

# Ron Paul's FREEDOM REPORT

A publication of the Foundation for Rational Economics and Education.

VOLUME 16, NO.8 – AUGUST 2013

## Why Are We At War In Yemen?

*Texas Straight Talk, 8/12/13*

Most Americans are probably unaware that over the past two weeks the US has launched at least eight drone attacks in Yemen, in which dozens have been killed. It is the largest US escalation of attacks on Yemen in more than a decade. The US claims that everyone killed was a “suspected militant,” but Yemeni citizens have for a long time been outraged over the number of civilians killed in such strikes. The media has reported that of all those killed in these recent US strikes, only one of the dead was on the terrorist “most wanted” list.

This significant escalation of US attacks on Yemen coincides with Yemeni President Hadi’s meeting with President Obama in Washington earlier this month. Hadi was installed into power with the help of the US government after a 2011 coup against its long-time ruler, President Saleh. It is in his interest to have the US behind him, as his popularity is very low in Yemen and he faces the constant threat of another coup.

In Washington, President Obama praised the cooperation of President Hadi in fighting the Yemen-based al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. This was just before the US Administration announced that a huge unspecified threat was forcing the closure of nearly two dozen embassies in the area, including in Yemen. According to the Administration, the embassy closings were prompted by an NSA-intercepted conference call at which some 20 al-Qaeda leaders discussed attacking the West. Many remain skeptical about this dramatic claim, which was made just as some in Congress were urging greater scrutiny of NSA domestic spying programs.

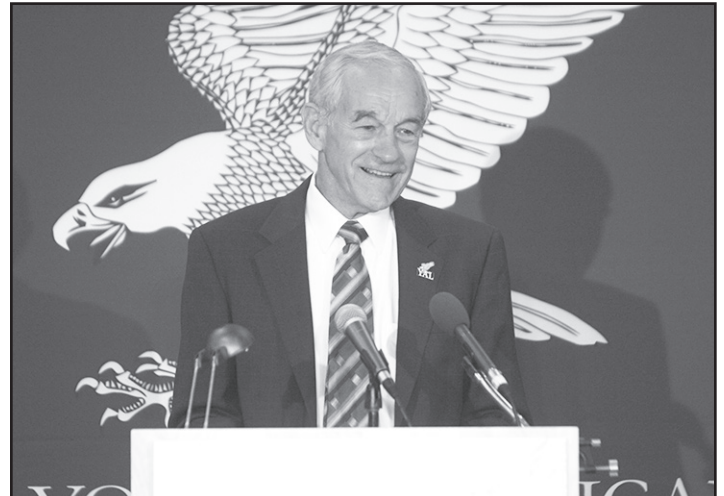


photo: Gage Skidmore

**Ron Paul addresses the Young Americans for Liberty Convention, July 2013.**

The US has been involved in Yemen for some time, and the US presence in Yemen is much greater than we are led to believe. As the Wall Street Journal reported last week:

“At the heart of the U.S.-Yemeni cooperation is a joint command center in Yemen, where officials from the two countries evaluate intelligence gathered by America and other allies, such as Saudi Arabia, say U.S. and Yemeni officials. There, they decide when and how to launch missile strikes against the highly secretive list of alleged al Qaeda operatives approved by the White House for targeted killing, these people say.”

Far from solving the problem of extremists in Yemen, however, this US presence in the country seems to be creating more extremism. According to professor Gregory Johnson of Princeton University, an expert on Yemen, the civilian “collateral damage” from US drone strikes on al-Qaeda members actually attracts more al-Qaeda recruits:

“There are strikes that kill civilians. There are

strikes that kill women and children. And when you kill people in Yemen, these are people who have families. They have clans. And they have tribes. And what we're seeing is that the United States might target a particular individual because they see him as a member of al-Qaeda. But what's happening on the ground is that he's being defended as a tribesman."

The US government is clearly at war in Yemen. It is claimed they are fighting al-Qaeda, but the drone strikes are creating as many or more al-Qaeda members as they are eliminating. Resentment over civilian casualties is building up the danger of blowback, which

is a legitimate threat to us that is unfortunately largely ignored. Also, the US is sending mixed signals by attacking al-Qaeda in Yemen while supporting al-Qaeda linked rebels fighting in Syria.

This cycle of intervention producing problems that require more intervention to "solve" impoverishes us and makes us more, not less, vulnerable. Can anyone claim this old approach is successful? Has it produced one bit of stability in the region? Does it have one success story? There is an alternative. It is called non-interventionism. We should try it. First step would be pulling out of Yemen.

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*Ron Paul's Texas Straight Talk, 7/29/13*

## **A House Divided Over NSA Spying On Americans**

Last week's House debate on the Defense Appropriations bill for 2014 produced a bit more drama than usual. After hearing that House leadership would do away with the traditional "open rule" allowing for debate on any funding limitation amendment, it was surprising to see that Rep. Justin Amash's (R-MI) amendment was allowed on the Floor. In the wake of National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower Edward Snowden's revelations about the extent of US government spying on American citizens, Amash's amendment sought to remove funding in the bill for some of the NSA programs.

Had Amash's amendment passed, it would have been a significant symbolic victory over the administration's massive violations of our Fourth Amendment protections. But we should be careful about believing that even if it had somehow miraculously survived the Senate vote and the President's veto, it would have resulted in any significant change in how the Intelligence Community would behave toward Americans. The US government has built the largest and most sophisticated spying apparatus in the history of the world.

The NSA has been massively increasing the size of its facilities, both at its Maryland headquarters and in its newly built (and way over-budget) enormous data center in Utah. Taken together, these two facilities will be seven times larger than the Pentagon! And we know now that much of the NSA's capacity to intercept information has been turned inward, to spy on us.

As NSA expert James Bamford wrote earlier this year about the new Utah facility:

"The heavily fortified \$2 billion center should be

up and running in September 2013. Flowing through its servers and routers and stored in near-bottomless databases will be all forms of communication, including the complete contents of private emails, cell phone calls, and Google searches, as well as all sorts of personal data trails—parking receipts, travel itineraries, bookstore purchases, and other digital "pocket litter." It is, in some measure, the realization of the "total information awareness" program created during the first term of the Bush administration—an effort that was killed by Congress in 2003 after it caused an outcry over its potential for invading Americans' privacy."

But it happened anyway.

Rep. Amash's amendment was an important move to at least bring attention to what the US intelligence community has become: an incredibly powerful conglomeration of secret government agencies that seem to view Americans as the real threat. It is interesting that the votes on Amash's amendment divided the House not on party lines. Instead, we saw the votes divided between those who follow their oath to the Constitution, versus those who seem to believe that any violation of the Constitution is justified in the name of the elusive "security" of the police state at the expense of liberty. The leadership—not to my surprise—of both parties in the House voted for the police state.

It is encouraging to see the large number of votes crossing party lines in favor of the Amash amendment. Let us hope that this is a growing trend in the House—perhaps the promise that Congress may once again begin to take its duties and obligations seriously. We should

not forget, however, that in the meantime another Defense Appropriations bill passing really means another “military spending” bill. The Administration is planning for a US invasion of Syria, more military assistance to the military dictatorship in Egypt, and more drones and interventionism. We have much work yet to do.

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*Ron Paul's Texas Straight Talk, 7/22/13*

## **Bernanke's Farewell Tour**

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Last week Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke delivered what may well be his last Congressional testimony before leaving the Federal Reserve in 2014. Unfortunately, his farewell performance was full of contradictory comments about the state of the economy and the effects of Fed policies on the market. One thing Bernanke inadvertently made clear was that the needs of Wall Street trump Main street, the economy, and sound money.

Quantitative easing (QE) and effectively zero interest rates have created paper prosperity, but now the Fed must continuously assure Wall Street that the QE spigot will not be turned off. Otherwise even the illusion of recovery will disappear. So Bernanke made every effort to emphasize that the economy was not doing well enough to end QE, while lauding the success of Fed policies in improving the economy.

Bernanke was also intent on denying that Fed policies directly boost financial markets. However, the money the Fed creates out of nothing in order to buy mortgage-backed securities and government debt for the QE3 program, benefits first and foremost the big banks and the financial class — those people who are invited to the Fed auctions. This new money then fuels stock bubbles, bond bubbles, agricultural land bubbles, and others. The consequences of this are felt by ordinary savers, investors, and retirees whose savings lose value because of the Fed's zero interest rate policy.

As if Wall Street favoritism and zero returns for savers isn't bad enough, the Fed wants the rest of America to bear a greater inflation burden. The Fed thinks you should lose two percent of the value of your dollar this year. But Bernanke is not satisfied with having reduced purchasing power by ten percent since the 2008 recession. The inflation picture is actually much worse if we look at the old consumer price index—the one that did not assume that ground beef is a substitute for steak.

Using the old CPI metric, as calculated by John Williams at Shadow Government Statistics, we've lost close to 50 percent of the purchasing power of our money in just the last five years. So what you were able to buy with the \$20 in your pocket before the financial crisis costs more than \$30 today. That might be peanuts to Wall Street, but that's real money for working Americans. And it's theft by the Fed. It is a direct consequence of the trillions of new dollars the Fed has “not literally” printed—as Bernanke put it.

Bernanke's final testimony before Congress confirms that the Fed has blatant disregard for the extra costs and the new bubbles it is creating. The Fed only understands paper prosperity, not how middle class Americans and the poor suffer the consequences of higher prices, resources misallocations, and distortionary bubbles as well as insidious unemployment.

The only way out of this tailspin of monetary favoritism is to restore sound money, which would end the Fed's ability to manipulate currency and put Wall Street first. The Fed has proven over and over again that it has no respect for the real money that preserves the value of people's labor, their wealth, and their ability to live free and prosperous lives. It is beyond time for the Fed, Wall Street, and the federal government to stop manipulating money and stealing from the American people under the false guise of paper prosperity.

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*Ron Paul's Texas Straight Talk, 8/5/13*

## **Why Won't They Tell Us The Truth About NSA Spying?**

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In 2001, the Patriot Act opened the door to US government monitoring of Americans without a warrant. It was unconstitutional, but most in Congress over my strong objection were so determined to do something after the attacks of 9/11 that they did not seem to give it too much thought. Civil liberties groups were concerned, and some of us in Congress warned about giving up our liberties even in the post-9/11 panic. But at the time most Americans did not seem too worried about the intrusion.

This complacency has suddenly shifted given recent revelations of the extent of government spying on Americans. Politicians and bureaucrats are faced with serious backlash from Americans outraged that their

most personal communications are intercepted and stored. They had been told that only the terrorists would be monitored. In response to this anger, defenders of the program have time and again resorted to spreading lies and distortions. But these untruths are now being exposed very quickly.

In a Senate hearing this March, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told Senator Ron Wyden that the NSA did not collect phone records of millions of Americans. This was just three months before the revelations of an NSA leaker made it clear that Clapper was not telling the truth. Pressed on his false testimony before Congress, Clapper apologized for giving an “erroneous” answer but claimed it was just because he “simply didn’t think of Section 215 of the Patriot Act.” Wow.

As the story broke in June of the extent of warrantless NSA spying against Americans, House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers assured us that the project was a strictly limited and not invasive. He described it as a “lockbox with only phone numbers, no names, no addresses in it, we’ve used it sparingly, it is absolutely overseen by the legislature, the judicial branch and the executive branch, has lots of protections built in...”

But we soon discovered that also was not true either. We learned in another Guardian newspaper article last week that the top secret “X-Keyscore” program allows even low-level analysts to “search with no prior authorization through vast databases containing emails, online chats and the browsing histories of millions of individuals.”

The keys to Rogers’ “lockbox” seem to have been handed out to everyone but the janitors! As Chairman of the Committee that is supposed to be most in the loop on these matters, it seems either the Intelligence Community misled him about their programs or he

misled the rest of us. It sure would be nice to know which one it is.

Likewise, Rep. Rogers and many other defenders of the NSA spying program promised us that this dragnet scooping up the personal electronic communications of millions of Americans had already stopped “dozens” of terrorist plots against the United States. In June, NSA director General Keith Alexander claimed that the just-disclosed bulk collection of Americans’ phone and other electronic records had “foiled 50 terror plots.”

Opponents of the program were to be charged with being unconcerned with our security.

But none of it was true.

The Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday heard dramatic testimony from NSA deputy director John C. Inglis. According to the Guardian:

“The NSA has previously claimed that 54 terrorist plots had been disrupted ‘over the lifetime’ of the bulk phone records collection and the separate program collecting the internet habits and communications of people believed to be non-Americans. On Wednesday, Inglis said that at most one plot might have been disrupted by the bulk phone records collection alone.”

From dozens to “at most one”?

Supporters of these programs are now on the defensive, with several competing pieces of legislation in the House and Senate seeking to rein in an administration and intelligence apparatus that is clearly out of control. This is to be commended. What is even more important, though, is for more and more and more Americans to educate themselves about our precious liberties and to demand that their government abide by the Constitution. We do not have to accept being lied to—or spied on—by our government.

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*Nothing in this publication is intended to aid or hinder the passage of legislation before Congress.*

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Turn on the truth.**



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