

# ***PERSONALLY SPEAKING***

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**PRESIDENT OBAMA: MORE LIKE LINCOLN OR GEORGE III?**

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*Permission to quote is granted when the source is acknowledged.*

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President Obama took the oath of office at his second inaugural on Lincoln's Bible. He reportedly asked to give his State of the Union Address on Lincoln's birthday, compares his critics to Lincoln's critics, likes to read the Gettysburg Address in Lincoln's own handwriting, and in his inaugural address borrowed lines from Lincoln's Cooper Union speech and Lincoln's second inaugural and it seems from the Emancipation Proclamation. Like Lincoln, Obama is from Illinois, and appears to see himself as the second coming of the Great Emancipator.

During his first term as president, Obama issued a total of 143 executive orders. Included among those orders were the following that *established* for the first time White House offices or councils, officially designated as follows: Strong Cities, Strong Communities; Homeland Security Partnership; Urban Affairs; Women and Girls; Health Reform; Community Solutions; Rural; Global Development; National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health; National Ocean; Financial Capability; Automotive Communities and Workers. Another executive order called for a National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. One of the first and most important Obama executive orders lifted the ban on human stem cell research.

Four of these new executive agencies, the ones dealing with cities, rural areas, communities, and urban affairs, have implications for the powers reserved to the States as set down in the **Tenth Amendment** of the *Bill of Rights*.

More direct and ominous threats to the *Bill of Rights* are evidenced by the HHS mandate on free preventive health services for women that attacks the **First Amendment** guarantee of freedom of conscience and by Obama's bungled attempts to reach an accommodation with religious institutions and deeply religious persons in for-profit enterprises.

The right to bear arms guaranteed by the **Second Amendment** is threatened by intense White House efforts to get gun control legislation through Congress in which the Obama administration asserts that the problem is not with the violence-prone often mentally disturbed gunman but with the gun itself.

The use of drones to kill enemies of the United States including persons who are American citizens tramples on the **Fifth Amendment** guarantee of due process. Even mass murderers such as James Holmes and Jared Loughner are assured that protection as American citizens and for that reason a death sentence for capital crimes typically takes years to enforce. Not so with the enemies of the state even when they have not been charged with a crime. Death rains down from the skies and is justified on grounds that as terrorists they have in effect rejected their American citizenship and constitutional rights. Might not the same be said for drug kingpins and Mafia godfathers who are American citizens?

Alleging voter suppression, the Justice Department has sued states that require photo ID for purposes of participating in the election process thereby threatening the sovereignty of the states as guaranteed by the **Tenth Amendment**.

Obama has demonized the rich and insisted that they alone have to pay “just a little bit more” in income taxes as part of a “balanced” approach to reduce the federal budget deficit. He has refused to enforce immigration law and the Defense of Marriage Act, to secure the borders, and made recess appointments to the National Labor Relations Board when Congress in fact was in session. He attempts to bully Congress into acting by declaring he will act if Congress does not. Years after many academic economists have dismissed Keynesian economics, Obama has used Keynes to justify a massive and debt-laden intrusion of the federal government into economic affairs. He burdens financial institutions with a torrent of new regulations and with Obamacare dictates patient access to care and provider reimbursement.

What can we say about an Obama administration in which the **First, Second, Fifth, and Tenth** Amendment are under attack? Is it one that embraces the centralization of more and more power in the hands of the president, that uses Keynesian economics to expand government control of the American economy, that enjoys a free hand to make war in places like Pakistan, Libya and approves covert operations in Syria? Or does it resist these developments? In the early 1970s historian Arthur Schlesinger called an administration that supports such developments an “Imperial Presidency.”

More recently theologian Avery Dulles warned that “when the transcendent source of human dignity is denied,” as when God-given rights articulated in the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Bill of Rights* are under attack and stem cell research flirts with the origins of human life, “the way lies open for totalitarianism and other forms of despotism, in which naked power takes over ...”

Is Obama more like Lincoln? Or George III?

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