

Wikinews interviews former Salt Lake City mayor and 2012 presidential candidate Rocky Anderson

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Rocky Anderson in 2009
Image: Don LaVange.

Former Salt Lake City mayor and human rights activist Rocky Anderson took some time to discuss his 2012 U.S. presidential campaign and the newly-created Justice Party with *Wikinews* reporter William S. Saturn.

Anderson served as mayor of Salt Lake City for eight years (2000-2008) as a member of the Democratic Party. During his tenure, he enacted proposals to reduce the city's carbon emissions, reformed its criminal justice system, and positioned it as a leading sanctuary for refugees. After leaving office, Anderson grew critical of the Democratic Party's failure to push for impeachment against President George W. Bush, and for not reversing policies on torture, taxes, and defense spending. He left the party earlier this year and announced that he would form a Third party.

Anderson officially established the Justice Party last week during a press conference in Washington D.C.. He proclaimed "We the people are powerful enough to end the perverse government-to-the-highest-bidder system sustained by the two dominant parties...We are here today for the sake of justice — social justice, environmental

justice and economic justice." The party promotes campaign finance reform and is attempting to appeal to the Occupy Wall Street movement. It is currently working on ballot access efforts, and will hold a Founding Convention in February 2012 in Salt Lake City.

Among other issues, Anderson discussed climate change, health care, education, and civil liberties. He detailed his successes as mayor of Salt Lake City, stressed the importance of executive experience, and expressed his views on President Barack Obama and some of the Republican Party presidential candidates. He spoke in depth about former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, with whom he worked during the 2002 Winter Olympics, and fellow Utahan, former governor and U.S. ambassador to China Jon Huntsman, Jr..

2012 United States Presidential Election



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Background

«William S. Saturn» Could you list some of your accomplishments as mayor of Salt Lake City?

Rocky Anderson: I served for eight years and during that time, Salt Lake City became known as the model city for providing leadership on climate change solutions. Just before the 2002 Winter Olympic games, I declared that we would meet at least the Kyoto Protocol goals, and we far exceeded those in a very short period of time with 31 percent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions during the course of three years.

I was a vigorous advocate for mass transit and was able to resurrect a light rail system that was voted down by our city council within days after my election. I was able to turn around the public opposition and not only received a unanimous vote from the city council but also obtained federal funding.

I put in place a comprehensive restorative justice program that became a nationwide model. We were one of three finalists for the World Leadership Award by the World Leadership Forum in London for our restorative justice program, which focuses on solutions rather than simply punishment and retribution.

I worked to provide real and effective drug prevention and education programs filling the completely ineffective D.A.R.E. program and getting proven effective programs in our schools and providing much better public education on substance abuse issues. We focused not only on the abuse of illicit drugs but also the abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, which is an enormous problem in Utah and throughout the country.

We fought against sprawl development incorporating principles of smart urban growth development with transit orientation development projects and opposition to sprawl-inducing new highways and increased dependence on the automobile.

I started a city-wide youth afterschool and summer program called YouthCity, and always pursued public policy with the understanding that upfront investments in making things better including opportunities for young people was far better for all in our community and far less expensive than ignoring those upfront needs and having to deal with the disasters down the road. We know that if we keep our young people engaged and teach them skills including social skills, we have a lot better shot of building safer healthier and sustainable communities, and at the same time keeping these young people out of trouble.

I helped change, well, I led for the change in the culture of our police department where there was much more community-oriented policing where police were held accountable for not only excessive force against our residents and visitors but also even for rude behavior. I instituted a crisis intervention team program where officers were trained in recognizing and dealing with people with mental illnesses. Before I was mayor, I noticed that police were getting in confrontations with people with mental illnesses and escalate situations to the point of, in some cases even shooting and killing mentally ill people. We see that happen in communities all over the country and it's so important that our police be trained to recognize the root causes of some violent behavior and understand when to back off and resolve the situation without further violence.



Downtown Salt Lake City during the 2002 Winter Olympic games.

Image: debaird.

Our prosecutor's office and police department were very supportive of our restorative justice program, which took a solution based approach to a wide variety of situations including public sex, drug abuse, prostitution, dealing with both prostitutes and johns. We had a homeless court, we had a mental illness court so that if homelessness or mental illness was at the root of illegal conduct, we could deal with those issues in a constructive way rather than simply running people through the criminal justice revolving door, which is very expensive and in the end destructive to everybody's interests.

I was a big proponent and testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee regarding the proposal to transport and store high level nuclear waste, first, on a supposedly temporary basis at the Goshute Reservation in Utah and ultimately at Yucca Mountain in Nevada.



Anderson at the 2007 Salt Lake City Marathon.

Image: Jen Wakefield-Dillier.

«WSS» How critical is it for a presidential candidate to have executive experience?

Anderson: I think it's extremely important for someone to be able to demonstrate in an executive capacity, he or she can handle the pressure, know how to deal with differing interests, and come to the best solutions. I know some people get in an executive position and they become very dictatorial and dogmatic about what they're doing. I've always held the view both as a practicing lawyer, as president of my law firm and of course as mayor and then later as executive director of High Road for Human Rights, that you're going to do a much better job if you learn as much as you can about any topic before you form your views and then still bring in those who have opposing views to hear them out and to learn, try to learn.



Public transit with the skyline of Salt Lake City in the background.

Image: CountyLemonade.

That's how we were able to get the light rail project completed right in the beginning of my term. There was a group called Citizens Against Light Rail that formed and they even had their own letterhead and logo, and the leaders of that group will tell you that the first thing I did was brought the opponents all together at my home, went through what caused them to oppose light rail, and we figured out through a really constructive

problem solving exercise during the course of several intense weeks, how to resolve most of those issues, and those opponents to light rail were very much in favor of it and are real champions of the community-based problem-solving process that we've put into place. That's also become the national model. We put together a community team of people that was comprised of businesses and residents all along the construction route that would determine whether the contractors would receive bonus payments, and then we set very clear guidelines for those contractors in terms of dust control, noise control, hours of construction, keeping one lane of traffic open at all times so businesses could continue to have access. This system had the contractor very very sensitive to the concerns of those along the construction route and ways we certainly didn't see during the construction of light rail down Main

“ I think in terms of executive experience, knowing how to bring those opposing forces together, solve problems, being respectful, and always having in mind that just because you're in that position doesn't make you any smarter or wiser than you were before. That shared wisdom can mean everything in terms of one's success. ”

Street under my predecessor. And contractors ended up received either 96 or 97 percent of possible bonus payments because of that increased sensitivity, and members of the community felt like they had real power, which of course they did. That's how it ought to be.

I think in terms of executive experience, knowing how to bring those opposing forces together, solve problems, being respectful, and always having in mind that just because you're in that position doesn't make you any smarter or wiser than you were before. That shared wisdom can mean everything in terms of one's success.

WSS: According to an article in *The Nation* publication from 2006, a supporter asked you to run for president, but you told them that a run would require money and the backing of the state machine, which would be virtually impossible in conservative Utah. You added, "If I thought I could win, I would [run]." How is the atmosphere in 2012 better for you than it was in 2008?

Anderson: Well first of all, as reflected by the Occupy Movement, people in this country across the board understand how diseased and corrupt our system is, both our electoral system and the system of governance. We know now that there have been repeated failures in public policy that are a direct result of the corrupting influence of money. We'd have a universal health care system like the rest of the industrialized world were it not for the corrupting influence of medical insurance money. We wouldn't be wasting billions, upon billions of dollars for unnecessary weapons programs, where the stranglehold and the corrupting influence of money from the military-industrial complex; we were warned about that by President Eisenhower during his last speech.

The deregulation of the financial institutions that led toward this nation's and the world's economic disaster from which we're all still suffering, would never have come about were it not for the corrupting influence of money in the system. President Obama for instance, received more money from Wall Street than any other candidate in our nation's history, and so they got a really good return on their investment because the Obama administration has not brought one person to justice for the massive financial fraud that took place that helped lead to this economic cataclysm.

The failure of our nation to provide international leadership on climate change and to develop a policy that would result in energy independence is a direct result of the corrupting influence of money from the coal, oil, and gas industries. I don't think President Obama woke up one day and decided it would be a really good public policy to veto the EPA's position of more strict limits on ozone in our communities. Ozone creates so many illnesses and even death. Rather, his decision was just another example of his kowtowing to polluting industries. Likewise, he could have put an end to any possibility of the Keystone Pipeline, yet he's just put it off, delayed it until after the election, and by all other signs from how he's conducted himself as president, it is pretty apparent that he will end up approving that pipeline if he is reelected.

So, the American people understand that. They want to see people in elective office that for a change are not going to be sustaining and sustained by the corrupting influence of money in our government. They want to see that the public interest is promoted for a change. So, we have that elevated awareness about what's going on in our government, about which people are very unhappy as reflected in 9 percent approval rating for congress and a low 40s percent



President Dwight Eisenhower warned, "we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

approval rating for our president.

And at the same time, and this is what's different than even just a few years ago: we have the democratizing impact on communications from social media. We've seen revolutions now in different parts of the world, the overthrow of dictators through a combination of courageous, tenacious people working at grassroots organizing and utilizing the tools now provided through social media. That's why we're going to be able to run this campaign limiting campaign contributions to \$100 per person for the election cycle and maximizing in every way we can, the use of social media. This will be a people's movement that is already gaining unbelievable traction after just one week since we announced.

The Justice Party and opposition

William S. Saturn **Let me ask about the Justice Party. What is it? How large is it? And how can people join?**

Rocky Anderson: People can join in a number of different ways. There's a website: justicepartyusa.org. There have been hundreds, probably thousands of inquiries from people from dozens of states about getting on board, helping out as they can. There's a steering committee, and we're building on that steering committee as we speak. These are some great passionate, engaged, brilliant people, who've been working on this. But to see this happen in the sense, quite organically over time starting with discussions with people who have been contemplated doing this kind of work, coming together, building coalitions; I see the possibility of alliances or coalitions being built with different organizations around the country. The head of the Libertarian Party in one state came to us and said that he was publicly going to support what we're doing. I've had Republicans contact me, telling us that they've had it with the craziness in that party; this extreme right wing approach that that party is now taking since the Tea Party's had such enormous impact. We're hearing from people who have been lifetime independents, members of the Green Party. We've got members of the Progressive Democrats that are being threatened to have their charter jerked by the Democratic Party because of their support for what we're doing. In fact, one gentleman from the Progressive Democrats of America out of Chicago, is now on our steering committee. So this is an amazingly, cross-partisan representation of people who agree about the fundamentals and that is we need to change, not just the candidates that are playing within the system, but we need to change the system.

WSS **You mentioned Republicans and Libertarians, what about those that believe, ideologically that the government should not be involved in regulating carbon emissions or providing health care?**

Anderson: Those who believe the government shouldn't have any involvement in providing essential health care for our citizens are not only on the margins in our country but throughout the industrialized world. The United States is the only country that allows reliance that in fact fosters reliance on for-profit insurance companies for the provision of essential health care for our citizens. It's simply wrong that people are dying by the tens of thousands throughout this country every year because of inadequate health care services being available to them and you know we oftentimes hear from people like former President George W. Bush that people can go to emergency rooms, well that's just simply not true. For a lot of the early diagnoses, early diagnostic work that can save lives, there's not an option for that if you don't have health care coverage. A lot of people can't afford those diagnostic tests, and as a result they're dying because by the time they're properly diagnosed, the opportunity for saving their lives is gone, and yet the care that then has to be provided to them until they die is going to be extremely expensive. It's so cost ineffective what we're doing. We pay in this country more than double per capita health care than the average among the industrialized world, and part of our so-called health care dollars is going toward the profits for the for-profit insurance companies, dividends for their shareholders, huge bonuses, all the marketing for those companies. We are *the* most inefficient of nations in the

industrialized world in terms of how we pay for health care. Our medical results are mediocre by comparison with other health care systems. And people are paying more money for mediocre results and we still don't cover all of our citizens. So we come out looking very very badly by comparison with the rest of the industrialized world. If we were running a corporation here, and shareholders were determining how that corporation was doing in comparison to its competitors: higher costs, far less coverage, and mediocre results? I think we'd be replacing our board of directors and the officers and demanding that we catch up with our competitors.

The same thing is happening with education in this country. Our students are not equipped to compete with students from so many other countries. Ivy League schools are now putting quotas on the number of Asian students that they can accept because if they accept all of them on the basis of their merits, there would be relatively few Caucasian Americans being admitted to those Ivy League Schools. Why is Singapore doing so much better? Why are their students doing so much better on their testing than our students? It's an utter failure of our educational system and it's going to have an enormous impact in terms of the future. We're not making the investments in education and innovation and in our nation's infrastructure, all at the same time we're wasting trillions of dollars on wars of aggression and continuing tactics in these countries that are creating so much hatred that leads to far less security in the long term for our nation.

And at the same time, we're creating conditions for absolute catastrophe. Hundreds of names of environmental refugees, utter devastation in so many communities, loss of water resources, drought, starvation because of our failure to do what is required to reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses. If there's any role for government, it's to provide for, not only for the short term, but long term health, safety, and national security of our people and our approach on climate change has been absolutely counter to that. Pentagon studies discuss how oncoming the imminent consequences from climate change are going to create such major national security problems, and that's going to be the case all over the world. It's absolutely irresponsible to not be looking out for the future, and doing what's necessary to prevent the most catastrophic consequences of climate change. And the science is as robust as one could ever expect from science. Every nation's science academy, every major scientific organization in the United States feels the climate issues are all in agreement: the world is heating up, generally, at a much faster rate than previously predicted. We're already seeing massive consequences including the melting of the tundra, the melting of the arctic ice cap, melting of glaciers from which communities for centuries have depended for their water supplies. All of these consequences are happening faster than people believed they would just a few years ago and the future consequences are going to be horrendous. And we know that it's all because of human's conduct, either the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse emissions, particularly from the burning of coal, oil, and gas, and from deforestation and the failure to reforest.



Anderson discusses Global Warming during a 2008 speech.

Image: NikiSublime.

«WSS» In 2008, you said that you voted for Barack Obama as the “lesser of two evils”, but Ralph Nader and Cynthia McKinney were also on the ballot in Utah. Looking back now as a third party leader, do you regret not voting for a third party candidate in '08?

Anderson: In '08...I actually...I think it was in '08 but I...or was it '04? Sorry. In one of those years, I swapped my vote with a Nader supporter elsewhere so that Nader would still get a net of one vote, but in a battleground state, it

wouldn't take away from the Democrat; it wouldn't help the Republican get elected. But with the Electoral College, the sad fact is my vote doesn't count in Utah because it's always so overwhelmingly Republican. The Electoral College is an immensely anti-Democratic part of our electoral system, it needs to be changed, we need to get to the point where we're all electing the president based on the principle of one person, one vote.



Anderson speaks at an anti-war rally in 2008.

Image: Jeremiah Roth.

And the reason that I said that I felt President Obama should be supported over McCain was that he was the lesser of two evils, but I recognized that President Obama had already shown his true colors. Then, I think in the pocket of the nuclear power industry when he was in the Illinois state house. He had never really stood up on any major issue. I asked his supporters, they fell for the whole hope and change hype during his campaign, and I was always asking people, so point to one thing that he stood for, where he's shown any courage in standing up for

“ [Obama] has greater contempt for the rule of law...than George W. Bush ”

principle. The entire time he was in the United States Senate, he voted for full funding for the occupation of Iraq. He never stood up against torture or the other human rights abuses that were occurring during that time. He promised us before he received the Democratic nomination that he would join the filibuster in opposition to Congress providing retroactive immunity for the telecom companies for their illegal participation in the Bush surveillance program. And by the way, not all the telecom companies participated in that, they recognized that it was illegal so it wasn't a matter of people were fooled about whether it was legal or not. But for those telecom companies that did violate the law, they should have been held accountable. But in the classic American way, the corrupt way that has developed in our system of government, three telecom companies spend some twelve million dollars on lobbyists during the course of three months they put on the press, Congress passed legislation providing for the retroactive immunity and among those voting for the immunity, now after he received the Democratic nomination was then-Senator Obama, completely betraying those that he had promised to join the filibuster. But it was just a sign of things to come, they always talked about the rule of law, he has greater contempt for the rule of law, I think, than George W. Bush. He comes into office, says, “oh, we're going to look forward, not backwards” in terms of holding accountable war criminals? And those were criminals not only under international law, the Geneva Convention, the Convention Against Torture, but under our own laws passed by Congress: War Crimes Act of 1996 and the federal torture statute. Clearly, an illegal act, and he says, “let's just look forward, not backwards”. But he's done the same thing for the people who committed such massive financial fraud on Wall Street without holding any one of them accountable.

He has reinforced this notion that there's this narrow special aristocracy in this country, who are the most wealthy and the most powerful, and the contributors to his campaign, by the way, who aren't going to be held accountable to the law while the rest of us oftentimes suffer just the most extreme consequences from the application of the laws, especially in the area of drugs, where tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, people have in our prisons because of violations of our drug laws.

The GOP race

« William S. Saturn » What is your take on the GOP field, particularly Jon Huntsman, Jr., and Mitt Romney, both of whom you've endorsed in past elections?

Rocky Anderson: They both have been good friends of mine. The Mitt Romney I knew is a very different Mitt

Romney than the one who's been running for president. The Mitt Romney I knew believed in *Roe v. Wade*, that it came to the right result and with that ought to be established law and that we should just move on with it. This Mitt Romney, who, the last time he ran said we shouldn't politicize Guantanamo, he doesn't seem to have any regard for human rights, he's gone back and forth and back and forth... Well, he did it as governor before the time he announced that he was going to run for president. But he's even done it while he's been running for president, this time, in terms of climate change. Out of one side of his mouth, he's talking about how climate change is a problem, we need to deal with it. By the way, George W. Bush even said that. And then later on, he says, well we don't really know the causes of climate change. But, he knows very well the causes of climate change. He knows how the scientific community feels on that issue. But he's doing whatever he can to win the election.



Anderson addresses the GLBT community of Utah in 2005.

Image: Jere Keys.

I think Jon Huntsman is on the whole very different than that. He stood by his views. He was governor of the state of Utah, advocating domestic partnerships, that is equal treatment under the law for members of the GLBT community. And I say equal, wasn't quite equal because he still hasn't reached a point where he embraces the idea of marriage equality as I have for decades. And actually had marriage equality when I ran for

Congress in 1996, it became a core part

of the opposition against me and probably led to my defeat in 1996. But he's stood up on these issues, he's stood up on the issue of climate change when he was governor. I think it was fantastic when he stood up during a debate and talked about how the Republican Party should no longer be the anti-science party. What an amazing thing. I mean one would think the bar is set that low that it would be amazing, but in this environment right now, for him to say that to the Republican Party while he's running for their nomination. And then of course he was one of only two people who had the moral courage and sense to say "we should never be torturing", and that is so counter to our nation's heritage from the very beginning George Washington prohibited torture of British soldiers, and that's been not only the law, but the ethic of our country from the very beginning. It's only changed during this last decade and that's part of a very dangerous trend toward an imperial presidency and the disregard for human rights, and it's really so undermined our standing and not only undermined our standing, but created so much hatred toward the United States in many parts of the world.

So, Jon Huntsman is a bright, good man. We differ on a lot of things: I differ with him on offshore drilling, I differ with him on the keystone pipeline, on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. But I think Jon, especially having served as U.S. ambassador to China understands all the amazing progress China has made in the area of green technology. China is just beating us in every possible way when it comes to green technology. They're producing more than half of world's solar panels, they're producing more than half of the world's wind turbines. Now, they're incorporating these green technologies in their buildings and they're insisting every mayor find ways to cut down on the use of energy in their communities. They know how to get the job done, and in this country, I mean, we look at our country and say well that they're totalitarian, and yeah they have people who can say this is what we have to do, this is



Former Utah governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. Anderson referred to Huntsman as "a bright, good man."

Image: United States Department of State.

our goal, and now you have to go get it done or you're not going to hold your job anymore. In this country, we have the pretense of democracy, but we know that it's with corporations that are benefiting so much from these disasters in public policy that are calling the shots. And we're not moving toward what would serve the public's interest, and that's clearly shown in the area of climate change and energy policy as it is when we see the work that we're paying a lot more for drugs than other countries because of the corrupting influence of the pharmaceutical industry and the way that we've been sold out by those in Congress, both Republicans and Democrats who are feeding at the same special interest trough of corrupting money.

WSS: Did you watch last night's [December 15] GOP debate?

Anderson: No. I didn't.

WSS: Well, one candidate that was not invited to the debate was former Louisiana governor Buddy Roemer, who like you, is limiting individual campaign contributions to \$100. Did your idea to do this come from Roemer?

Anderson: No. No I didn't, frankly, I didn't realize that he was doing that. I heard Jeffrey Sachs talking about how these races could be won and the message to get across to people, and I said, absolutely that's what we ought to do. Just set a \$100 limit and let everybody know: they're equal players, we're all shareholders, we're all shareholders in this, and no special interest is going to come along and have any special access or influence.

Public policy and the state of democracy

William S. Saturn: What is the single most important issue facing Americans right now and how will you address this as president?

Rocky Anderson: The single most important issue facing our country is providing jobs, education, enhanced infrastructure, and encouraging innovation because we are falling so far behind the rest of the world. And part of that innovation and investment needs to be addressing climate change because in the long run, the impacts from climate change are going to be greater than...from any other shorter term issue right now.

Fiscal policy of course relates to all of that. We need to bring in adequate revenues so that we're not passing off on to the next generation this enormous debt and interest burden, and we also need to get our spending under control, but still with an eye toward priming the pump during this recession and providing the kind of infrastructure, education, and innovation that's going to serve this country not only for the present but far out into the future.

WSS: This is my last question. What necessary freedoms are currently lacking in American society?

Anderson: There has never been a time in our nation's history when the executive branch has claimed so much power and abused that power and that runs the gamut. Our president has asked for the legal authority to point to anybody, even citizens of this country; have them taken away, essentially kidnapped, disappeared, detained without any limit; no legal representation, no charges, no trial. It is so absolutely contrary to what our constitution is based upon and what our system of government is based upon. It's contrary to our nation's heritage, to our most dearly held values. The Senate just passed this incredible bill, the Federal Military Authorization Act that would allow for that detention based on who-knows-what kind of information, no standard of proof, no public hearing. It's not like these people are infallible.

The rule of law has been denigrated to the point never before experienced in this country. People can commit war crimes and if they're rich and powerful enough, the

“ **The rule of law has**

United States says let's just look forward and not backwards and let them off the hook. Not even an investigation. So we the American people have lost the freedom to even know what our government is doing and to know whether or not they're going to be held accountable under the law.

been denigrated to the point never before experienced in this country. ”

All three branches of government have been part of this deterioration of the law. Courts through the very subversive state secrets doctrine will dismiss cases, not on the merits, but on the basis of the very perpetrator, the executive branch, coming to it and saying that the case cannot move forward because to do so would mean the disclosure of state secrets that would be contrary to national security, and so the courts throw the cases out. That is perhaps the most subversive thing that's ever happened in this country because our system of government is based on the system of separation of powers and checks and balances. The courts are there in large part to protect against abuses of power including illegal conduct by the executive branch. If that check isn't there, that spells tyranny. That means the executive branch can do whatever it wants, regardless of the law, even domestic laws and treaty obligations that have been passed by Congress.



Anderson (right) shakes hands with a peace activist and Iraq War veteran.
Image: Jeremiah Roth.

So there have been torture victims, and by the way, these torture victims it has been established, they have zero connection to terrorism. Torture victims have come to our courts with the claims and they're proven claims by the way that they were kidnapped by the CIA, disappeared from their families and other loved ones, whisked off, one to an Afghanistan prison and another one to a Syrian prison. They were tortured. They were held for several months: one five months, the other one a year. One was a German citizen, the other a Canadian citizen. They come to our courts to challenge that illegal conduct, and by the way, the United States has assured the United Nations Committee Against

Torture that we provide these kinds of remedies for victims of torture. So they come in, seek justice, seek a means of getting the truth out, and what is the response of the both the Bush and the Obama administration? They oppose the lawsuits even moving forward on the merits because, among other reasons, the state's secret doctrine and the courts dismiss the cases. That is absolutely un-American.

The Bush administration, contrary to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act approved over the course of years, numerous dictates, we don't know how many because the truth hasn't come out, but likely tens if not hundreds of thousands of instances of warrantless surveillance of communications by American citizens. Not just telephone calls, but e-mail communications and otherwise. President Bush promised us the warrants were being obtained in all those cases. He was lying to us. He later admitted "yeah I ordered the national security agency to go ahead and do that." So there hasn't been one person prosecuted when people have come into our courts to challenge that illegal surveillance and a 2 to 1 decision by one of our circuit courts, the determination was made that they don't have standing to pursue the cases because they can't prove that their individual communications were subjected to that illegal surveillance, and the reason they can't determine if their communications were subject to that surveillance was because of the state's secrets doctrine. The government was able to block them from getting that information once again asserting the state's secrets doctrine.

“ **[The state secrets doctrine] is perhaps the most subversive thing that's ever happened in this country...** ”

So we have lost freedoms in very fundamental ways. We're a country where no longer can even pretend to abide by the rule of law. Where congress will pass retroactive immunity legislation, letting corporations that can pump \$12 million into their lobbyists in three months, letting them off the hook for their felonious misconduct. Where torturers are

not held to account. Where there aren't even investigations. At least, in the late 70's, when there were abuses in the intelligence community, Congress had states' people that would come together as under the Church Committee and investigate these matters and disclose to the American people, which led to legislation that would help deter these kinds of things from happening in the future. There's none of that. There's nothing to deter that kind of misconduct; the kind of absolutely subversive un-American activity within our executive branch. And Congress sits by let like the biggest bunch of patsies. Not asserting their constitutional prerogatives, not exercising their constitutional responsibilities to provide a check against those kinds of abuses.

Related articles

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