



Political and
Geostrategic
OBSERVATORY
of the United States

CHRISTIAN NATIONALIST RALLY LED BY A CHRISTIAN NATIONALIST REGIME

Lincoln Mitchell / Political analyst, essayist, lecturer at
Columbia University

May 2026



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lincoln Mitchell / Political analyst, essayist, lecturer at Columbia University

Lincoln Mitchell, based in New York City and San Francisco, is a political analyst and a writer who teaches at Columbia University. He has contributed to CNN, Opinion, NBC News, the San Francisco Examiner, and other outlets. Lincoln has authored nine books covering topics from democratic development to urban politics to baseball.

PRESENTATION OF THE OBSERVATORY

Under the direction of **Romuald Sciora**, Associate Research Fellow at IRIS, the IRIS Political and Geostrategic Observatory of the United States aims to provide new insights into contemporary developments in the United States, particularly their impact on Franco-American cooperation, the European Union, and the wider world.

The Observatory is structured around several core activities: the publication of analyses, the co-publication of reference works, the production of video content, and the organization of events (conferences, roundtables, and symposiums) in France, the United States, and Canada.

Its main academic partners include **The Academy of Political Science**, founded by Columbia University in New York, the **Columbia-SIPA Urban and Social Policy Program**, and the **Raoul-Dandurand Chair in Strategic and Diplomatic Studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal**.

iris-france.org



@InstitutIRIS



@InstitutIRIS



institut_iris



IRIS



IRIS - Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques

The Trump regime has told us again and again precisely what they are.

During the first Trump term and even into the second, commentators would frequently pose the rhetorical question of asking how some Trump outrage would have been perceived if it had been done by Barack Obama. The point of this exercise was to note how Trump continues to get away with pretty much everything and has never been held to the same standards as Obama. A subtext of that comparison was to suggest that Trump was a president in some way similar to Obama, and to downplay the regime change that Trump began in his first term and has accelerated during his second term.

There is another similar frame that I prefer to use during Trump's second term. I was one of those people who during 2024 believed that Trump was a fascist who, if elected, would destroy American democracy, so I sometimes point to things that Trump has done during this term and ask how the same earnest pundits who told people like me were being hysterical during the campaign, would have reacted in 2024 if we had told them Trump would commit whatever outrage he is doing now.

One example of this is that in, say the fall of 2024, I had said that if elected, Trump will hold a Christian nationalist rally in Washington, most of the liberal punditry would have told me I was exaggerating the threat Trump represented. I confess, I did not predict that Trump would hold a rally like this, but my comments and writings at the time certainly did not preclude the idea that Trump would do something like this.

The rally, which was held Sunday, sought to, according to the White House website, "reflect on our abundant blessings, pray for our country and our people, and rededicate ourselves as one Nation under God [...]. We pray that our noble cause continues to be guided by the hand of providence and the grace of God." This is an astounding piece of evidence confirming my view that we are now in post-Constitutional America.

The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." This has long been interpreted to mean a clear separation between church and state. The Trump regime has turned this on its head and implored us to all worship the God they choose as we approach the 250th anniversary of American independence.

In addition to a rogues' gallery of right-wing Christian speakers, leavened with a patina of Judaism because one rabbi spoke, several Trump regime sycophants and Christian nationalist

fanatics including Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Secretary of State Marco Rubio all spoke. Trump delivered a video greeting as well.

Having top government officials speak at a rally asserting Christianity as the all but official faith of the US makes a mockery of the separation of church and state, and along with it the Constitution. That is how this regime wants to celebrate the first quarter millennium of our country.

It is also apparent that anybody with a passing knowledge of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth can see that the Christianity advocated by this regime is something very different.

Despite my commitment to freedom of religion in the US, and recognizing that I have never been a Christian, I believe that seeking to follow Jesus's teachings is not a bad idea and would be an approach to governance and leadership that would be a tremendous improvement upon the cruel, greedy, ignorant and bigoted way this regime has sought to lead the country. However, nobody gathered on that mall was calling for genuinely following what Jesus taught. Rather, theirs was a political Christianity, one that centers right-wing politics, fanatic nationalism and elevates intolerance to a sacrament.

Sunday's rally was, in some respects, not exactly big news. Christian nationalist regime with no regard for the Constitution holds Christian nationalist rally is something of a dog bites man story. However, it also is another indicator that this regime is set on pursuing its agenda regardless of how unpopular they are, how badly the war in Iran is going, how the American people are being weighed down by an affordability crisis that is, in substantial part, due to Trump's policies or the scandals from Epstein to rank corruption that are so abundant that is difficult to keep track of them.

A regime that was concerned about losing power or the niceties of election outcomes and democracy more generally would not continue to do things that mobilize their most extremist supporters and alienate so many others, but it should now be extremely evident that Trump is not concerned about those things and is more focused on mobilizing his base for whatever crises he fears or will create. That is the reality of Trump's second term-whether some of us saw it coming or not.

The memory of the rally will soon fade away as Trump moves on to the next attack on the Constitution and on the American people. However, it should be a reminder that the things we were told could not happen in a second Trump administration because many chose to believe

he was not really a fascist, are continuing to happen with such frequency that they are no longer even major news.

Strategic expertise in complete independance



2 bis, rue Mercœur - 75011 PARIS / France

+ 33 (0) 1 53 27 60 60

contact@iris-france.org

iris-france.org



IRIS is one of the main French think tanks specialising in geopolitical and strategic issues. It is the only one to have the singularity of combining a research centre and a teaching centre delivering diplomas, via its IRIS Sup' school, a model that contributes to its national and international attractiveness.

IRIS is organised around four areas of activity: research, publication, training and event organisation.