

## 1984 in 2013

The 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees the freedom of speech. Although Eric Blair (whose pen name was George Orwell) was a British citizen, he was fortunate to live in a similarly free society that gave him the freedom to express his views of the world (and also convey his warnings about the potential for abuses that could be committed by a totalitarian / authoritarian government) in his most noteworthy work of fiction..... (Or was it?)

In his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell wrote about a government headed by Big Brother and The Party, who justified their rule in the name of the supposed greater good. The inhabitants of Oceania had no real privacy. Many of the citizens lived in apartments equipped with two-way telescreens, so that they could be watched and listened to at any time. The Thought Police, whose role was to suppress all dissenting opinion, would employ undercover agents who posed as normal citizens and reported any person with subversive tendencies. A major theme of the book was censorship and the role of the Ministry of Truth, where photographs were doctored and public archives were continually rewritten.

The adjective *Orwellian* has come to describe official deception, secret surveillance, and manipulation of the citizenry by a totalitarian / authoritarian state.

In November 2011, the US government argued before the US Supreme Court that it wanted to continue to utilize GPS tracking of individuals without first seeking a warrant. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer questioned what that meant for a democratic society by asking, "If you win this case, then there is nothing to prevent the police or the government from monitoring 24 hours a day the public movement of every citizen of the United States. So if you win, you suddenly produce what sounds like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*."

The members of Our Editorial Board are not conspiracy theorists, and most of us are not paranoid ☺. We are providing this Conversation Piece to not only pay homage to George Orwell's work of fiction, but also to emphasize the wisdom of (and the absolute importance of) our Founders' Fourth Amendment (from back in 1789) -

*The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.*

Simply put - "generic" monitoring of the entire population should not be allowed. Searches and seizures should only occur after the issuance of a warrant, after establishing "probable cause."