

## **The Power Elite Is Real and Trump Is Its Latest Captive Tool**

by John W. Whitehead via gus - The Rutherford Institute *Tuesday, Aug 7 2018, 12:01am*

international / prose / post

“Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government, owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people.” — Theodore Roosevelt

There are those who would have you believe that President Trump is an unwitting victim of the Deep State.

And then there are those who insist that the Deep State is a figment of a conspiratorial mind.

Don't believe it.

The Deep State—a.k.a. the police state, a.k.a. the military industrial complex, a.k.a. the surveillance state complex—does indeed exist and Trump, far from being its sworn enemy, is its latest tool.

When in doubt, follow the money trail.

It always points the way.

Every successive president starting with Franklin D. Roosevelt has been bought—lock, stock and barrel—and made to dance to the tune of the Deep State.

Even Dwight D. Eisenhower, the retired five-star Army general-turned-president who warned against the disastrous rise of misplaced power by the military industrial complex was complicit in contributing to the build-up of the military's role in dictating national and international policy.

Enter Donald Trump, the candidate who swore to drain the swamp in Washington DC.

Instead of putting an end to the corruption, however, Trump has paved the way for lobbyists, corporations, the military industrial complex, and the rest of the Deep State (also referred to as “The 7th Floor Group”) to feast on the carcass of the dying American republic.

Apart from tweets that are little more than sound and fury, Trump is not a man who is raging against the machine.

He is too much a part of the machine.

Indeed, as Reuters reports, “[President] Trump has gone further than any of his predecessors to act as a salesman for the U.S. defense industry.”

Despite claims to the contrary, Trump is not advocating for peace with Russia, or North Korea or any other nation.

He is selling us out to the war hawks.

The latest squawk over Iran is just more of the same chest-thumping, sleight-of-hand intended to play into the hands of a salivating military industrial complex for whom war is merely a means to a larger profit margin.

The war hawks have no beef with Trump.

Why should they? He's giving them exactly what they want.

With Trump's blessing, the military's budget—with its trillion dollar wars, its \$125 billion in administrative waste, and its contractor-driven price gouging that hits the American taxpayer where it hurts the most—will continue to grow.

Borrowing a leaf from his buddies in China, Russia and North Korea, Trump is even planning a \$12 million military parade on November 10 to showcase the nation's military might.

Follow the money.

It always points the way.

The corporations are getting richer, average Americans are getting poorer, the military is getting more militaristic, America's endless wars are getting more endless, and the prospect of peace grows ever dimmer.

This is exactly how you keep the Deep State in power.

We've been losing our freedoms so incrementally for so long—sold to us in the name of national security and global peace, maintained by way of martial law disguised as law and order, and enforced by a standing army of militarized police and a political elite determined to maintain their powers at all costs—that it's hard to pinpoint exactly when it all started going downhill, but we're certainly on that downward trajectory now, and things are moving fast.

The "government of the people, by the people, for the people" has perished.

In its place is a shadow government, a corporatized, militarized, entrenched bureaucracy that is fully operational and staffed by unelected officials who are, in essence, running the country and calling the shots in Washington DC, no matter who sits in the White House.

Mind you, by "government," I'm not referring to the highly partisan, two-party bureaucracy of the Republicans and Democrats.

Rather, I'm referring to "government" with a capital "G," the entrenched Deep State that is unaffected by elections, unaltered by populist movements, and has set itself beyond the reach of the law.

This is the hidden face of a government that has no respect for the freedom of its citizenry.

This shadow government, which "operates according to its own compass heading regardless of who is formally in power," makes a mockery of elections and the entire concept of a representative government.

So how do you recognize the Deep State when it rears its ugly head?

It's the militarized police, which have joined forces with state and federal law enforcement agencies in order to establish themselves as a standing army.

It's the fusion centers and spy agencies that have created a surveillance state and turned all of us into suspects.

It's the courthouses and prisons that have allowed corporate profits to take precedence over due process and justice.

It's the military empire with its private contractors and defense industry that is bankrupting the nation.

It's the private sector with its 854,000 contract personnel with top-secret clearances, "a number greater than that of top-secret-cleared civilian employees of the government."

It's what former congressional staffer Mike Lofgren refers to as "a hybrid of national security and law enforcement agencies": the Department of Defense, the State Department, Homeland Security, the CIA, the Justice Department, the Treasury, the Executive Office of the President via the National Security Council, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, a handful of vital federal trial courts, and members of the defense and intelligence committees.

It's every facet of a government that is no longer friendly to freedom and is working overtime to trample the Constitution underfoot and render the citizenry powerless in the face of the government's power grabs, corruption and abusive tactics.

These are the key players that drive the shadow government.

This is the hidden face of the American police state.

Just consider some of the key programs and policies—manifestations of the police state complex—that continue to be advanced by the shadow government with the full support of its latest accomplice in the White House:

Domestic surveillance. The National Security Agency (NSA), with its \$10.8 billion black ops annual budget, continues to spy on every person in the United States who uses a computer or phone. Yet the government does not operate alone. It cannot. It requires an accomplice. Thus, the increasingly complex security needs of our massive federal government, especially in the areas of defense, surveillance and data management, have been met within the corporate sector, which has shown itself to be a powerful ally that both depends on and feeds the growth of governmental bureaucracy. For instance, through its vast telecommunications network that crisscrosses the globe, AT&T provides the U.S. government with the complex infrastructure it needs for its mass surveillance programs.

On any given day, whether you're walking through a store, driving your car, checking email, or talking to friends and family on the phone, you can be sure that some government agency, whether the NSA or some other entity, is listening in and tracking your behavior. Local police have been outfitted with a litany of surveillance gear, from license plate readers and cell phone tracking devices to biometric data recorders. Technology now makes it possible for the police to scan passersby in order to detect the contents of their pockets, purses, briefcases, etc. Full-body scanners, which perform virtual strip-searches of Americans traveling by plane, have gone mobile, with roving police vans that peer into vehicles and buildings alike—including homes. Coupled with

the nation's growing network of real-time surveillance cameras and facial recognition software, soon there really will be nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

Global spying. The NSA's massive surveillance network, what the Washington Post refers to as a \$500 billion "espionage empire," is still spanning the globe and targeting every single person on the planet who uses a phone or a computer. The NSA's Echelon program intercepts and analyzes virtually every phone call, fax and email message sent anywhere in the world. In addition to carrying out domestic surveillance on peaceful political groups such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace and several religious groups, Echelon has also been a keystone in the government's attempts at political and corporate espionage.

Roving TSA searches. The American taxpayer is still getting ripped off by government agencies in the dubious name of national security. One of the greatest culprits when it comes to swindling taxpayers has been the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), with its questionable deployment of and complete mismanagement of millions of dollars' worth of airport full-body X-ray scanners, punitive patdowns by TSA agents and thefts of travelers' valuables. Considered essential to national security, TSA programs will continue in airports and at transportation hubs around the country.

USA Patriot Act, NDAA. America's so-called war on terror, which it has relentlessly pursued since 9/11, continues to chip away at our freedoms, unravel our Constitution and transform our nation into a battlefield, thanks in large part to such subversive legislation as the USA Patriot Act and National Defense Authorization Act. These laws completely circumvent the rule of law and the rights of American citizens. In so doing, they re-orient our legal landscape in such a way as to ensure that martial law, rather than the U.S. Constitution, is the map by which we navigate life in the United States. These laws will continue to be enforced no matter who gets elected.

Militarized police state. Thanks to federal grant programs allowing the Pentagon to transfer surplus military supplies and weapons to local law enforcement agencies without charge, police forces continue to be transformed from peace officers into heavily armed extensions of the military, complete with jackboots, helmets, shields, batons, pepper-spray, stun guns, assault rifles, body armor, miniature tanks and weaponized drones. Having been given the green light to probe, poke, pinch, taser, search, seize, strip and generally manhandle anyone they see fit in almost any circumstance, all with the general blessing of the courts, America's law enforcement officials, no longer mere servants of the people entrusted with keeping the peace, continue to keep the masses corralled, controlled, and treated like suspects and enemies rather than citizens.

SWAT team raids. With more than 80,000 SWAT team raids carried out every year on unsuspecting Americans by local police for relatively routine police matters and federal agencies laying claim to their own law enforcement divisions, the incidence of botched raids and related casualties continues to rise. Nationwide, SWAT teams continue to be employed to address an astonishingly trivial array of criminal activity or mere community nuisances including angry dogs, domestic disputes, improper paperwork filed by an orchid farmer, and misdemeanor marijuana possession.

Domestic drones. The domestic use of drones has continued unabated. As mandated by Congress, there will be 30,000 drones crisscrossing the skies of America by 2020, all part of an industry that could be worth as much as \$30 billion per year. These machines, which will be equipped with weapons, will be able to record all activities, using video feeds, heat sensors and radar. An Inspector General report revealed that the Dept. of Justice has already spent nearly \$4 million on drones domestically, largely for use by the FBI, with grants for another \$1.26 million so police departments and nonprofits can acquire their own drones.

School-to-prison pipeline. The paradigm of abject compliance to the state continues to be taught by example in the schools, through school lockdowns where police and drug-sniffing dogs enter the classroom, and zero tolerance policies that punish all offenses equally and result in young people being expelled for childish behavior. School districts continue to team up with law enforcement to create a “schoolhouse to jailhouse track” by imposing a “double dose” of punishment: suspension or expulsion from school, accompanied by an arrest by the police and a trip to juvenile court.

Overcriminalization. The government bureaucracy continues to churn out laws, statutes, codes and regulations that reinforce its powers and value systems and those of the police state and its corporate allies, rendering the rest of us petty criminals. The average American now unknowingly commits three felonies a day, thanks to this overabundance of vague laws that render otherwise innocent activity illegal. Consequently, small farmers who dare to make unpasteurized goat cheese and share it with members of their community continue to have their farms raided.

Privatized Prisons. States continue to outsource prisons to private corporations, resulting in a cash cow whereby mega-corporations imprison Americans in private prisons in order to make a profit. In exchange for corporations buying and managing public prisons across the country at a supposed savings to the states, the states have to agree to maintain a 90% occupancy rate in the privately run prisons for at least 20 years.

Endless wars. America’s expanding military empire is continuing to bleed the country dry at a rate of more than \$15 billion a month (or \$20 million an hour). The Pentagon spends more on war than all 50 states combined spend on health, education, welfare, and safety. Yet what most Americans fail to recognize is that these ongoing wars have little to do with keeping the country safe and everything to do with enriching the military industrial complex at taxpayer expense.

Are you getting the message yet?

The current president, much like the previous president and his predecessors, is little more than a figurehead, a puppet to entertain and distract the populace from what’s really going on.

As Lofgren reveals, this state within a state, “concealed behind the one that is visible at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue,” is a “hybrid entity of public and private institutions ruling the country according to consistent patterns in season and out, connected to, but only intermittently controlled by, the visible state whose leaders we choose.”

The Deep State not only holds the nation’s capital in thrall, but it also controls Wall Street (“which supplies the cash that keeps the political machine quiescent and operating as a diversionary marionette theater”) and Silicon Valley.

This is fascism in its most covert form, hiding behind public agencies and private companies to carry out its dirty deeds.

It is a marriage between government bureaucrats and corporate fat cats.

As Lofgren concludes:

[T]he Deep State is so heavily entrenched, so well protected by surveillance, firepower, money and its ability to co-opt resistance that it is almost impervious to change... If there is anything the Deep State requires it is silent, uninterrupted cash flow and the confidence that things will go on as they have in the past. It is even willing to tolerate a degree of gridlock: Partisan mud wrestling over

cultural issues may be a useful distraction from its agenda.

So let's have no more of this caterwauling about Trump being victimized by the Deep State.

There is no conspiracy to do away with Trump.

He is doing too good a job at sowing division, creating distractions that keep Americans oblivious to the government's ongoing power grabs, and helping to advance the profit-driven agenda of the Deep State.

Trump is no victim.

If you want to talk about the true victims of the Deep State, let's talk about the men and women and children being shot and killed and brutalized and spied on and muzzled and jailed and robbed at gunpoint and treated as if they have no rights.

Let's talk about the sorry state of our freedoms, which have continued their downward trajectory with no let-up.

Let's talk about the fact that constitutional ignorance, corruption, ineptitude and cruelty are not unique to the Trump Administration. They have been hallmarks of the American police state.

So the next time you find yourselves mesmerized by Donald Trump's latest tweets or theatrics or drawn into a politicized debate over the machinations of Congress, the president or the judiciary, remember: as I make clear in my book *A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*, it's all intended to distract you from the fact that you have no authority and no rights in the face of the shadow government no matter who is in office.

As long as government officials—elected and unelected alike—are allowed to operate beyond the reach of the Constitution, the courts and the citizenry, the threat to our freedoms remains undiminished.

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