



President Barack Obama rang in the New Year by signing the NDAA law with its provision allowing him to indefinitely detain citizens. It was a symbolic moment, to say the least. With Americans distracted with drinking and celebrating, Obama signed one of the greatest rollbacks of civil liberties in the history of our country ... and citizens partied in unwitting bliss into the New Year.

Ironically, in addition to breaking his promise not to sign the law, Obama broke his promise on signing statements and attached a statement that he really does not want to detain citizens indefinitely (see the text of the statement here).

Obama insisted that he signed the bill simply to keep funding for the troops. It was a continuation of the dishonest treatment of the issue by the White House since the law first came to light. As discussed earlier, the White House told citizens that the president would not sign the NDAA because of the provision. That spin ended after sponsor Senator Carl Levin (Democrat, Michigan) went to the floor and disclosed that it was the White House and insisted that there be no exception for citizens in the indefinite detention provision.

The latest claim is even more insulting. You do not "support our troops" by denying the principles for which they are fighting. They are not fighting to consolidate authoritarian powers in the president. The "American way of life" is defined by our constitution and specifically the bill of rights. Moreover, the insistence that you do not intend to use authoritarian powers does not alter the fact that you just signed an authoritarian measure. It is not the use but the right to use such powers that defines authoritarian systems.

The almost complete failure of the mainstream media to cover this issue is shocking. Many reporters have bought into the spin of the Obama administration as they did the spin over torture by the Bush administration. Even today, reporters refuse to call waterboarding torture despite the long line of cases and experts defining waterboarding as torture for decades.

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