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Barack Milhous Nixon

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“Being on President Nixon’s enemies list was the highest single honor I’ve ever received,” the actor Paul Newman once remarked. America’s 37th president had a fascination, some might say an unhealthy obsession, with the perceived enemies of his administration. He drew up lists of who was being naughty. He tasked henchmen to break into the offices and spy on Democrats. For this Nixon was forced to resign in disgrace, becoming the only man in the history of the United States to relinquish and resign the great powers of the Oval Office.

Fast forward four decades, and our 44th president, Barack Obama, and his administration are taking a page from the Nixon playbook by targeting their political enemies in the Tea Party. Richard Milhous Nixon must be blushing.

The Internal Revenue Service admitted Friday that it had knowingly targeted dozens of non-profit groups with “tea party” and “patriots” in their name. The Tea Party News Network’s sister organization, TheTeaParty.net was one of the largest and most prominent groups. TheTeaParty.net received a number of harassing requests and inquiries from the IRS to relinquish its donor lists, every email ever sent, every Tweet ever put out, every Facebook post and every You Tube video published since its creation.

The assumption all along had been that behind the IRS harassment was a political motivation. The goal was to silence and intimidate those who stand in the way of big government and the burdensome taxes that thousands of bureaucrats at the IRS gleefully exact from the 47 percent of Americans who pay into the system.

It has been no secret within the movement that Tea Party organizations as well as Tea Party candidates have been targeted since the first day of the Obama administration. In March 2012, the New York Times editorialized in favor of using the IRS as a political weapon. “The I.R.S. must not flinch from its duty to enforce the tax code and root out political operatives who are abusing the law and conning taxpayers and voters.”

We have seen both the mainstream media and this administration strongly come against any group who did not align themselves with the President’s agenda and when possible, inflict punishment in the form of savage political attacks, television ads, surrogate smears – and now, we know, IRS audits and inquiries.

The majority of Tea Party groups and candidates were undeterred. They continued to push through the bureaucratic mud, hoping that eventually their persistence would pay off, that if they answered all the questions – as costly and time-consuming as they were – that ultimately their First Amendment rights to speak freely about their political views would prevail.

Now we know our worst fears have been realized. Friday’s revelation marks a milestone in the

history of our Republic – a sad one where our Constitutional rights have been trampled. For all the talk of the Patriot Act and Guantanamo and any of the other imagined Constitutional crimes committed by the Bush administration in the eyes of the left, here we have an affront against our citizenry and a blatant disregard of the Constitution that should make every American, Republican, Democrat and Independent unite in outrage.

Now, the rallying cry has been sounded and the Tea Party movement has been united. The last thing a Patriot ever wants to hear is that a corrupt Government is targeting them. Now that they are emboldened, people will be ready to share their story with hopes that by unifying in large numbers there will be little or no retaliation.

I hope the American people will listen to these examples and realize that no one is exempt from being targeted and every right that we as American's enjoy is currently under attack. Tyranny is knocking at America's doorsteps and it is only those who are paying attention who are keeping the door from swinging wide open.

It is a national disgrace that those of us who have been part of the Tea Party movement over the past several years – regular Americans trying to make a living to support their family – have been targeted by our own government because of our opposition to tax-and-spend policies of both Democrats and Republicans. Yet now that it is public, now that we vow to continue to search out who authorized this, when and why, and how high up the chain in the Obama administration this scandal reaches, we will hopefully turn aside this sad chapter in American history.

I don't claim to speak on behalf of millions of Tea Parties across the nation, but for me at least, I'm proud to say that being on President Barack Obama's enemies list is the highest single honor I've ever received.