

# “Christians Are Instructed to Pray for Secular Leaders”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website ([churchofgodbigandy.com](http://churchofgodbigandy.com)). It was posted for the weekend of March 1, 2025.

**By Dave Havir**

BIG SANDY, Texas—Christians are well-aware that we are saved by the grace offered to mankind by our Heavenly Father and His Son. And Christians seek to maintain an ongoing relationship with Them through prayer, Bible study, fasting, obedience and service.

Throughout our lives, we find ourselves dealing with secular leaders.

The Son of God said: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you” (Matthew 20:25-26).

The apostle Paul reminded the disciples that the Son of God will eventually put an end to all rule, authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

And before that occurs, Paul gave solid advice to Timothy and to the rest of us in 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

It reads: “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men—for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

With that in mind, I have chosen to present the following four articles to be helpful to people. Some of you will not be interested in them, and I support your freedom of choice. But I have friends who will be edified by the material and I want to help them. (I hope the material also helps you.)

As you read the articles, I remind you to pray that you may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.



Looking back to September 2017, an article by Michael Crowley titled “The Deep State Is Real” was posted at [politico.com](http://politico.com) on Sept. 5, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

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At a conference in mid-July, Barack Obama's CIA director, John Brennan, remarked that executive branch officials have an "obligation . . . to refuse to carry out" outrageous or anti-democratic orders from President Donald Trump.

The comment quickly caught the attention of Rush Limbaugh, who saw nothing short of a threat to the republic. "He practically called for a coup!" the radio host bellowed on the air a few days later, warning of a plot orchestrated by "embeds in the deep state at the Pentagon, State Department, various intelligence agencies."

Embeds in the what? A year ago, the term "deep state" was the province of Edward Snowden acolytes and fans of paperback espionage thrillers. Today, Limbaugh takes it for granted that his millions of listeners know what it meant.

The deep state entered America's national discourse in 2017 with the feeling of an already familiar character, ready to assume a starring role as hero or villain—depending on how you feel about Trump. It's easy to dismiss the idea as the breathless complaint of a frustrated president who hasn't learned to work the system.

But it's not that simple: There really is a kind of cabal that operates independently of elected officials in Washington—even if it's not quite what Trump or his conservative allies think it is.

Political scientists and foreign policy experts have used the term *deep state* for years to describe individuals and institutions who exercise power independent of—and sometimes over—civilian political leaders.

They applied it mainly to developing countries like Algeria, Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, where generals and spies called the real shots in nominally democratic societies and replaced elected leaders when they saw fit. (Turkey and Egypt have recently moved to more overt security-state dictatorships, in which the deep state is the only state.)

For a generation, the people who saw something like an American deep state—even if they rarely called it that—resided on the left, not the right.

The 9/11 attacks triggered the rapid growth of an opaque security and intelligence machine often unaccountable to the civilian legal system.

In the 2000s, the critique focused on a "war machine" of military and intelligence officials, defense contractors and neoconservative ideologues who, in some versions, took orders directly from Vice President Dick Cheney.

In the Obama era, the focus shifted to the eerie precision of "targeted killings" by drones, and then the furor over Snowden, the ex-National Security Agency contractor whose 2013 leaks exposed the astonishing reach of the government's surveillance. "There's definitely a deep state," Snowden told the *Nation* in 2014. "Trust me, I've been there."

Even measured academics began to describe a dual-state system in the United States, the focus of Tufts University international law professor Michael J. Glennon's 2014 book, *National Security and Double Government*.

Glennon observed that Obama had campaigned against Bush-era surveillance and security policies in 2008 but acquiesced to many of them as president—suggesting a national-security apparatus that holds sway even over the elected leaders notionally in charge of it.

Enter Donald Trump.

After January 2017, the unaccountable string-pulling bureaucracy suddenly came to seem, especially to liberals, less a sinister cabal than a crucial check on a president determined to blow up the system we had come to take for granted.

Trump was openly hostile to much of the government he now ran, and its institutions began fighting back, sometimes in public ways.

They did so with a combination of the severe (leaks of Trump's conversations with foreign leaders) and the absurd (critical tweets from federal accounts like that of the National Park Service).

To Trump and his allies, the new president is now the victim of conspiratorial bureaucrats threatened by a president trying to "drain the swamp."

In August, after Environmental Protection Agency employees alerted the *New York Times* to an EPA report on climate change they feared would be quashed, a headline at the conservative Breitbart News website shouted: "Deep State Teams with Fake News."

Even more anxiety swirls around classified information: In July, the Republican-led Senate Homeland Security Committee released a report that found the Trump administration was being hit by national security leaks "on a nearly daily basis" and at a far higher rate than its predecessors encountered.

(After the report was picked up in the conservative media, Trump's son Donald Jr. tweeted a link to it. "If there ever was confirmation that the Deep State is real, illegal & endangers national security, it's this," he wrote.)

Thus have the old battle lines flipped. Conservatives who once dismissed concerns about political abuse of NSA surveillance now complain about intelligence leaks linking Trump associates to the Kremlin; liberals who not long ago were denouncing the CIA for its unaccountable power have discovered new affection for the heroes at Langley who might uncover impeachment-worthy dirt.

Beneath the politics of convenience is the reality that a large segment of the U.S. government really does operate without much transparency or public scrutiny, and has abused its awesome powers in myriad ways.

And sometimes the government bureaucracy really does exercise power over the commander in chief: Obama felt that the military pressured him into sending more troops to Afghanistan than he had wanted, while an inexperienced George W. Bush was arguably led to war by a bipartisan cadre of national-security insiders who had long wanted to take out Saddam Hussein.

Even the Trump critique about the deep state in revolt, however exaggerated, is worth consideration.

Hillary Clinton voters might delight in the classified material gushing forth about the president's men—but its release can be criminal. (In May, Brennan called the intelligence leaks "appalling.") Yes, the president could be covering up misdeeds of his own, raising thorny ends-and-means questions. But Trump haters should consider the precedent—and how they would feel if, say, a President Kamala Harris were to enter the White House in 2021 and be hobbled by a similar blizzard of leaks from intelligence officials who consider her soft on terrorism.

Whether any of this means there is a deep state in America depends on your definition.

Powerful bureaucrats with access to government secrets and trusted media friends certainly do try to influence presidents from the shadows.

Some of the subversion and leaks Trump has faced are merely federal employees defending their turf from budget cuts and boneheaded ideas.

But in Washington, at least, their views and goals are not monolithic.

And unlike their counterparts in the developing world, they do tend to execute the orders they're given by the president, however grudgingly—and are committed to upholding the rule of law.

[Editor's note: Let's consider the last statement saying that members of a deep state "are committed to upholding the rule of law." While that statement would be certainly open to evaluation and debate back in 2017, the political landscape has only gotten more confrontational in 2025. So, while it would be questionable to claim that bureaucrats would uphold the rule of law in 2017, it would be even more improbable in 2025.]



Looking back to December 2021, an article by Hans A. Von Spakovsky titled "Will New York Times, Washington Post Return Pulitzer for Misleading Russia Collusion Stories?" was posted at [heritage.org](https://www.heritage.org) on Dec 13, 2021. Following are excerpts of the article.

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Will it be 2089 before the *New York Times* (and the *Washington Post*) acknowledge their misleading reporting and apologize?

In 2018, journalists from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* won a Pulitzer Prize in national reporting for their biased and inaccurate coverage of Russia's alleged collaboration with the Trump campaign to interfere with the 2016 election, a claim we now know was a hoax.

So when are they going to return the prize?

If this sounds familiar, it should.

This is not the first time the prize—which is supposed to recognize outstanding achievement and public service in journalism—was awarded for misleading and discredited coverage.

In 1931, the *New York Times* published 13 articles by its Moscow reporter and Communist sympathizer, Walter Duranty, praising the Soviet Union and dictator Joseph Stalin's government. These articles relied solely on official Soviet Communist sources, ignored the evidence contradicting the government's propaganda, and covered up the genocide Stalin was committing in the Ukraine.

Consequentially, Duranty's work was explicitly and knowingly misleading. Columbia University history professor Mark von Hagen said in 2003 that Duranty was "a disgrace in the history of the *New York Times*."

Throughout the series, Duranty glorified Stalin's policies and peddled Soviet propaganda. Most notably, he rejected reports by fellow journalists describing the catastrophic consequences of collectivization.

Duranty's deceptive articles purposefully exalted the Soviet Union and a murderous dictator, what Professor von Hagen called an "uncritical acceptance of the Soviet self-justification for its cruel and wasteful regime," ignoring the absolute brutality of Soviet policies.

Even the *New York Times* finally admitted in an editorial in 1990 that his articles were "some of the worst reporting to appear in this newspaper."

Ukrainian American organizations continually requested that the Pulitzer Prize board repeal Duranty's award because of his false reporting, resulting in two distinct investigations.

But the Pulitzer board refused to withdraw the award, most recently in 2003.

While the board admitted that there were substantial problems with Duranty's reporting, it refused to revoke the award because "all principals are dead and unable to respond." Apparently, concerns regarding an obvious lack of journalistic integrity are illegitimate once enough time has passed.

Today, the *New York Times* and the Pulitzer Prize board have fallen into a similar scenario.

In a series of 10 articles, *Times* reporters propagated a narrative detailing fictitious connections between the Kremlin and the Trump campaign, the president's transition team and the administration.

The Mueller investigation as well as the Senate Intelligence Committee affirmed that there is no evidence that President Trump or his staff conspired with the Russian government to impact the 2016 election.

Special Counsel John Durham is now indicting some of those who were involved in creating what amounted to a political hoax that dogged the Trump administration for years.

Despite these findings, and the inaccuracies in the s articles, the Pulitzer Prize board has not repealed the award. (Note that all principals are alive and perfectly capable of responding.)

The *Times* first publicly acknowledged Duranty's misinformation in the 1980s, but did not issue a formal apology until 2003, 71 years after Duranty received his prize in 1932.

Will it be 2089 before the *New York Times* (and the *Washington Post*) acknowledge their misleading reporting and apologize? And will the Pulitzer Prize board wait until all the principals are dead so it can "investigate" the matter and issue a nonapology?



An article by Hannah Knudsen titled "Rand Paul Explains What Must Be Done to Make DOGE Discoveries Stick" was posted at [breitbart.com](https://www.breitbart.com) on Feb. 21, 2025.

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A rescission package is absolutely necessary to actually to end the waste uncovered by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) said during an interview on Breitbart News Daily.

"We need to do what's called a rescission package, meaning get rid of the spending right now. None of the spending has really been eliminated, so they're finding the waste, they're talking about it, and it's the same thing I've been doing for a decade, but it has to be sent back," Paul began, explaining that the administration should "bundle it all together."

"When it comes back to Congress, it can be passed with a simple majority, Republicans only because we won't get any Democrats. But then, once we pass a bill getting rid of that spending, the savings actually occurs," he said.

"Then the money goes back to the Treasury and [is] not spent. Right now, when they find waste, it's still being spent. They're temporary, delaying it or

stopping it, but it hasn't come back to the Treasury and won't come back unless Congress votes on it. We can do this, but not enough people are talking about it," he continued, contrasting this with impoundment, which he said will lead to countless legal battles.

"It basically just says you're not going to spend it. So Congress tells you to spend it, and they say, here's a billion dollars for an aircraft here, and you build it for \$800 million because Elon is now in charge, so you save \$200 billion but what happens is the money just sort of sits there, doesn't necessarily go back to the Treasury," Paul said.

"There's also a long-standing legal sort of battle that's gone on, and when the Presidents can do this, the statutes say he can't, so there'll be a court battle over that. Rescission is different," he said, describing it as a "privileged vehicle, in the sense that it gets voted on immediately."

"It also can't be filibustered. That's another privilege it has. And this was written into law, I don't know, 30, 40 years ago, maybe with the Budget Act of 1974, but it's sent back, and by a simple majority, we can vote to get rid of the spending. Then it's really done. It's a much more certain way of doing this," Paul said, emphasizing that impoundment would lead to both "courts and uncertainty."

Rescission will be absolute, and it will be done," he said, adding that the only major hurdle with rescission is it would need half of Republicans to "do the right thing," which he said does not occur in the D.C. swamp often.



An article by Shawn Fleetwood titled "DOGE's Work Is Meaningless Unless Republicans Get Serious About Cutting Spending" was posted at thefederalist.com on Feb. 25, 2025. Following are excerpts of the article.

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The Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has made commendable progress in identifying areas of waste, fraud, and abuse throughout the federal government. But failure by congressional Republicans to codify cuts to these items and other wasteful spending into law threatens to jeopardize the watchdog group's success.

Amid the backdrop of DOGE's fraud-finding expedition are ongoing negotiations among House and Senate Republicans to pass a budget reconciliation package that includes President Trump's legislative priorities, such as tax cuts and resources for border enforcement.

As defined by Ballotpedia's Briana Ryan, "Budget reconciliation is a term for the legislative process that bypasses the [60-vote] filibuster to approve a package of legislation in Congress that changes spending, revenues, or the debt limit."

While many Republicans have been quick to glom onto DOGE and profess support for its work, few seem to be interested in actually stopping the wasteful spending that's plagued the federal government for years. Case in point: the Senate GOP's latest "vote-a-rama."

In the early hours of Friday morning, the upper chamber held votes on various amendments to Senate Republicans' \$340 billion reconciliation blueprint. According to Breitbart News, the package (which included provisions aimed at "secur[ing] the southern border, unleash[ing] domestic energy production, [and] other priorities") is one half of the Senate GOP's "two-bill strategy" for reconciliation.

Among the amendments proposed for the Senate's reconciliation package was a measure introduced by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., that sought to cut federal spending by \$1.5 trillion. The Kentucky Republican noted that "Americans will pay dearly for Congress's inability to say no to welfare and warfare state," and that continued reckless spending practices "will mean confiscatory tax rates, high inflation, rising interest rates, and a weak economy."

"[I]f we were fiscally conservative, why wouldn't we take the savings from Elon Musk and DOGE and move it over here and help with the border?" Paul said on the Senate floor last week. "Why would we be doing a brand new bill to increase spending by \$340 billion?"

Whether Republicans ultimately pass a reconciliation package that includes substantial spending cuts remains to be seen. But the writing on the wall should not give voters confidence in their willingness to do so.

With trifecta control of the federal government and Trump and DOGE enjoying net-positive approval from the American public, there is no better opportunity for Republicans to shrink the bureaucracy and slash wasteful spending.

Whether it's eliminating USAID and the Education Department or repealing Biden's wrongly named "Inflation Reduction Act," the possibilities for substantial cuts are too numerous to be ignored. The reality is that, as promising as DOGE's continued discoveries seem, the work it's doing in uncovering government abuse of taxpayer dollars will be meaningless unless Republicans get serious about Washington's spending problem. Voters gave the GOP a mandate, and it's past time they fulfilled it.