My, my, it must be nearing election time again. How do I know without looking at a calendar? Easy, I just have to look at all the stuff coming through my email and posted on the web - The ‘big bad whatever’ is rearing its ugly head with a roar! The ‘fear factor’, ‘scare tactics’, ‘divide and conquer’, ‘lying by omission’, ‘finger pointing’, ‘mudslinging’ and ‘talking down’ methodologies seem to me to always BOOM during election years – big time.

"Zeal without knowledge is fire without light."

Thomas Fuller

First and foremost: I do NOT trust my government any farther than I can spit and haven’t since I became politically aware in 1974. However, I do firmly believe it is still the best government on this planet. Oh that is not to say it can’t use a little improving here and there. I am also a rather skeptical person and tend to research what I hear before I act or react to it.

Second: I keep reminding myself that in order stay in business; newspapers, news magazines and all the ‘talking heads’ on TV almost have to sensationalize the news to get us to tune in. Without us tuning in they cannot make money. So with that in mind and with reporters being human, they will
most certainly take statements and or sentences out of context, for their quotes and or leave any additional information out, which would spoil the sensationalism.

To top this off I must remember that we seem to have become a civilization of quickly board humans, that seem to only comprehend things when given in short spurts, loaded with exclamation or bullet points and hence, the news media has to give us the most information in the shortest possible time frame.

IE: Utopia does not exist; Perfection is an illusion and there is good and bad in everyone, anything and everything.

Third: I hate being manipulated and way too many of these articles are attempting to do just that.

"The trouble with the world is not that people know too little, but that they know so many things that ain't so."

Mark Twain

So when I hear about various ‘conspiracy’ theories or ‘shock’ headlines I start digging.
This is how I look for the most information on a subject when trying to gather the facts:

“I hope we never live to see the day when everything is as bad as the news makes it.”

Mark Twain

- I utilize Google and Bing internet searches. I look for what sources are listed on the first 4-10 pages of results.

- When possible I also go to the library and or write (yes good old fashioned snail mail) the author(s)/person(s) who ‘broke the story’ or were interviewed by some ‘news’ source.

- What are the original publishing dates to these articles and any referred to supporting articles?
• If this is a subject with “sides”, then which sources belong to which side?
  o What information is the same from ‘both’ sides and what is different? What is the same, is most likely the truth and what is different, is at best an ‘educated guess’ and at worst pure ‘fanatical supposition’ or a tactic to promote ‘fear’ or ‘hatred’.
  o If both sides aren’t screaming about it, then it is probably something that is blown out of proportion.

"Knowledge is power and enthusiasm pulls the switch."

Steve Droke

• What is the original source to each article? Like a particular ‘talking head’ or news station/paper, scientific study, research or what have you.
  o If this is a scientific study or research, are all the parts to this study or research present? I mean complete from hypothesis to conclusion.
  o Who were the major contributors to the research and what ‘side’ are they on? IE: I look for independent research with NO or little contributions from either ‘side’.
  o If this is from the news media: Is this from a major source or not? What ‘side’ is this source on? What corroborative sources does this media refer to and the like?
A Little Truth Goes A Long Way Towards A Lot of Fiction - Continued

• Is this article referring to a bill? If yes, what bill #, what congressional session? I tend to use govtrack.us and opencongress.org for legislation.
  
  o Is it an active, stagnant, dead, or passed bill?
  o If it passed what Public Law number was given to it?
  o Can it be downloaded or read in its passed entirety?
  o If yes, I read the thing, boring and convoluted as they are. Then I look for circular references and loop-holes (the more of these there are, the more room for the bill to do just about anything a corrupt government official could want).
  o Are there any congressional studies to the bill? Can these be downloaded and read in their entirety? Then yes, I read these too.
  o Does the bill actually reduce, correct or fix the issue(s) it is addressing, according to its own studies?

Note: Bills that do NOT get passed during a congressional session (each session lasts two years), is a dead bill and must be re-introduced, assigned a new number and passed in the current session. We are currently in the 112th Congress that runs from January 3, 2011 through January 3, 2013.

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply.

Willing is not enough; we must do."

Johann von Goethe

• I distrust articles on bills or executive orders and the like, if they do NOT state the bill/EO number or official title of the legislation.

• I also distrust articles that refer to ‘this or that’ being the first time “ever” ‘this or that’ has been done or passed or what have you.
And last but not least, I distrust articles that appear to be “all inclusive” or using words like; ‘always’, ‘all’, ‘never’, and ‘none’. Let’s face it – there is an exception to every rule or what have you. Even saying “the sun will always rise tomorrow” isn’t true, since eventually our sun will burn itself out or our planet will stop spinning on its axis.

Once I complete my research I put all the information together and then put the issue into perspective. How do I put it into perspective? Well I’m not sure how to explain this without using an example:

Take all the articles about FEMA camps, ordering body bags and other supplies that have been floating around recently.

When one researches that, you discover that the old Civil Defense, had camps and supplies, including body bags, that have been ordered and stashed in warehouses around the U.S. for decades going back to CD’s beginnings (mostly outside of large metropolitan areas) and these items have a shelf life and need rotating/replacement from time to time.

Each fiscal year a bill is presented called “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year xxxx” that funds the U.S. Department of Defense and other defense agencies like DHS for the upcoming fiscal year.

When you research the facilitating ‘source articles’ (that accompany the FEMA articles) on military jobs for ‘civilian internment officers’ and the like, you find out that these positions have existed since our War of Independence and have been formalized in our military branches since WWI.

Today, the authority and budget for FEMA comes only through the Department of Homeland Security, a bureaucracy layer, that hasn’t accomplished much other than slowing things down and muddying the waters.

When you research the history of laws, executive orders and the like for CD, FEMA and DHS, you find many that basically obtain supplies, provide the same protocols and training on large disasters (both natural and human made), partially fund the same military positions, and since the Patriot Act, put more power in DHS’s hands to bypass some of our basic Constitutional benefits.

So even though these recent ‘news’ stories ‘imply’ that this is new stuff being done by our current administration – the bottom line is the information in these ‘news’ stories is nothing new.
When putting all this into perspective, I see nothing new - Yet I do get a rather urgent ‘need’ to keep an eye on any new bills, executive orders and the like that can change the current standing or in short anything that gives DHS additional powers.

IE: Many of our current worries stem from the Patriot Act and the creation of DHS (2002). Which, by the way, swallowed up some 20+ previously independent departments and or agencies and took away their independent authority – consolidating it under ONE authority – DHS; and DHS can act independently of and in some cases, without the consent of, the Executive, Legislative or Judicial branches of our government - on anything it deems is a threat to ‘national security’.

"The only good is knowledge
and the only evil is ignorance."

Socrates
(469 BC - 399 BC)

As for conspiracy theories, well, rather than waste time and energy to prove them correct, it is far wiser to determine: IF such a thing were true, what weaknesses in our society and or government allowed this to happen and how can we correct those weaknesses, so that this is less likely to occur again in the future. Then strive to do just that.

The best any of us can do in situations like this is to use our brains, think and decide for ourselves.

Armor yourself with Knowledge
and
Be Prepared – Not Scared
If you want additional information on this and other similar items see:

Mormon Cannery Raid in TN [http://www.thesurvivalistblog.net/mormon-cannery-raid-oathkeepers-fabrication/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+PlanPrepareSurvive+%28The+Survivalist+Blog+dot+Net%29];
The Oathkeepers.org story has been pulled [http://oathkeepers.org/oath/2011/12/09/oath-keepers-alert-federal-agents-demand-customer-lists-from-mormon-food-storage-facility/];
LDS statement about the incident [http://newsroom.lds.org/article/church-dispels-rumors-regarding-tennessee-food-storage-facility/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+LDSNewsRoomTop15+%28RSS%3A+LDS+Newsroom%29&utm_content=Google+Feedfetcher];