on to talk about his Christian faith before predicting his microphone would be turned off. A moment later, it was. The Joshua Independent School District later cited a policy of pre-approving all graduation speeches and stated Reimer's microphone was cut off once he violated the policy by departing from approved remarks. This kind of censorship of both free speech and religion was extremely rare before the ACLU and other kindred entities took legal action to silence "overtly religious" remarks and other actions at government schools. To make matters worse, Joshua High School principal Mick Cochran is threatening to write a letter disparaging Reimer to the U.S. Naval Academy, where the young man has an appointment.

The lesson we need to learn from Reimer's speech, though, is one of always being prepared. No faithful valedictorian's ensemble should be complete without a back-up bullhorn.

'Non Compos Mentis': Much Ado About (Toy) Guns

Taking his cue from big cities that think the only way to reduce crime is to disarm the law-abiding populace, the principal of Strobbridge Elementary School in Hayward, California, decided to instill that same obedience to questionable authority by holding a gun buyback program for *toy guns* as part of the school's "Safety Day." Principal Charles Hill defends his idea - which uses books and a chance to win a bicycle as rewards to children who turn in the ersatz guns -- with the preposterous claim that "playing with toy guns, saying 'I'm going to shoot you,' desensitizes them, so as they get older it's easier to use a real gun." Yet Strobbridge's Safety Day included a local policeman demonstrating bicycle *and* gun safety. As Patriot readers likely know, the [NRA's Eddie Eagle program](#) has been successfully educating children in gun safety

for decades. Its approach is very simple: stop, don't touch, leave the area and tell an adult. No bicycles or "buybacks" required.

In related news, in Maryland, Robin Ficker, an attorney for the family of the eight-year-old student suspended for having a [gun-shaped half-eaten Pop-Tart](#), said he would seek to have the boy's record expunged by the Anne Arundel County school board after Superintendent Kevin Maxwell rebuffed his appeal of the suspension. While the boy may continue to have the Pop-Tart incident as a stain on his permanent record, he received one consolation from the affair: The eight-year-old is now a lifetime NRA member. It's good to know he'll learn a healthy respect for guns whether made from Pop-Tarts or otherwise.

Climate Change This Week: Emissions Up?

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), 2012 global CO₂ emissions were up 1.4 percent, reaching an all-time high. "The agency said continuing that pace could mean a temperature increase over pre-industrial times of as much as 5.3 degrees Celsius (9 degrees Fahrenheit)," [reports The Washington Post](#). "IEA chief economist Faith Birol warned [such an increase] 'would be a disaster for all countries.'" However, the U.S. has actually experienced a 3.8 percent year-over-year drop in emissions to 1990s levels. Likewise, Europe saw a decrease. Even China, despite a 3.8 percent rise in emissions, experienced "one of the slowest increases in the past decade, and half of 2011's rate of increase. The level of carbon dioxide emissions per unit of electricity generation has fallen about 17 percent."

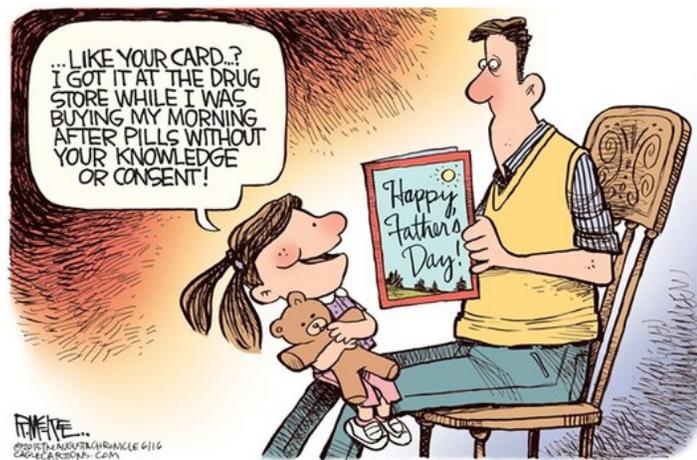
CO₂ may be at record levels, but there's a [clear disconnect](#) to global temperatures as the 15-year plateau continues. In addition, meteorologist Joe Bastardi [observed](#), "CO₂ was higher in the 1800s by chemical analysis of many more stations than it is now, as only relatively recently (1960) did we switch to making one station, Mauna Loa, the single site to measure global CO₂." Imagine that: more inconvenient truths.

Administration Goes With Plan B

This week, the Department of Justice reversed its position on the sale of Plan B to girls of *any age* without a prescription. The administration originally voiced its opposition after the [April 5 ruling](#) by U.S. District Judge Edward Korman sparked a furious debate. Korman decided that restrictions -- age-based or otherwise -- on the sale of Plan B were "arbitrary and capricious" and placed an undue burden on low-income girls and women because they are less likely to have the photo ID required to pick up prescriptions. He also claimed that the feds' resistance was "politically motivated." That's an understandable presumption given the administration's track record, though in this case Barack Obama's original decision ran contrary to his usual policy goals.

When the ruling came down, Obama made sure that everyone knew he was against it. "As the father of two girls," he said, he could not in good conscience support the bill. He also pontificated that we need to "use common sense when it comes to over-the-counter medication." Now that the Justice Department has decided to comply with the measure, however, Obama has been conspicuously silent on the issue.

Of course, women's advocacy groups hailed Korman's decision as a reproductive milestone. This week, they are doubly ecstatic that the administration has returned to the fold.



Faith and Family: Father's Day

Sunday is Father's Day. Unfortunately, we live in a day when fatherhood is too often undervalued and abandoned. (The Obama administration, in fact, couldn't even bring itself to use the term "Founding Fathers." A new White House webpage, now corrected, called them "[Founding Founders](#).")

As Mark Alexander often writes, however, fatherhood is the foundation of Liberty, and it requires real men to step up and support their families.

Read more [here](#).

And Last...

Did you know...? *The Patriot Post's* Digest represents a collaborative effort of more than 20 contributors and editors who bring their passion and expertise from all walks of life. We spend each week refining our publication to ensure an accurate and penetrating analysis of news, policy and opinion before passing it to our highly capable technical staff for publication. Our readers have come to expect nothing less over the last 17 years. While most volunteer their time and effort, and the rest receive only a modest salary, we do have substantial overhead for technical service, office space, legal expenses and so forth.

If you found today's Digest interesting, inspiring or informative, we humbly ask that you consider donating to *The Patriot Post's* 2013 Independence Day Campaign with a [secure online donation](#). Or, if you prefer to support us by mail, please use our [printable donor form](#).

As a token of our thanks, for a donation of \$26, we will send you the gift of your choice -- our popular Essential Liberty Guide, the Tea Party Primer, or a packet containing a collection of patriotic bumper stickers from *The Patriot Post* Shop. Donate \$52 or more and receive four booklets or a sticker packet; contribute \$100 or more to receive 10 booklets or a sticker packet. Help keep the flame of Liberty bright by distributing these booklets and stickers to family, friends and associates. (Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.) Of course, you may also choose not to

receive a thank-you gift, but we greatly appreciate your support in every case.

Thank you!
Nate Jackson
Managing Editor

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis!
The Patriot Post Editorial Team