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Following are excerpts from Justice Black's opinion and from concurring opinions by his fellow Justices Douglas, Brennan, Stewart, White, and Marshall, revealing their views on the important role of the press, for emphasis during this time of unprecedented attacks on the press.

The essential role of the press in a democracy is to serve the governed, not the governor. It is to inform the people, to the end that government may be responsive to the will of the people and that changes, if desired, may be obtained by peaceful means. Therein lies the security of the Republic, the very foundation of constitutional government.

"As stated by Chief Justice Hughes in *Near v. Minnesota ex rel. Olson*, 283 U.S. 697, 719 720 (1921), ... the administration of government has become more complex, the opportunities for malfeasance and corruption have multiplied, crime has grown to most serious proportions, and the danger of its protection by unfaithful officials and of the impairment of the fundamental security of life and property by criminal alliances and official neglect, emphasizes the primary need of a vigilant and courageous press ..."

"The dominant purpose of the First Amendment was to prohibit the widespread practice of governmental suppression of embarrassing information. It is common knowledge that the First Amendment was adopted against the widespread use of the common law of seditious libel to punish the dissemination of material that is embarrassing to the powers that be."

"Secrecy in government is fundamentally anti democratic, perpetuating bureaucratic errors. Open debate and discussion of public issues are vital to our national health. On public questions there should be 'uninhibited, robust, and wide open' debate. *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254, 269 270 ..." (1964).

"The only effective restraint upon ... [governmental power] may lie in an enlightened citizenry in an informed and critical public opinion which alone can here protect the values of democratic government. For this reason, it is perhaps here that a press that is alert, aware, and free most vitally serves the basic purpose of the First Amendment. For without an informed and free press there cannot be an enlightened people."

Of course, the role of the press is the same in a totalitarian society, but the ramifications are more likely to be deadly to those who criticize the government.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Kreitz Cook
President

