

Donald Trump, the libertarian president?

By Glenn Harlan Reynolds

Trump the libertarian? Yes. And how.

Since 2016 I've had people ask me why I, as a libertarian, support Donald Trump. I think we're seeing why now.

It's true that Trump's instincts, particularly in his first term, weren't especially libertarian. Oh, the claims that he was an authoritarian, possibly a Fascist, maybe even a Nazi, were obvious bullshit from the beginning. But he showed no particular enthusiasm for limited government.

Still, by that point I saw the government *apparatus* as deeply corrupt and dysfunctional, and dangerously close to making its position so entrenched as to be unassailable through ordinary politics. Anyone promising to shake it up looked good to me, and in 2016 Trump had the added advantage of not being Hillary Clinton. I knew what *her* instincts were.

Had the Democrats simply accepted Trump as a normal president, and not pulled out all the stops against him, the shaking up would have been comparatively modest, though still worth it. Reagan never really shrank the government – even the Department of Education, which he promised to eliminate, actually grew – but he did slow things down and redirect them, and that was enough to boom the economy, and reboot American culture, for over a decade.

Even if Trump had gotten a second term in 2020, he would probably, like Reagan, have accomplished less change than in his first. By now he'd probably have been replaced by a Democrat, unless Mike Pence managed to pull off a George H.W. Bush, which seems unlikely for a man with even less pizzazz

than George H.W. Bush. And had Pence somehow gotten a term, it would have been even more accommodationist than Bush's was.

But before he was even sworn in, Democrats were demanding "don't normalize Trump!" His entire first term was filled with efforts by Democrats to denormalize him, with two impeachments, protests, and, finally, the utterly denormalized 2020 election, which led to the installation of the *non compos mentis* Joe Biden, the perfect puppet for the Deep State apparatus. Meanwhile, to make sure Trump wasn't a threat, they pursued him with lawsuits, absurd prosecutions, FBI raids on his home, and more. They not only denormalized his presidency, but his ex-presidency.

But now he's back. Someone, I forget who, compared the change to Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*. Gandalf the Grey returned, purged and strengthened from his underground battle with the Balrog, as Gandalf the White. Trump has returned similarly – honestly, he looks better and more energetic than eight years ago, and he's definitely better informed, much more focused, and very different in his attitude.

If a conservative is a liberal who has been mugged, you can get a libertarian out of a conservative who has been targeted for political prosecution and abuse. Trump saw firsthand, to a degree greater than probably any American citizen ever, just how far the resources and lack of principles or moral fiber of the federal government go. It would be very difficult to remain a believer in Big Government as a good thing after that.

(He's also appointed people like Kash Patel, Pete Hegseth, Tulsi Gabbard, RFK, Jr., etc. who have similarly been targeted by the agencies they're now being put in control of. I think he understands the transformative impact of what happened to him, and wants people that it's happened to as lieutenants wherever possible.) Having seen today's government in action, he doesn't like it.

So now DOGE is investigating government agencies, starting with the lowest-hanging and most tactically relevant fruit, USAID. USAID was funding the press that attacked Trump and his allies, the groups that attacked Trump and his allies, and the politicians and pundits – including no small number of “principled Republicans” like Bill Kristol – and now it is not. Plus the exposure of just how much money was going to everything from Chinese Biowar factories to *Politico* to opposition parties in Poland and Hungary instead of, you know, drilling wells in Mali or something made the whole enterprise look corrupt and phony, as indeed it is, which has made it hard for Democrats to mount a convincing response.

So Trump’s abolishing USAID, is drafting orders to abolish the Department of Education, and has already laid off 1,000 EPA workers. He’s talking about eliminating the income tax. And there’s much more to come. (On X, Larry Correia, who was an accountant/auditor before becoming a bestselling author, calls Trump’s audits and cuts [“accountant porn.”](#)) None of this would have happened if he had been treated as a normal president.



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In one week Donald Trump dismantled an agency that has 10,000 people in it and a 70 billion dollar budget. He shuttered the space and put the remaining 1,400 employees on administrative leave (statistics per WSJ).

I would say he is pretty serious about taking down the deep... [Show more](#)

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What should concern Democrats isn't the immediate threat of defunding USAID. What's concerning is that extent of corruption and government waste is no longer abstract -- it's concretely evident to normie voters.

Political debates will never be the same after DOGE.

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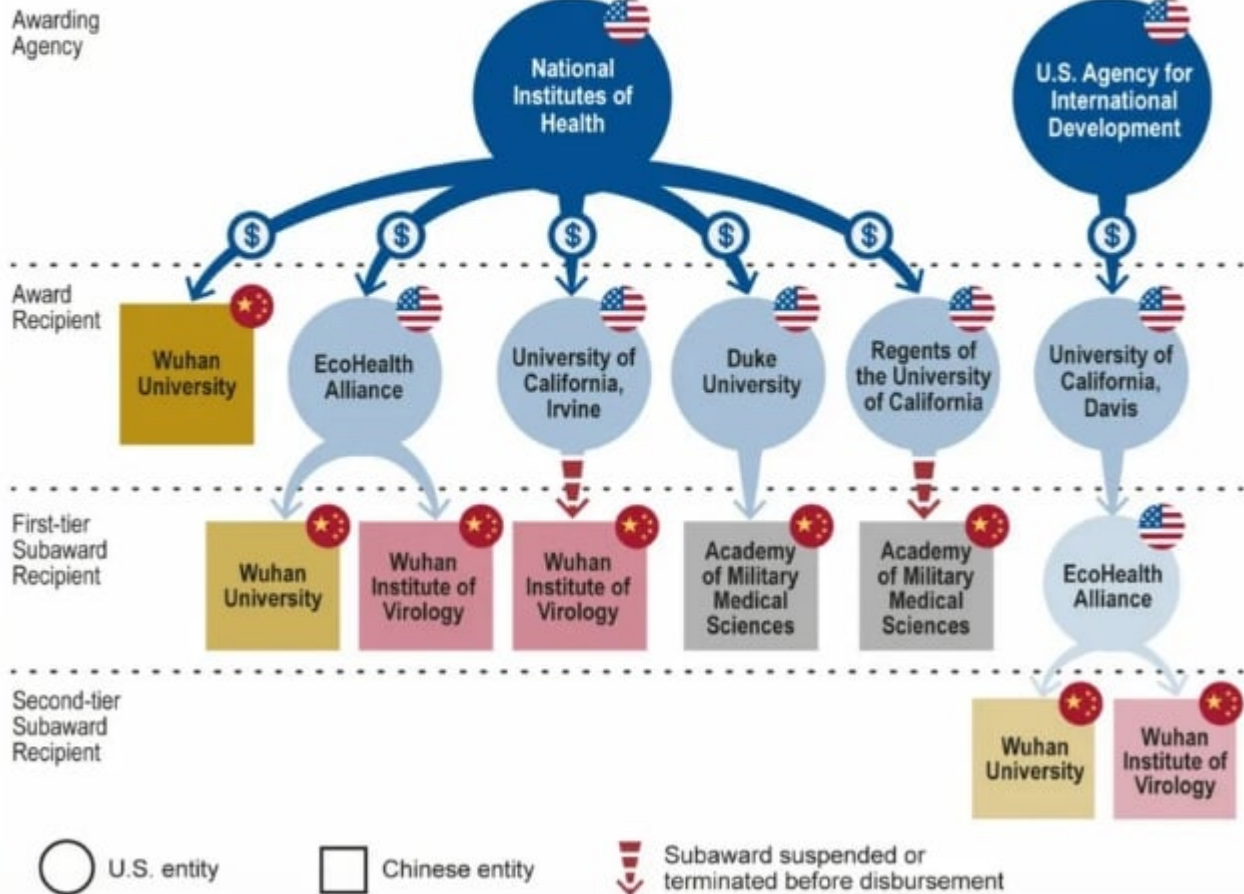
The U.S. government has become one corrupt, progressive shell game after another

It's time to break it all down and then put it back together—this time sticking to the original structure and blueprint supplied by the Constitution

 **Chip Roy**  @chiproytx

What if I told you....

Awards and Subawards Identified to Three Selected Chinese Entities, Calendar Years 2014-2021



Source: GAO analysis of agency and award recipient funding data and documents. | GAO-23-106119

For the first time in modern history, what Mike Lee talks about looks possible.

But it did. And I ask you: What other serious presidential candidate in my lifetime would have done all this to reduce the size and power of big government?

There was a time in the 1990s when I had some enthusiasm for the Libertarian Party. Helen managed the campaign of our libertarian candidate for Congress in 1996 and he got more attention than the Democrat did. (Neither had a chance, of course, against the semi-hereditary incumbent, Jimmy Duncan, though Duncan was actually pretty libertarian himself.)

Nationally, Harry Browne was the Libertarian candidate, and while he had no chance of course he was an excellent spokesman and got considerable TV time. (I remember him being challenged by an interviewer on CNN: "Under your administration, isn't it true that we'd have open-air drug markets in our cities?" Browne: "That's what we have *now*.")

But the Libertarian Party hit its high point then and is now pretty much a joke, even when they manage to keep naked fat guys off their convention stage. Trump isn't a joke. He's delivering more cuts, and more blows to unaccountable Deep State authority, than anyone else ever has and there's no one else who could do this right now.

So that's how I, a libertarian, can support Trump. Not a hard choice, really.

First published in [Glenn's Substack](#)