

THE EPOCH TIMES

OUR NATION

FBI Targeted Trump Earlier Than Official Timeline, Rep. Nunes Says

Congressman also reveals
that leaked transcripts
of Trump's early calls
with foreign leaders were
intelligence products **8**

Rep. Devin Nunes
(R-Calif.) on Capitol
Hill on Oct. 28, 2019.



Trump Announces ISIS Leader Dead

After US Raid in Syria

BOWEN XIAO

The fugitive leader of the ISIS terrorist group is now dead. President Donald Trump announced at the White House on Oct. 27, adding that capturing or killing Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was a top national security priority under his administration.

The president noted that no U.S. personnel died in the risky nighttime raid carried out by Special Operations forces in northwestern Syria over the night of Oct. 26. A large number of Baghdadi's fighters and companions were killed along with him.

"Last night, the United States brought the world's No. 1 terrorist leader to justice," Trump said. "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is dead. He was the founder and leader of ISIS, the most ruthless and violent terror organization in the World."

Baghdadi died after fleeing into a dead-end tunnel, Trump said, adding that during his final moments, the ISIS leader was "whimpering and crying and screaming."

The terrorist leader had dragged three children with him into the tunnel, and as he reached the end of it, he detonated the explosive vest he was wearing, killing himself and the children.

"His body was mutilated by the blast, but test results gave certain and positive identification," Trump said.

Baghdadi lived his final moments in "utter fear, panic, and dread—terrified of the American Forces bearing down," Trump said. Last month, his administration announced the killing of Hamza Bin Laden, the son of Osama Bin Laden, and in March, the ISIS "caliphate" was destroyed.

'Must Remain Engaged'

The key now for the United States is to ensure it remains engaged in the war on terror, because Baghdadi's death could spur an immediate reaction from his supporters, Patrick Gerard Buchan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said.

"Baghdadi died the coward that he always was," Buchan, who is director of CSIS's U.S. Alliances Project, told The Epoch Times. "ISIS has been crippled. But as we have seen, whether its from al-Qaeda to ISIS, groups do morph and change, they change names, they change geographic loca-

A brutal killer, one who has caused so much hardship and death, was violently eliminated—he will never again harm another innocent man, woman, or child.

President Donald Trump



SHEALAH GRAIGHEAD/THE WHITE HOUSE

President Donald Trump is joined by Vice President Mike Pence (2nd L), national security adviser Robert O'Brien (L), Secretary of Defense Mark Esper (3rd R), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff U.S. Army General Mark A. Milley (2nd R), and deputy director for Special Operations on the Joint Staff Brig. Gen. Marcus Evans at the White House on Oct. 26, 2019, where the president was monitoring developments as U.S. Special Operations forces closed in on ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's compound in Syria.

tions, so you have to continue to cut the head off the snake.

"Declaring victory and walking away from the war on terror will not work. The United States must remain engaged to ensure that another leader doesn't rise again."

Trump said the death of the ISIS leader was another reminder that the United States will "continue to pursue the remaining ISIS terrorists to their brutal end."

"The day before the announcement, Trump hinted there would be major news coming, saying on Twitter, 'Something very big has just happened!'"

Mark Cancian, senior adviser at the International Security Program at CSIS, told The Epoch Times that while the death of Baghdadi is significant, the fight against ISIS is not over.

"The killing of Baghdadi brings justice to the world's foremost terrorist and sends a message to his organization that it is failing and that there is no place to hide," he said via email.

"However, we must keep in mind that the killing of a terrorist leader, no matter how prominent, does not signify the end of the conflict. Osama bin Laden has been dead for eight years, yet his organization lives on."

U.S. forces stayed in the area for approximately two hours after the mission was done, where they took "highly sensitive material and information from the raid," Trump said. Baghdadi has led ISIS for the last five years.

A reporter asked Trump following the announcement if he had noti-

fied House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the news ahead of time. He replied, "I wanted to make sure this was kept secret."

The president told reporters he watched the raid as it happened, with Vice President Mike Pence and others in the White House Situation Room.

Global Support

Trump said in his speech that those who oppress and kill innocent people will not sleep soundly, "knowing that we will completely destroy them."

"These savage monsters will not escape their fate—and they will not escape the final judgement of God," he said.

The president said the raid was conducted impeccably and noted it could only have been done "with the acknowledgement and help of certain other nations and people."

"I want to thank the nations of Russia, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, and I also want to thank the Syrian Kurds for certain support they were able to give us," Trump said.

"Thank you as well to the great intelligence professionals who helped make this very successful journey possible."

Trump also thanked the American soldiers and all those involved in the operation, calling them the "very best there is anywhere in the world."

"Last night was a great night for the United States and for the World. A brutal killer, one who has caused so much hardship and death, was violently eliminated—he will never again harm another innocent man, woman, or child," Trump said.

"He died like a dog. He died like a coward. The world is now a much safer place."



ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in an interview by the terrorist group's media outlet Al-Furqan.



TASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY IMAGES

President Donald Trump announces at the White House on Oct. 27 that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the ISIS terrorist group, was killed in a military operation.



SAMIRA BOUADU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Carter Page, former foreign-policy adviser to Donald Trump during his 2016 presidential election campaign, in Washington on May 28, 2019.

Carter Page Sues DOJ, Demands Review of IG Report Prior to Release

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

A former Trump campaign associate who was wiretapped by the FBI sued the Department of Justice (DOJ) on Oct. 21, demanding that the government provide him with the opportunity to review, before it is made public, the forthcoming inspector general's report on potential surveillance abuses in his case.

In a lawsuit filed with the U.S. District Court in Washington, Carter Page accuses the DOJ of violating his privacy rights by failing to grant him the opportunity to review the report before the document is published.

The DOJ Office of Inspector General is expected to soon release a voluminous report examining potential surveillance abuses tied to secret court warrants that the FBI obtained to spy on Page.

Page additionally alleges that the DOJ violated his privacy rights by disclosing copies of the FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) warrant application to The New York Times prior to giving him an opportunity to review the documents.

In addition to requesting damages and the prosecution of the officials involved, Page is asking the court to order the DOJ to hand over all of the documents he has long sought to review and amend.

"The DOJ, its employees and officers, including those in the affiliated agency of the FBI under their jurisdiction, acted intentionally or willfully in violation of Dr. Page's privacy rights," the lawsuit states.

"As a result of the DOJ's violations of the Privacy Act, Dr. Page has suffered adverse harmful effects, including, but not limited to, mental distress, emotional trauma, embarrassment, humiliation, and lost or jeopardized present or future financial opportunities."

Page filed a formal Privacy Act request in May 2017. The request remains unfulfilled.

The Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits the government from releasing information on individuals to the public without written consent. One of the provisions also empowers citizens to review and request amendments to records that the government holds in

Bottom line: I'm not trying to delay anything, but will keep doing everything possible to ensure that it's actually accurate this time.

Carter Page, former Trump campaign associate



SAMIRA BOUADU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Carter Page in Washington on May 28, 2019.

its possession. While the lawsuit asks the court to order the DOJ not to release the report until Page has a chance to review it, Page clarified that he isn't seeking such a delay.

"There is actually no need for delay," Page wrote in an email to The Epoch Times. "For example, I was in D.C. for five straight days last weekend—Thursday morning through Monday night, October 17–21. And I had asked DOJ to meet that Thursday, 10/17. If they had followed the law and granted me permission for review like I have been requesting for many months, I would've worked on my review intensively last Saturday and Sunday. They could have received it by the time they returned to the office on Monday morning. But instead, they just continued stonewalling me so I had no choice [but] to sue. Bottom line: I'm not trying to delay anything, but will keep doing everything possible to ensure that it's actually accurate this time."

The FBI obtained a FISA warrant and began surveilling Page in October 2016. The warrant application described Page as an agent of Russia. The government didn't charge Page with a crime.

The FBI obtained the warrant as part of its counterintelligence investigation of the Trump campaign. The

application relies heavily on the dossier of political opposition research on then-candidate Donald Trump. Former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele compiled the dossier by paying second- and thirdhand sources with ties to the Kremlin. The FISA warrant application fails to mention that the Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee paid for the dossier.

Some of the claims in the dossier that cast Trump and his associates in a negative light have been debunked, while the rest remain unverified despite intense scrutiny by the media, Congress, the special counsel investigation, and privately funded research. They could have received it by the time they returned to the office on Monday morning. But instead, they just continued stonewalling me so I had no choice [but] to sue. Bottom line: I'm not trying to delay anything, but will keep doing everything possible to ensure that it's actually accurate this time."

The FBI's counterintelligence investigation evolved into the special counsel probe by Robert Mueller. The special counsel's office finished its investigation earlier this year, concluding there was insufficient evidence to establish that anyone colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

The Epoch Times has previously reported that the process for securing the FISA warrants was riddled with abnormalities and oversight failures.

In an Oct. 24 letter to lawmakers, DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz wrote that the voluminous report will be minimally redacted.

As a result of the DOJ's violations of the Privacy Act, Dr. Page has suffered adverse harmful effects.

Lawsuit filed by Carter Page, former Trump campaign associate

Senators Grill Boeing CEO Over What He Knew of 737 MAX Safety Issues

M

PETR SVAB

Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation questioned Boeing's top executives on Oct. 29 regarding safety and oversight issues stemming from the two crashes of Boeing 737 MAX planes that killed 346 in 2018 and 2019.

The senators focused on recently revealed 2016 communications of 737 MAX's then-chief technical pilot, Mark Forkner, who raised issues about the behavior of the plane's automated flight control system, MCAS, in a flight simulator. MCAS issues have been pinpointed as one of the major factors in the crashes.

The MCAS was "ramping up" during the simulation, and the plane was "trimming itself like crazy [sic]" at a relatively low speed and altitude (4,000 feet, 265 mph), Forkner texted to Patrik Gustavsson, Boeing's technical pilot at the time, who has since been promoted to take Forkner's position. The texts were provided to the Department of Justice (DOJ) in February as part of Boeing's cooperation with an investigation apparently sparked by the first crash.

Forkner's description seems to resemble what happened during the crashes of Lion Air Flight 610 on Oct. 29, 2018, and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 on March 10, 2019. In both cases, it appears, the MCAS was getting erroneous data from a faulty sensor that caused it to repeatedly "trim," meaning push the plane's nose down.

Dennis Muilenburg, president and CEO of Boeing, said he was made aware of Forkner's communications in early 2019, before the second crash, but didn't remember being briefed on the details. He noted that the company handed over half a million pages of documents, and he hadn't read all of them.

He said Boeing hasn't been able to talk to Forkner, since

How did you not in February set out a 9-alarm fire to say, 'We need to figure out exactly what happened?'

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas)

MANDEL NGAN/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Boeing President and CEO Dennis Muilenburg testifies before Congress on Oct. 29, 2019.

he no longer works at the company.

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) was apparently displeased with the explanation, accusing the CEO of "disclaiming responsibility."

"How did you not in February set out a 9-alarm fire to say, we need to figure out exactly what happened, not after all the hearings, not after the pressure, but because 346 people have died and we don't want another person to die," he said.

"I didn't see details of this exchange until recently, and we're not quite sure what Mr. Forkner meant by that exchange," Muilenburg said.

Forkner's lawyer previously told media the texts pertained to concerns about the flight simulator not behaving properly and that Forkner believed the plane was safe.

Muilenburg said it "could be" Forkner talked about the simulator. "We don't know," he said. "I fully support diving deep into this and understanding what he said and what he meant."

Cruz pointed out that Gustavsson, the recipient of the texts, still works at Boeing.

"Have you had that conversation with him?" he asked.

"Senator, my team has talked with Patrik as well," Muilenburg said.

"Have you had that conversation," Cruz emphasized. "Senator, I have not," Muilenburg said.

Some of the senators also criticized Boeing for initially only giving the texts to the DOJ and not to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Congress.

Muilenburg said he relied on the company lawyers to give the documents to authorities. Boeing didn't respond to requests for comment, but its spokesman previously told The New York Times the company didn't give the messages to the FAA earlier because of the DOJ's ongoing criminal investigation.

Regulation Push

Multiple senators called for stricter government oversight of Boeing and criticized the FAA's practice of delegating a large part of aircraft safety certifications to Boeing engineers working on the FAA's behalf.

Some also criticized the FAA for having a "cozy" relationship with Boeing.

John Hamilton, Boeing's vice president and chief engineer, disagreed, saying the relationship is "professional."

Concerns over the FAA's coziness to the industry have been raised for decades. A 2005 legislative change allowed companies to nominate their own FAA-authorized safety certification personnel. Previously, only the FAA could pick the personnel. Now, it can still reject the company picks.

The years prior to the Lion Air crash, however, have been some of the safest in aviation history, especially for U.S. airlines.

There have only been 6 major or serious accidents involving U.S. major or regional airlines between 2010 and 2017, averaging 0.75 a year, according to National Transportation Safety Board data. That's down from 4.4 such accidents a year in the decade prior.

Muilenburg said the delegation of safety certification to the industry's own experts has contributed to that record, though he was open to exploring ways to improve the delegation scheme.

The 737 MAX was grounded by regulators after the second crash, and the planes are not expected to take off again until next year. Boeing said it has put several safety updates in place to prevent a similar accident from happening again. Muilenburg said the company has taken the opportunity to give further safety improvements to 737 MAX as well as to improve its oversight of safety issues.

"We will never forget, and that is our commitment going forward," he said, addressing the families of the crash victims, some of whom were present.

MCAS (the plane's automated flight control system) issues have been pinpointed as one of the major factors in the crashes.

MANDEL NGAN/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Family members hold up photos of loved ones they lost, as John Hamilton (L), vice president and chief engineer of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, and Dennis Muilenburg (R), president and CEO of The Boeing Company, testify during a hearing on Oct. 29, 2019.

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES



Mother Loraine Marie Maguire, of the Little Sisters of the Poor, speaks to the media after arguments at the Supreme Court in Washington on March 23, 2016.

The Little Sisters never wanted this fight and have spent eight years trying to focus on caring for the elderly poor instead of fighting senseless legal battles.

Montse Alvarado, executive director, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty

Federal Appeals Court Rules Little Sisters of the Poor Must Provide Birth Control

MATTHEW VADUM

ARoman Catholic charity that objects on religious grounds to having to provide health insurance that covers birth control, sterilization, and abortifacients for its employees under the Obamacare law has lost the latest round of a long-running legal battle in a federal appeals court.

The Obama-era contraception mandate has been a source of controversy since it surfaced in 2011, reportedly spurring lawsuits from upward of 100 private individuals, religious groups, state governments, and businesses that objected to it on religious grounds. In 2017, the Trump administration created a regulation that exempted religious groups from complying with the Obamacare mandate.

In the present case, cited as California v. Little Sisters of the Poor, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit ruled on Oct. 22 that a preliminary multi-state injunction issued by U.S. District Judge Haywood S. Gilliam Jr. of San Francisco against the Trump-era exemption provided to religious groups could continue.

The Little Sisters of the Poor, a religious order and charity that operates facilities nationwide, describes itself

The Founders envisioned a Nation in which religious voices and views were integral to a vibrant public square.

President Donald Trump, in an executive order excerpt

Nuns supporting Little Sisters of the Poor, attend a rally in front of the Supreme Court in Washington on March 23, 2016.

on its website as "an international congregation of Roman Catholic women... founded in 1839 by Saint Jeanne Jugan... [that] serve the elderly poor in over 30 countries around the world... [Offering] the neediest elderly of every race and religion a home..."

The injunction bars enforcement of final rules by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in California and the other 12 states involved in the lawsuit plus the District of Columbia that exempt employers with religious and moral objections from the Affordable Care Act's requirement that group health plans cover contraceptive care.

In July, the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals also ruled against the Little Sisters, which, among other organizations, had received a religious exemption from the HHS mandate. The National Catholic Register reported.

"The Little Sisters never wanted this fight and have spent eight years trying to focus on caring for the elderly poor instead of fighting senseless legal battles. The states in these lawsuits should leave the nuns alone," said Montse Alvarado, vice president and executive director of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a public-interest law firm that represents the Little Sisters.

Alvarado wrote on Twitter on Oct. 22 that the Trump administration and

Becket have asked the Supreme Court to review the appeals court decision.

"It must step in to fix the mess and secure #religiousfreedom for the Little Sisters," she said. "Enough is enough."

The 9th Circuit itself stated in its opinion that it is "in uncharted waters" and welcomes "guidance from the Supreme Court," which has already weighed in on cases about the exemption but has yet to issue a definitive ruling.

Acknowledging that a U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania already issued a nationwide injunction against the Trump administration's exemption, the 9th Circuit stated, "The Supreme Court has yet to address the effect of a nationwide preliminary injunction on an appeal involving a preliminary injunction of limited scope."

The ruling comes almost two and a half years after President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13798 on May 4, 2017, in which he took steps to protect Americans' fundamental rights of conscience and religious liberty.

EO 13798 states it "shall be the policy of the executive branch to vigorously enforce Federal law's robust protections for religious freedom" because our "Founders envisioned a Nation in which religious voices and views were integral to a vibrant public square, and in which religious people and institutions were free to practice their faith without fear of discrimination or retaliation by the Federal Government."

The order directs "all executive departments and agencies... to the greatest extent practicable and to the extent permitted by law, respect, and protect the freedom of persons and organizations to engage in religious and political speech."

The ruling also comes after former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke of Texas, now a Democratic presidential candidate, promised earlier in October to revoke religious charities' tax-exempt status if they oppose same-sex marriage.

"There can be no reward, no benefit, no tax break for anyone or any institution, any organization in America that denies the full human rights and the full civil rights of every single one of us," he told CNN's Don Lemon. "So, as president, we're going to make that a priority and we are going to stop those who are infringing upon the human rights of our fellow Americans."



MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES



OLIVIER DOULIERY-POOL VIA GETTY IMAGES

Evangelicals Worry About Growing Intolerance, See Trump as Bulwark of Protection

MARK TAPSCOTT

Every Wednesday at 7 a.m., a small group of federal officials gather around a table somewhere in Washington to study the Bible and how it affects them in their personal lives and as public servants.

Their numbers can vary due to the intense demands of being members of President Donald Trump's Cabinet, but on any given Wednesday, their ranks can include Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson, and NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine.

Leading their study is Ralph Drollinger, founder and president of the evangelical group Capitol Ministries (CapMin), who also leads similar weekly gatherings of senators and representatives. Drollinger's CapMin groups are also found in 32 state capitols and 24 nations around the earth.

But it's the Trump Cabinet study that has most raised eyebrows recently, so much so that The New York Times Magazine described it on Oct. 29 as "perhaps the most influential small-group Bible study in the world."

Other than the prominence and power of the attendees, however, Drollinger's Cabinet study is very much like the millions of similar evangelical Bible studies that meet every day of the week in every part of America.

"These millions of evangelical Christians believe the Bible is the authoritative guide to daily living.

Bible Central to Political Beliefs

More than any other group of Americans, evangelicals define good and evil, morality and immorality, based on the Bible and their faith, according to Lifeway Research, the research arm of the Christian book publisher.

The centrality of the Bible in evangelical political thinking is reflected in a recent Lifeway survey that found 80 percent of evangelicals "say the Bible informs their political views," while 81 percent "say they look for biblical principles to apply in evaluating political issues."

When 1,000 Americans were asked about the biggest influences on their views on morality, the most often-cited factor at 39 percent was "parents," Lifeway reported in 2017.

But Lifeway also found that "those with evangelical beliefs are most likely to point to their faith (64 percent), rather than their parents (22 percent)."

Evangelicals are also the most generous group of Americans, with eight of the top 10 most giving states (ranked according to their residents' average percentage of net income devoted

They've evolved in realizing there are no perfect presidents and that we can really only select a president on the basis of his policies.

Robert Jeffress, Baptist pastor



Danielle Drollinger

Powerful interests on the other side of today's polarizing society now want to make Christian belief a mark of bigotry and hate.

Tom Gilson, senior editor, The Stream

to charitable support) being in the South where Southern Baptist and independent conservative churches are especially common, according to the Philanthropy Roundtable.

And evangelicals believe in the power of prayer. The Barna Group reported in 2018 that "as of early 2017, 37 percent of American adults reported praying for Trump. Evangelicals were the group most active in their prayer, along with majorities of [other] groups with an active Christian faith."

Barna also noted that "these prayers were just as common among black Americans as among white Americans, but less common among those who profess a non-Christian faith or fall into the category of notional Christians."

Civility

Many evangelicals worry about the ultimate fate of the country if officials they support are defeated in upcoming elections.

"Almost three in five evangelicals by belief (58 percent) say that if those with whom they disagree politically are able to implement their agenda, "our democracy will be in danger," Lifeway reported in its recent "Civility and Politics" survey.

Civility in public policy discussion remains important to most evangelicals, according to Lifeway, which found 66 percent "believe being civil in political conversations is productive, with 22 percent dissenting and 12 percent not sure."

They worry, though, that their own civility is no longer returned by those who disagree with them.

"Powerful interests on the other side of today's polarizing society now want to make Christian belief a mark of bigotry and hate," Tom Gilson, senior editor of the evangelical website The Stream, wrote earlier in October.

Support for Trump

Evangelicals make up, depending on how they are defined, anywhere from



SHEALAH CRAIG/HEAD/THE WHITE HOUSE

neighbor, and is in no serious, continual, present breach of the 10 Commandments," Drollinger said.

A key to understanding the high level of evangelical support for Trump and for conservative Republicans more generally is their appreciation for the president as a "warrior," according to Dr. Robert Jeffress, senior pastor of the 14,000-member First Baptist Dallas mega-church in Texas.

Jeffress was among a small group of key evangelical leaders who met on Oct. 29 with Trump in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Others in the meeting included Faith and Freedom Coalition President Ralph Reed, Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, and American Values President Gary Bauer. Former Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) was also in the gathering.

"I think people did not elect him because of his piety. He doesn't pretend to be overly pious, but they elected him because they view him as the warrior," Jeffress told The Epoch Times on Oct. 30.

"He's the one fighting for values that evangelicals hold very dearly and I think that's one reason you have such pushback from evangelicals on impeachment.

"They take impeachment personally. They think to impeach President Trump equates with impeaching their own deeply held values. Christians have, I think for at least half a century, felt marginalized in society, and they see President Trump as representing values they think are important to the American people."

'Evolution in Expectation'

Asked how evangelical support for Trump despite his alleged flaws compares with liberal support in 1998 for President Bill Clinton following his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, Jeffress said "evangelicals stick with Trump because of his pro-life, pro-Israel and pro-religious liberty views and their opposition to Clinton wasn't just due to his personal foibles, but because of the policies he embraced."

Jeffress also said he believes there has been "an evolution in expectation" among evangelicals since Clinton was in the Oval Office.

"They've evolved in realizing there are no perfect presidents and that we can really only select a president on the basis of his policies, not on the basis of personal shortcomings he may have had in the past," Jeffress said.

Jeffress also told The Epoch Times that many evangelical leaders like Reed and Perkins often express admiration for former President Ronald Reagan.

"They loved Ronald Reagan but the point they made was that, even in the Reagan administration and the Bush two years, we've never had this kind of access to the White House as we've had under President Trump," he said. Asked if conservative leaders like Vice President Mike Pence, who has called himself an "evangelical Catholic," will command the same level of evangelical support after Trump leaves office, Jeffress was upbeat.

"Vice President Pence is a friend of mine and he is an authentic Christian and a gifted leader. He is the natural heir to President Trump in 2024," he said.

Jeffress also said Pompeo, Secretary of Energy and former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson would command significant support among evangelicals if they ran for elected office again.

A Warrior But white evangelical support for Trump isn't unconditional. Pew also found that "roughly half of white evangelicals do not think that Trump has set a high moral standard for the presidency since taking office."

Drollinger agreed, telling The Epoch Times on Oct. 30 that he doesn't "think it is fair to assume that evangelicals would stick with Trump no matter what. If he showed no regard for God's moral law, then I think they'd turn from supporting him."

Trump will be OK with most evangelicals as long as "in the outward sense he loves the Lord and loves his

Contact Mark Tapscott at mark.tapscott@epochtimes.nyc

(Top) President Donald Trump greets Pastor Robert Jeffress during the Celebrate Freedom Rally in Washington on July 1, 2017.

(Bottom) President Donald Trump at Joint Base Andrews, Md., on Oct. 17, 2019.

Trump: Schiff Wasn't Told of ISIS Raid Because He 'Is the Biggest Leaker in Washington'

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

President Donald Trump told reporters in Washington on Oct. 28 that the White House didn't notify the House Intelligence Committee about a raid against the leader of the ISIS terrorist group because of concern that the information would be leaked by committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.).

"Well, I guess the only thing is they were talking about why didn't I give the information to Adam Schiff and his committee. And the answer is: Because I think Adam Schiff is the biggest leaker in Washington," Trump said.

"You know that. I know that. We all know that. I've watched Adam Schiff leak. He's a corrupt politician. He's a leaker like nobody has ever seen before."

U.S. forces conducted the raid that resulted in the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the founder of ISIS and arguably the most wanted terrorist in the world, on Oct. 26 in Syria's Idlib province. Baghdadi's death marked a major blow to ISIS, which has already lost all of its territory in the Middle East since Trump took office.

"Last night, the United States brought the world's No. 1 terrorist leader to justice," Trump said in an announcement. "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is dead. He was the founder and leader of ISIS, the most ruthless and violent terror organization in the world."

The president has repeatedly accused Schiff of leaking information to the press. In February last year, Trump wrote on Twitter that Schiff "is one of the biggest liars and leakers in Washington." In March this year, Trump wrote, "Congressman Adam Schiff, who spent two years knowingly and unlawfully lying and leaking, should be forced to resign from Congress!"

Unauthorized leaks to the media had potentially contributed to al-Baghdadi slipping

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, holds a press conference on Capitol Hill on Oct. 15, 2019.



ERIC BARADAT/APP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Adam Schiff is the biggest leaker in Washington.

President Donald Trump

away from U.S. forces, Gen. Tony Thomas said in 2017. During a raid that killed ISIS oil minister Abu Sayyaf in 2015, U.S. forces captured Sayyaf's wife, who provided a trove of valuable information on Baghdadi's recent whereabouts.

"That was a very good lead. Unfortunately, it was leaked in a prominent national newspaper about a week later and that lead went dead," Thomas said at the Aspen Security Forum.

"The challenge we have [is] in terms of where and how our tactics and procedures are discussed openly. There's a great need to inform the American public about what we're up to. There's also a great need to recognize things that will absolutely undercut our ability to do our job."

Thomas was likely referring to a June 2015 New York Times article that disclosed details of the Sayyaf raid, including the information that U.S. forces seized.

"Abu Sayyaf's wife, Umm Sayyaf, who was captured in the operation, has also provided information to investigators, one senior American official said," the newspaper reported.

Schiff is leading the Democratic-run impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives. The investigation is being conducted behind closed doors and has been characterized by a number of selective leaks of information damaging to Trump.

Schiff said that the congressional Gang of Eight consists of the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate intelligence committees.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) criticized the White House for not notifying Congress in her statement about the killing of al-Baghdadi. Trump had previously said the White House planned to notify Congress, "but we decided not to do that because Washington leaks like I've never seen before."

2nd Democrat Aide Sentenced in Kavanaugh 'Doxxing' Scheme

KATABELLA ROBERTS

A former staff member who worked for Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) was sentenced on Oct. 28 for her part in an attempt to burgle her former employer's office, officials confirmed.

Samantha DeForest-Davis, 24, was sentenced to two years of supervised probation with 200 hours of community service and given a suspended sentence of 180 days in prison.

DeForest-Davis was also ordered to stay away from Hassan's office and current and former staff, and to not use Tor or anonymized computer applications.

DeForest-Davis pleaded guilty on July 30 to the federal charge of aiding and abetting computer fraud, and to the District of Columbia charge of attempted tampering with evidence, according to a statement issued by the Depart-

ment of Justice.

According to the statement, DeForest-Davis had been employed by Hassan and was also friends with Jackson Cosko, a former colleague at the office who had been fired in May 2018.

In what police have dubbed a "doxxing" scheme, DeForest-Davis helped Cosko, 27, burgle the senator's office, where he illegally accessed Senate computers and stole information from them between July and October 2018.

According to Courthouse News Service, Cosko released personal information such as home addresses and phone numbers of Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah), and then-Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) on Wikipedia and Twitter.

The publication claims Cosko also publicized information about Kentucky's senior U.S. senator, Mitch

DeForest-Davis was ordered to stay away from Hassan's office and current and former staff, and to not use Tor or anonymized computer applications.

Judge Brett Kavanaugh at the White House on July 9, 2018.



SAUL LOEB/APP/GETTY IMAGES

McConnell, and then-Sen. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.).

It states that Cosko felt compelled to release the sensitive information after becoming enraged about the senators' support for Justice Brett Kavanaugh, amid the sexual allegations made against him.

By August 2018, DeForest-Davis began to suspect that Cosko was breaking into the senator's office and stealing information from Senate computers, yet she failed to report him.

On the night of Oct. 2, 2018, DeForest-Davis agreed to lend Cosko her keys to the senator's office with the understanding that he would unlawfully enter the office to access Senate computers.

DeForest-Davis agreed to lend her keys to Cosko in return for money for her rent, according to Courthouse News Service.

Cosko then used the keys to break into the office that night and accessed information from a Senate computer.

However, he fled when he was spotted by another worker in the office who then reported the break-in to U.S. Capitol Police.

The morning after the break-in, Cosko returned the keys to DeForest-Davis and persuaded her to "wipe down" the computers, keyboards, and computer mice in the senator's office in a bid to destroy any evidence of the burglary.

When DeForest-Davis did what Cosko had instructed her to do, she was seen by another employee who had entered the building early.

In court, DeForest-Davis acknowledged that she had lied to her former employer and the U.S. Capitol Police a number of times during the investigation, claiming that she knew nothing about Cosko's illegal activities.

Cosko pleaded guilty to five federal offenses, including two counts of making public restricted personal information, and one count each of computer fraud, witness tampering, and obstruction of justice.

He was sentenced to four years in prison.

According to Fox News, Cosko previously worked for a number of prominent Democrats, including former Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), and with the office of Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.).

Investigation of Trump Campaign Started Earlier Than Official Timeline, Nunes Says

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

The investigation into the 2016 presidential campaign of then-candidate Donald Trump started earlier than the official date listed in the final report by special counsel Robert Mueller, according to Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), the ranking Republican on the House Intelligence Committee.

According to the Mueller report, the FBI opened the counterintelligence investigation of the Trump campaign on July 31, 2016. But Nunes told The Epoch Times that “the FBI investigation did not begin at the end of July.”

In a wide-ranging interview, Nunes also confirmed that the FBI didn’t appropriately brief the congressional “Gang of Eight”—the House speaker and minority leader, the Senate majority and minority leaders, and the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate intelligence committees—about its probe of the campaign and that the intelligence community continued scooping up Trump’s communications even after Inauguration Day.

Nunes says that the surveillance of the Trump campaign is the greatest political scandal in modern American history, and in a newly published book about Nunes’s work to expose the spying, author Lee Smith arrived at the same conclusion. Nunes emphasized that the media played a major role in the scandal by disseminating opposition research at least partly funded by the campaign of Hillary Clinton.

At the core of the scandal is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrant the FBI obtained to spy on Trump campaign associate Carter Page. The bureau used an unverified dossier of opposition research in the FISA warrant application, without mentioning that the dossier was funded by Clinton’s campaign and the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

Clinton and the DNC paid for the dossier through a law firm, Perkins Coie, which, in turn, hired Fusion GPS, a political opposition research firm. Fusion GPS hired former British spy Christopher Steele, the author of the dossier, who paid second- and thirdhand sources with ties to the Kremlin for the claims in the dossier.

The FBI paid Steele as a confidential human source but cut ties with him after learning that he was leaking to the media. Notably, the FISA application cites a media article to buttress Steele’s claims, even though the article appears to have resulted from a leak by Steele himself.

“So it’s clear all of this was being done with the help of the media, and then being plugged into the FBI,” Nunes said.

“And the only question that you really have is, at what point did this whole Clinton campaign operation with Fusion GPS, what time did it merge with the FBI investigation? Because we know that the FBI investigation did not begin at the end of July and that’s really what [U.S. Attorney John] Durham needs to get to the bottom of and then figure out who was responsible for all of it.”

Attorney General William Barr appointed Durham earlier this year to investigate the origins of the FBI’s probe of the Trump campaign.

The Mueller report states that the FBI opened its counterintelligence investigation of the Trump campaign on July 31, 2016, after learning that George Papadopoulos, a Trump campaign adviser, mentioned to a “representative of a foreign government” that Russia had damaging information on Clinton.

The assertion by Nunes that the FBI’s investigation started earlier than that could mean that either FBI officials were improperly probing the Trump campaign without formally opening an investigation



Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) on Capitol Hill on Oct. 26, 2019.

or that another probe predated Crossfire Hurricane, the code name for the operation that FBI agent Peter Strzok opened and approved on July 31 of that year.

Three weeks prior, at the FBI’s direction, undercover informant Stefan Halper met with Page, the Trump campaign associate, at a symposium at Cambridge University, and they remained in touch for several months. The New York Times first reported that Halper was acting on instructions from the FBI.

While FBI agents can conduct some activity without opening a full investigation, tasking an informant to interact with potential witnesses without opening a probe would be in violation of the bureau’s Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide (DIOG).

Before opening a full investigation, FBI agents can open an assessment, which doesn’t require a “particular factual prediction.” Nevertheless, the basis for an assessment “cannot be arbitrary or groundless speculation,” the DIOG states. During the assessment, the agents are authorized to collect publicly available information, search FBI and Justice Department records, conduct clarifying interviews, and accept voluntary information from private entities. Tasking an informant to interact with witnesses, as was done with Halper, isn’t one of the authorized activities.

During Mueller’s testimony in late July this year, Nunes asked the special counsel whether his team interviewed Steven Schrage, the man who invited Page to the symposium where Page met Halper.

“Those areas, I am going to stay away from,” Mueller replied.

The special counsel’s investigation concluded in March, finding insufficient evidence to establish that anyone colluded with Russia



perched. And it had nothing to do with Russia.”

Nunes previously revealed, in March 2017, that he had confirmed that the intelligence community incidentally collected the communications of Trump’s transition team and intentionally unmasked the names of individual officials. His comments to The Epoch Times on Oct. 28 show that intelligence gathering on Trump and his associates continued beyond Inauguration Day and appeared in major leaks to the media.

“And then the media had no interest in that. Not only were they never interested in the unmaskings that occurred, they continue to be against it. They said that I did all kinds of things wrong, and they only wanted to know where I got it from. And then they made up a totally phony story about how somehow I was going over to the White House at midnight, which was completely nuts,” Nunes said, referring to disproven allegations that he was coordinating his investigation with the White House.

The Trump administration was subjected to a barrage of leaks beginning on the president’s first day in office. A Senate investigation determined that during Trump’s first 126 days of the Trump administration, leaks flowed at a rate of one per day. Many of the leaks contained information meant to damage or ridicule Trump or his associates. Roughly half of the unauthorized disclosures went to The New York Times and The Washington Post.

The revelation that the intelligence community was surveilling a sitting president is the latest development in the scandal surrounding the spying on Trump’s campaign. The claim by Nunes aligns with reports that Durham has extended the timeline of his criminal investigation to include the early months of Trump’s presidency. Fox News reported earlier this month that the time frame of Durham’s inquiry now extends up until the spring of 2017.

It isn’t known whether Durham is looking into the unmaskings of the president from incidentally collected intelligence. Barr told Congress that he believes spying occurred on the Trump campaign and that he’s looking to determine whether the surveillance was legal and free of improper motivation.

Media

Nunes noted that the media figures who played a role in the scandal have exposed themselves as “activists.” The point is driven home in Smith’s book on Nunes’s work, titled “The Plot Against the President: The True Story of How Congressman Devin Nunes Uncovered the Biggest Political Scandal in U.S. History.”

Smith “shows how corrupt and how involved the media was in all of this. And I think that’s the key. The key part of Lee’s book is that one thing that happened through the “Russiagate” hoax is that all the little media rats have run off the ship and they’ve exposed themselves,” Nunes said.

“And so I don’t know that we’re ever going to come back to have a media like we’ve had. ... I mean, everybody knew the media was left-wing, but nobody knew that they were actually activists.”

Epoch Times senior editor Jan Jekielek contributed to this report.

President Donald Trump speaks to media before boarding Marine One at the White House on Oct. 10, 2019.

So it's clear all of this was being done with the help of the media and then being plugged into the FBI.

Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), ranking member, House Intelligence Committee



John H. Durham, U.S. attorney for the District of Connecticut since February 2018.

to influence the 2016 presidential election.

After Mueller’s testimony, Nunes told Fox News that he’s investigating what role Schrage played, including whether Schrage handled the Steele dossier.

Nunes told The Epoch Times that he’s still investigating the issues tied to the spying on Trump’s campaign.

“Just last Friday—I’m not going to get into it—but we’ve sent additional followup letters based on our ongoing investigation into FISA abuse and other matters,” Nunes said. “So our investigation continues.”

Leaks

Nunes confirmed, for the first time, that leaks of the details of the calls between President Trump and the leaders of Mexico and Australia in 2017 were the product of intelligence gathering.

According to Nunes, sources told the House Intelligence Committee that the leaks of the calls between Trump and the foreign leaders were based on intelligence products, prompting Nunes to investigate the issue.

“We knew right away in January that unmasking was occurring. Well, we knew the big one, the major one, was the Flynn transcript that was given out. And then you slowly had the Australian prime minister, you had the Mexican president, plus stories that we were seeing out in the mainstream news media. It was clear that somehow people were getting information from what appeared to be intelligence products,” Nunes said Oct. 28.

“We had some sources that had come to us to tell us that this was happening. So finally, we were able to finally piece it together, and I was able to review it. And then, once I saw what it was, and it was much more than what I ex-

WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) speaks during the fourth Democratic primary debate of the 2020 presidential campaign season in Westerville, Ohio, on Oct. 15, 2019.

Elizabeth Warren’s Wealth Tax Proposal Is Unconstitutional—and Why You Shouldn’t Believe Law Professors’ Claims to the Contrary

ROB NATELSON



Commentary
Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s (D-Mass.) proposal for a federal wealth tax is flatly

unconstitutional. This is despite two letters of support from 17 law professors, who apparently signed their names without fully investigating the subject.

The Constitution distinguishes between direct and indirect taxes. Indirect taxes must be uniform throughout the country. Congress must impose the same tax rates on citizens of all states.

But Congress must draft direct tax laws so their revenue is “apportioned” among states by population. Because wealth varies among the states, federal direct tax statutes must feature different rate schedules for each state. The 16th Amendment waived that requirement for income taxes, but not for other direct levies.

Warren’s proposed wealth tax is a classic example of a direct tax. However, it would impose the same rates everywhere without regard to state boundaries, thereby violating the Constitution’s “apportionment” mandate.

Why, then, would law professors sign letters certifying that her proposal is constitutional?

Taxation Myths

It’s clear from their letters that the signers largely accept two myths about the Constitution’s taxation clauses: (1) the founders didn’t understand the difference between direct and indirect taxes; and (2) almost the only direct taxes are head taxes (which the Constitution calls “Capitations”) and levies on real estate.

The first conclusion is commonly based on an incident at the Constitutional Convention. According to James Madison, Massachusetts delegate Rufus King asked the precise meaning of “direct taxation,” and no one answered him.

But this silence didn’t necessarily stem from ignorance, and Madison never says it did. Ignorance would be

unlikely, because the founding-era record shows very wide agreement on the differences between direct and indirect taxes.

References to direct and indirect taxes appear in founding-era newspapers and pamphlets, government documents, economics treatises, the debates over the Constitution’s ratification, and British and American statutes.

The direct/indirect distinction was central to 18th-century tax statutes. Indirect tax statutes placed “duties” on certain luxury items, such as carriages, and on discrete events. The principal “duties” were levies on imports and exports, domestic excises (essentially sales taxes), and charges on legal transactions, such as Parliament’s notorious 1765 Stamp Act.

In addition to indirect tax laws, most jurisdictions enacted separate statutes imposing direct tax schemes. People sometimes referred to a scheme of direct levies as “the land tax.” That label may have confused some modern readers into thinking direct taxes were primarily those laid on real estate. In fact, direct tax or “land tax” statutes usually were levied on much more than land.

Specifically, these statutes typically imposed levies on some or all of the following: annuities, loan proceeds, and other income; livestock, tools, machinery, and other business property; listed trades and occupations (“facilities”); household items—and wealth. Direct tax statutes frequently required that revenue be apportioned among local governments, such as towns and counties.

The record of the constitutional debates shows a keen understanding of these facts. For example, John Marshall, the future chief justice, noted at the Virginia ratifying convention, “The objects of direct taxes are well understood,” and then proceeded to enumerate several of them.

Oliver Ellsworth, a Constitutional Convention delegate and another future chief justice, emphasized the distinction when promoting the Constitution in Connecticut. Many of the Constitution’s opponents also discussed the distinction between direct and indirect impositions.

The founding generation noted the

vast number of items subject to direct taxes. They addressed how direct taxes caused hardship and how politicians might use them to target unpopular minorities—just as Warren is seeking to do. Many argued that Congress shouldn’t have the power to impose direct taxes at all. Ultimately, the framers added that power because it might be necessary to fund wartime revenue needs.

As noted above, apportionment among smaller units of government was common. That fact encouraged the Constitution’s framers to require that federal direct taxes be apportioned among the states. They also hoped apportionment would protect minorities from being plundered by a ruling coalition. Further, the complexity of apportionment would discourage Congress from adopting direct levies when indirect ones were sufficient. (Some writers add that apportionment was designed partly to punish or accommodate slavery, but there is little evidence for this.)

Facts and Politics
The facts about direct and indirect taxes are now readily available. They are laid out in a series of studies published over the past two decades, including one I authored. So why would 17 law professors sign letters claiming wealth taxes are indirect?

Some people are tempted by political considerations—and in my long academic career, I learned that many law professors are among them. The fact that many of America’s law schools are one-sided political hothouses further encourages leftist passion at the expense of curiosity and care.

When you are passionate, you prefer to expound before you investigate, and apparently, that occurred in this instance. The law professors’ letters show no familiarity with any of the major studies of the Constitution’s financial provisions. To the extent they contain any analysis, the letters merely extrapolate from some Supreme Court cases issued before those studies were published.

Even the treatment of the cases is flawed. For example, one letter deduces that wealth taxes are indirect from the Supreme Court’s holding that estate taxes are indirect. But wealth

and estate taxes are different, and a primary factor behind the court’s estate tax conclusion is missing from wealth taxes.

One of the two letters does cite a short, recent article defending the constitutionality of wealth taxes. But that article largely ignores the founding-era record, other than to repeat the discredited claim that the meaning of direct tax “was unclear to the Framers themselves.”

My experience in legal academia taught me that most law professors don’t perform high-quality constitutional analysis. The political bias prevailing on law faculties discourages independent thinking. Moreover, most law professors don’t have the necessary skills: Most are hired with little experience beyond law school and are ignorant of historical method, and of the language, customs, ideas, and jurisprudence of the founding era.

Not surprisingly, they have produced a great deal of nonsense. I have written elsewhere about how law professors promulgated misinformation about the Constitution’s amendment process and many other constitutional provisions—and even about such non-political topics such as the origins of condominium ownership. Their pronouncements about Warren’s wealth tax comprise yet another example.

Whatever the Supreme Court has said in the past, the evidence is now compelling that wealth taxes are “direct” as the Constitution uses the term. Today’s Supreme Court justices all show considerable respect for the Constitution’s original meaning. Before this court, Warren’s wealth tax would be unlikely to survive.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Rob Natelson was a law professor for 25 years and authored a comprehensive historical study of the Constitution’s tax provisions: “What the Constitution Means by ‘Duties, Imposts, and Excises’—and ‘Taxes’ (Direct or Otherwise).” He is a senior fellow in Constitutional Jurisprudence at the Independence Institute in Denver.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



Law enforcement officers walk out of the FBI Building in Washington on Jan. 28, 2019.

Criminal Indictments Could Be Coming in 'Russiagate'

STEPHEN MEISTER

Commentary

Four recent, blockbuster developments in "Russiagate" could spell big trouble, including, in my opinion, forthcoming criminal indictments for upper-echelon Obama-era officials.

Inspector General's Report on FISA Abuses

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael Horowitz said in a letter to House and Senate leaders on Oct. 24 that he would shortly release his much-awaited report on possible Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) abuses by Obama-era officials against the Trump campaign ahead of the 2016 election.

He also said that he expected the report would be released to the public with "few redactions."

Horowitz's investigation began in early 2018, after lawmakers and former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions questioned whether the FBI had misled the FISA court when it sought to surveil Carter Page, a former Trump campaign volunteer, in 2016 in relation to the "Russia collusion" probe.

The collusion probe was proved to be a hoax after the exhaustive nearly two-year investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

Partially redacted versions of the FBI's FISA warrant application to surveil Page revealed that the FBI relied on the largely discredited dossier written by British ex-spy Christopher Steele, while working for Fusion GPS, a research company that had been hired and paid by the Hillary Clinton campaign and Democratic National Committee (DNC) to dig up dirt on Trump. The FBI apparently hid from the FISA court that the Clinton campaign and DNC had ordered and paid for the Fusion GPS report, and therefore, indirectly, the dossier itself.

Worse, the FBI apparently vouched for the dossier's allegations surrounding Page, even though the FBI had already veri-

fied that Steele's allegations concerning Page were false.

For example, while the dossier had reported that Page, during a July 2016 trip to Moscow, secretly met with two associates of Vladimir Putin—Rosneft oil executive Igor Sechin and senior government official Igor Divyeykin—as part of the effort to collude with the Trump campaign, the FBI's investigation revealed that Page only met with a lower-level Rosneft official, and shook hands with a Russian deputy prime minister. This was far cry from the tale spun by Steele's dossier, as investigative journalist John Solomon reported in a July 2019 article published by The Hill.

Steele claimed that Sechin had offered Page "a 19 percent (privatized) stake in Rosneft in return" if he could get Trump to help lift sanctions on Moscow. According to Solomon, "That offer, worth billions of dollars, was never substantiated and was deemed by some in U.S. intelligence to be preposterous."



(Above) Global Natural Gas Ventures founder Carter Page participates in a discussion on "politicization of DOJ and the intelligence community in their efforts to undermine the president," hosted by Judicial Watch at the One America News studios, on Capitol Hill on May 29, 2019.

(Below) Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz arrives before testifying to the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill on June 18, 2018.



CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen—who would eventually "flip" on Trump after facing substantial prison time for charges brought against him by Mueller including for tax and bank fraud unrelated to his work for Trump—admitted (and apparently his passport proved) he was not in Prague in the summer of 2016, when Steele claimed he was meeting with Russians to coordinate a hijacking of the election.

Steele also identified former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort as among the alleged Russian co-conspirators inside the Trump campaign. That proved to be false as well, although, like Cohen, the falsity of Steele's charges against Manafort didn't immunize him from criminal charges by Mueller predating and unrelated to his work for Trump.

Mueller, after his exhaustive two-year-long investigation, didn't confirm, or provide, any evidence for any of the claims made in the Steele dossier, including the salacious claim that Russians controlled Trump because they possessed incriminating sex tapes showing Trump had engaged in depraved acts with Russian prostitutes.

Flynn pleaded guilty based on fraudulently altered notes from an FBI interview after exculpatory evidence was improperly withheld from him.

The FBI knew, long before the Mueller report, and even before submitting the dossier to the FISA court to surveil Page, that the dossier was false. According to Solomon, the FBI had prepared an extensive spreadsheet on the dossier, either affirmatively disproving or noting the FBI's inability to verify its central claims.

Even after developing their extensive spreadsheet disproving or failing to verify the dossier's claims, the DOJ not only submitted information contained in the dossier to the FISA court, stating contrarily (i.e., falsely) that the FBI vouched for the Page-related claims, but also added that it "did not believe" Steele was the source for a Yahoo News article implicating Page in Russian collusion. Instead, the FBI used that September 2016 article by Yahoo's Michael Isikoff as independent corroboration of the dossier before the FISA court.

However, UK court documents showed that Steele had briefed Yahoo News, as well as other reporters, at the direction of Fusion GPS in the fall of 2016.

Separately, a troublesome conflict of interest has emerged between the DOJ and Fusion GPS. As Solomon reported last May, Nellie Ohr, while working for Fusion GPS at the time, funneled her research to her DOJ-prosecutor husband, Bruce Ohr.

Tom Fitton, head of Judicial Watch, whose Freedom of In-

formation Act request led to the disclosure of the Ohr-Ohr emails, claims they raise serious questions of a conflict of interest. According to Fitton: "The documents show that Nellie Ohr had extraordinary access to the Justice Department. Nellie Ohr may as well as have had a desk at DOJ."

Horowitz's forthcoming report on FISA abuses by the DOJ and the FBI, will likely conclude serious FISA abuses, as the information already in the public realm suggests strongly that the FISA court was intentionally deceived by the DOJ and the FBI.

After the FBI had prepared an extensive spreadsheet on the Steele dossier either affirmatively disproving or noting the FBI's inability to verify its central claims, they submitted the dossier to the FISC court.

Durham's Probe Becomes Criminal Investigation

IG Horowitz's findings on FISA abuses are what likely, at least in part, led to the recent revelation that John Durham, the U.S. attorney appointed by Attorney General William Barr to investigate the investigators, has transitioned into a full-fledged criminal investigation, with the power to issue subpoenas, convene grand jury proceedings, and recommend federal charges.

Besides the potential FISA abuses, a source in the Italian Ministry of Justice told The Daily Beast earlier this month that Barr and Durham went to Rome recently, where, while sitting in a secure conference room, they were played a taped deposition of Joseph Mifsud, the Maltese professor who allegedly told then-Trump campaign aide George Papadopoulos that the Russians had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton. In addition to the Steele dossier, the Russia-collusion investigation was largely predicated on Mifsud's alleged statements to Papadopoulos that the Russians had obtained Clinton's emails.

Papadopoulos has said he was introduced to Mifsud as part of an entrapment orchestrated by U.S. intelligence agencies.

One America News Network (OANN) reporter Jack Posobiec on Oct. 25 reported that Barr and Durham had "flipped" former FBI general counsel James Baker to cooperate with them on the Mifsud situation.

If Mifsud, whose cell phones were recently acquired by Durham, was really an FBI or CIA asset, then, instead of being able to say that a minor Trump campaign volunteer was told by a Russian asset that the Russians had Clinton's emails, the truth would be that Obama-era officials used their own asset, who initiated contact with that low-level volunteer.

If true, that's proof of one of the greatest scandals in modern U.S. politics.

Fox News reports that its sources said Durham is "very interested" to question former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper and former CIA Director John Brennan.

'Sisters Have Begun Leaking Like Mad'

On Oct. 23, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, and Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, wrote to Michael Atkinson, the inspector general of the intelligence community, asking whether he had opened an investigation into the frequent, national-security damaging leaks—averaging one leaked story per day during Trump's first 18 weeks in office—by the intelligence community aimed at disrupting the Trump presidency.

The letter included some never-before-revealed texts and emails including a Dec. 15, 2016, text by since-fired FBI agent Peter Strzok

to his FBI lawyer paramour, Lisa Page, in which Strzok said: "Think our sisters have begun leaking like mad. Scorned and worried and political, they are kicking into overdrive."

The senators want to know who the "sisters" are—presumably other intelligence agencies, including the CIA.

Flynn's Counsel Claims FBI Notes Were Altered

Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, was charged and pleaded guilty to having made false statements to the FBI during their questioning of him, as part of the FBI's counter-intelligence investigation into the president.

Although many people don't realize it, audio recordings or stenographic transcripts of FBI interviews—while they form the basis of charges such as the one against Flynn—aren't always made. Instead, the government relies on the FBI agents' notes, supposedly contemporaneous, of the questions and answers at the subject's interview summarized in an FD-302 form.

Flynn's star counsel is now Sidney Powell, an accomplished former U.S. attorney, who worked at the DOJ for 10 years, in three federal districts under nine U.S. attorneys from both political parties. In a blockbuster 37-page motion, a minimally redacted copy of which is available online, Powell charges that the FBI conducted an ambush interview of Flynn that wasn't for the purpose of investigating any crimes he may have committed.

Indeed, a Jan. 30, 2017, internal joint DOJ and FBI memo, less than a week after his interview, exonerated Flynn of being an agent of Russia, according to Powell.

Instead, Powell charges that the Jan. 24, 2017, interview—four days after Trump's inauguration and two weeks after BuzzFeed had published the Steele dossier—was arranged as if a mere meeting among colleagues, after FBI top brass, including then-FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, Strzok, Lisa Page, and then-FBI general counsel James Baker, decided upon a strategy of entrapping Flynn into making a false statement. According to Powell, McCabe himself made the call to Flynn, breaking FBI protocol, to set up the perjury trap interview, a move approved—she said—by then-FBI Director James Comey. As noted above, OANN's Posobiec said that Baker has been "flipped" by Barr and Durham.

According to Powell's filing, the FBI also altered the FD-302 form of Flynn's interview to create, "from whole cloth," statements that have no basis in the handwritten notes.



Joseph Mifsud in Zurich, Switzerland, in May 2018. The photo shows a signed power of attorney document dated May 21, 2018.

At issue are supposed false statements by Flynn regarding what he "said or did not say" about then-Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Sergey Kislyak, getting back to him on how Russia would react to his requests about a U.N. vote and about President Barack Obama's expelling of 35 Russian diplomats for Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 election.

There's no mention of Kislyak's response in the handwritten notes, Powell said.

The notes do indicate that Flynn denied making the requests to Kislyak in the first place. Those statements were immaterial, Powell argued, since they had nothing to do with the FBI's Russia probe and "policy discussions by the incoming National Security Adviser were none of the FBI's business."

Powell also charges that the Flynn 302 writup laid in a "deliberative" state in FBI hands for an inordinately extended period.

The FBI had transcripts of the Flynn-Kislyak calls, which they had wiretapped, so they knew what had been said between Flynn and Kislyak, and had no legitimate basis to investigate Flynn about them (again the purpose was solely a perjury trap). In fact, after a transcript of the Flynn-Kislyak calls was leaked—with the consent of then-FBI general counsel Baker, Powell charges—to Washington Post columnist David Ignatius on Jan. 10, 2017, DNI Clapper told Ignatius to "take the kill shot" on Flynn, or words to that effect, according to Powell.

In her motion, Powell asks the



Christopher Steele, former British intelligence officer, in London, speaking to the media for the first time, on March 7, 2017.

court to make the DOJ prosecutors explain why they shouldn't be held in contempt of court, to produce the original draft 302 notes and other exculpatory documents, and to dismiss the case against Flynn (despite his previous guilty plea and before he is sentenced) because it involves "outrageous government conduct" that is "repugnant to the American criminal system."

Flynn pleaded guilty on Dec. 1, 2017, but he did so, according to Powell, based on a fraudulently altered 302, after exculpatory evidence was improperly withheld from him, and while his then-defense counsel, Covington and Burling LLP, was laboring under an intractable conflict of interest, as they had worked with the government to prepare and file for Flynn the very same Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) papers that the government then used to threaten him with a FARA violation charge.

In addition, Powell asserts that texts show that the federal judge who initially presided over the case, Rudolph Contreras, who was recused from the case shortly after accepting Flynn's plea, was a friend of Strzok, and that exculpatory correspondence from Obama's then-attorney general, Sally Yates, has been hidden.

In her motion, Powell refers to Mifsud as a CIA "asset" and charges former FBI top officials Comey and McCabe with having run a politically driven campaign to convict Flynn as part of a larger attempt to oust Trump.

Are Criminal Indictments Forthcoming?

All this suggests criminal deception of the FISA court, coordinated criminal leaks of classified information by U.S. intelligence agencies to disrupt the Trump presidency, the secret use of an asset by U.S. intelligence agencies to entrap a low-level Trump campaign aide, and the entrapment of Flynn, coupled with the criminal alteration of an FBI 302 to at least partially fabricate federal crimes against him.

All this, as I wrote in February of last year, was part of a politically motivated and highly coordinated effort by upper-echelon Obama-era officials to use the vast power and machinery of the federal government to oust Trump, based on the entirely fabricated charge that Trump had colluded with the Russians, which itself began as an Obama-era narrative to excuse Clinton's historic loss to Trump in 2016.

In other words, a silent coup. Americans are appalled at the unimaginable level of corruption at these formerly revered U.S. institutions—the DOJ, the FBI, and the CIA. Obstruction of justice also includes framing the innocent. Besides criminal leaking of classified information and perjury, the coup attempt is arguably treasonous.

Don't believe the liberal media damage-control spin that Barr is just doing Trump's dirty work, in an attempt to ensure the president's reelection. The mainstream media are deeply complicit and have a vested interest in preserving the false narrative they've been peddling for years.

Barr's motivation is apolitical: He knows that the vast damage these Obama officials have done to the reputations of the DOJ, the FBI, and the CIA can only be repaired with convictions and meaningful jail time for the bad actors. Obama's top brass knows this, and that's why they are now lawyering up. It remains to be seen how high the corruption goes, including whether Obama will be implicated.

Stephen Meister is a founding partner of Meister, Seelig & Felm LLP, a law firm headquartered in New York; a published author; and an opinion writer. Opinions expressed here are his own, not his firm's.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



Michael Flynn, President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, and his lawyer Sidney Powell, leave the federal court in Washington on Sept. 10, 2019.



The U.S. Capitol on Dec. 10, 2018.

The Deep State Isn't a Conspiracy, *It's a Revolution*

CLIFFORD HUMPHREY

*Commentary*

Ever since President Donald Trump's inauguration, the mask has been slipping from the "deep state."

But last week, *The New York Times* ripped it off completely.

"President Trump is right: the deep state is alive and well," says a member of the newspaper's editorial board. The deep state, she explains, is a small number of experts who sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, oppose and undermine the constitutionally elected president of the United States.

In 2018, former FBI Director James Comey insisted "there is no deep state." At that time, they called themselves simply "the resistance," but they have since grown more honest (or rather more shameless).

Now, they concede they resist Trump not because he threatens some constitutional status quo, but because he threatens their claim to rule and the persistent drift toward a political revolution they've been working toward for decades.

They aim to change our form of government from a constitutional republic that seeks "to secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity" to a bureaucratic technocracy that seeks to impose on the

No people who submit to the rule of an unaccountable bureaucracy can really call themselves free.

◀ The New York Times building in New York on Sept. 6, 2018.

American people a Neo-Marxist understanding of justice in the name of a "global struggle for human dignity and freedom."

Someone once noted that all political conflicts in a community are related to "the most fundamental political controversy," the question of who should rule.

The deep state isn't a conspiracy; it's a revolution.

The Rise of the Bureaucratic Technocracy

The author of the *New York Times* op-ed, titled "They Are Not the Resistance. They Are Not a Cabal. They Are Public Servants," calls agents of the deep state—like the much-lauded whistleblower—"heroes." They are heroes because they "protect the interests, not of a particular leader, but of the American people."

Kim Jong Un claims to serve the interests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Like Kim, deep state agents aren't actually responsible to the people they claim to serve. But responsibility, through elections, is the only way a people can retain sovereignty.

The author claims deep state agents are "public servants." When, however, they prefer their own policies to those of elected officials, they don't act like servants of the public; they act like their rulers.

But we can trust these deep state heroes, we are told, because they are experts who know things such as "science, expertise and facts"—things the American people just can't understand when they vote. In other words, these deep state agents believe the United States is no longer a republic over which the people are sovereign. To them, it's a technocracy in which they, the experts, rule.

Further, the agents of the deep state operate by any means necessary, regardless of the Constitution. The deep state replaces the Constitution, through which the sovereign people express their will, with a bureaucracy, through which its agents dictate and justify whatever policy they want.

The word "bureaucracy" is illuminating. It's similar to "democracy," which means the rule or literally the "power" of the people. Bureaucracy, though, means "the power of the desk." Try arguing with a bureaucrat; it's like arguing with a desk.

No people who submit to the rule of an unaccountable bureaucracy can really call themselves free.

New Regime With New Understanding of Justice

Not only does the deep state aim to overthrow our form of government; it also aims to enforce a new understanding of justice. An earlier op-ed from *The New York Times*, titled "We

Are Not the Resistance," explains exactly what form of justice the technocrats of the deep state are seeking to impose on the American people.

The author dislikes the word "resistance" and points out that it's really a conservative word. She warns that merely resisting Trump might "tempt us to set our sights too low" and even "to forget our ultimate purpose and place in history." She sees theirs as a kind of universal, religious mission.

She notes that in fact "Donald Trump is the resistance." What is he resisting? The birth of a "new nation" that is "struggling to be born."

The election of President Barack Obama, she says, was supposed to symbolize "the imminent birth of this new America." But now, Trump is messing up the plan by resisting the implementation of a new understanding of justice.

The new justice of this "new nation" is exactly opposite to that of the founding of the United States. The founders held that "all men are created equal." In the "new nation," though, all men belong to various, unequal groups.

They call this new justice "social justice." The peddlers of social justice try to weave together the plights of all supposedly oppressed peoples in the world into a new proletariat that history is using to overthrow the oppression by the new bourgeoisie of the cis-gendered, white, male patriarchy.

The author says plainly, "We aim ... to reimagine the meaning of justice in America." And the dictates of social justice don't depend on elections, which is why deep state agents feel justified disregarding election outcomes when they conflict with the "radical evolution of American democracy."

The deep state is about as democratic as North Korea. It's not democratic evolution; it's political revolution.

And that's the real irony of the deep state. Its agents claim to serve the interests of the American people by opposing Trump, forgetting that it was those same people who chose Trump in the first place, knowing full well who he was.

The deep state is undermining not the authority of Donald Trump, but that of the sovereign people of the United States. If the allies of the deep state don't like the term "resistance," perhaps they prefer the term "treason"?

Clifford Humphrey is originally from Warm Springs, Georgia. Currently, he is a doctoral candidate in politics at Hillsdale College in Michigan.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



ANGELA WEISS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES