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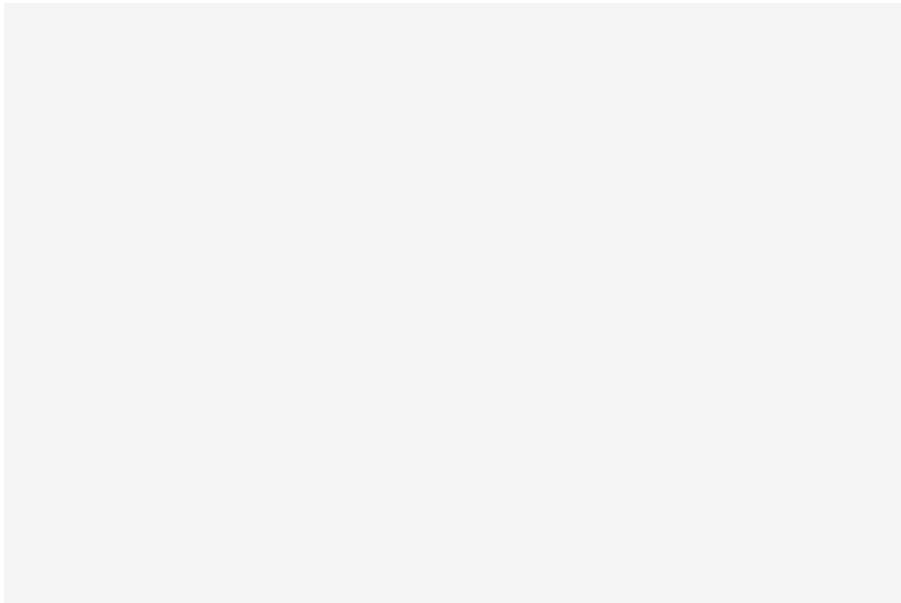
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from Washington and beyond

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February 5, 2025/3:46 p.m. ET
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CIA Sets Off Security Crisis With One Email to Trump’s White House
In an effort to comply with Trump’s orders, the CIA just opened itself up to foreign attacks.



JEMAL COUNTRESS/AFP/Getty Images
Newly confirmed CIA Director John Ratcliffe

The CIA may have just doxxed itself.

[The New York Times](#) is reporting that the Central Intelligence Agency, complying with Trump’s attempts to purge the federal government, sent his administration an unclassified email containing a list of every single person the CIA had hired over the past two years. Security experts everywhere are alarmed at the news, as many of those named closely monitor U.S. adversaries like Russia and China—and could soon become targets because of it.

The list, which was sent to the White House’s Office of Management and Budget, contained names of operatives whose identities are typically guarded. It’s not clear how many names were in the email.

“Exposing the identities of officials who do extremely sensitive work would put a direct target on their backs for China,” Democratic Senator Mark Warner [wrote](#) on X. “A disastrous national security development.”

A former CIA officer described the email as a “counterintelligence disaster.” This comes as Trump offered CIA employees an unauthorized “[buyout](#)” in return for their resignations.

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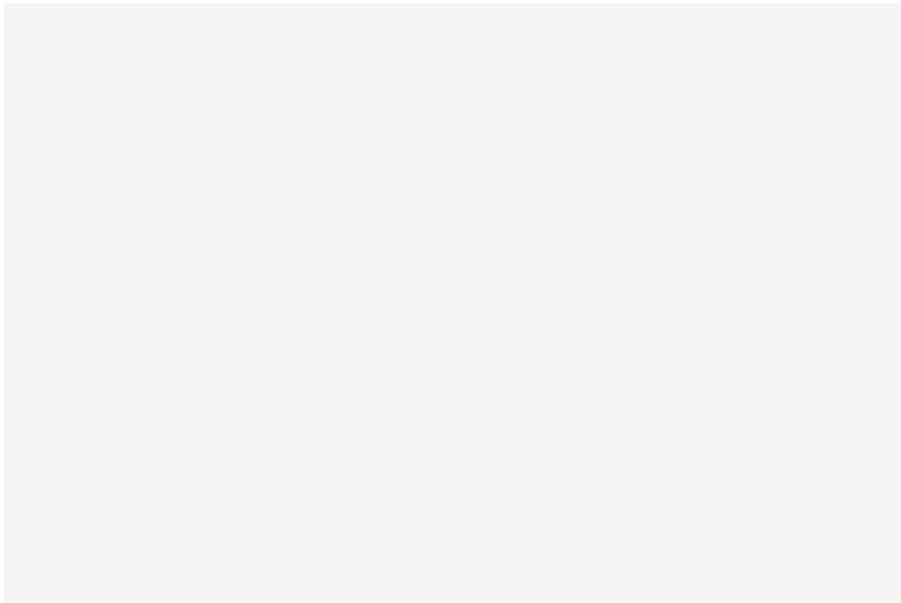
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Anti-Trump Protests Break Out at State Capitols Across the Country

Protesters gathered nationwide to protest Donald Trump and Elon Musk.



Brandon Bell/Getty Images

Thousands of Americans are [protesting](#) in cities across the United States Wednesday against Donald Trump and Elon Musk’s [early attempts](#) to overhaul the federal government.

The protests took place at state capitols across the country, [organized online](#) by a movement called 50501, referring to 50 protests in 50 states in one day. Demonstrators gathered in Michigan, Texas, Wisconsin, Indiana, Delaware, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, according to the r/50501 subreddit and the [Associated Press](#).

In Philadelphia, protesters gathered outside of a federal courthouse holding signs that said “TRUMP + MUSK ARE NOT KINGS” and “RESIST.” In Madison, Wisconsin, demonstrators at the state Capitol held signs objecting to fascism, Elon Musk, and the conservative manifesto Project 2025. In Lansing, Michigan, about 500 people demonstrated outside the state Capitol denouncing Trump’s plans for Gaza, the rollback of transgender rights, and the federal government’s mass deportation efforts under Trump.

One of the organizers at Michigan’s protest only learned about the movement on Sunday night, and helped with coordinating speakers and safety protocols.

“I want to look back at this time and say that I did something and I didn’t just sit back,” Kelsey Brienne [told](#) the AP Monday night.

On social media, protesters used the hashtag #50501 to organize and document the protests. Videos were also posted by journalists and media outlets across the country showing local protests.

Texas Capitol 50501 protest, part of a nationwide demonstration against [@realDonaldTrump](#) and [@elonmusk](#), is still growing in size as we near the lunch hour [#txdege](#)
[pic.twitter.com/Zvcii9bstP](#)

— Bayliss Wagner (@baylisswagner) [February 5, 2025](#)

NOW: "F**k Elon Musk!" - protesters chant in Washington DC during 'We Reject Project 2025' protest that self organized starting from creation of fliers on 50501 sub reddit. [pic.twitter.com/QHEUYu5hqV](#)

— Oliya Scootercaster ☐ (@ScooterCasterNY) [February 5, 2025](#)

Citizens gathered at the State Capitol in Pennsylvania in protest of President Donald Trump's administration on Wednesday. This protest is part of the 50501 Movement- or 50 states, 50 protests, one day. [pic.twitter.com/S3j9wJg4nF](#)

— FOX Baltimore (@FOXBaltimore) [February 5, 2025](#)

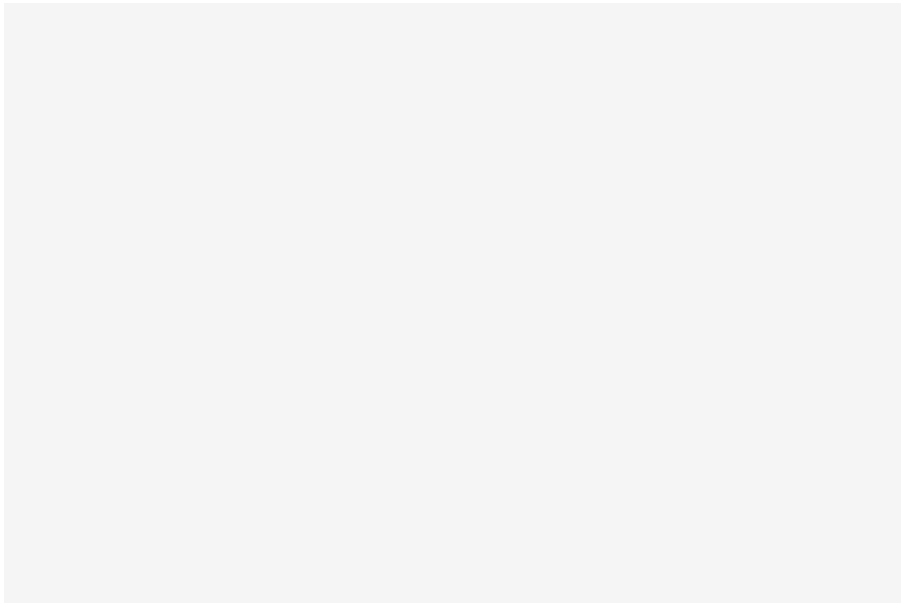
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Trump’s Extreme Birthright Citizenship Order Shut Down in Court—Again
Donald Trump just got even more terrible news about his executive order ending birthright citizenship.



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Another federal judge has blocked Trump’s brutal attack on birthright citizenship.

On Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman [filed](#) a preliminary injunction against Trump’s executive order, which was a promise he [signed](#) into action his first day in office.

Boardman ruled that Trump’s repeal of birthright citizenship “conflicts with the plain language of the 14th Amendment, contradicts 125-year old binding Supreme Court precedent and runs counter to our nation’s 250-year history of citizenship by birth.”

“No court in the country has ever endorsed the president’s interpretation,” she continued. “This court will not be the first.”

Boardman’s injunction will almost surely be challenged by the Trump administration and head to a federal appeals court, after which it could then head toward the Supreme Court. Boardman is the [second](#) federal judge to rule against Trump’s executive order.

The Trump administration argued that the Founding Fathers didn’t mean to “create a loophole to be exploited” by immigrants. Boardman was unconvinced.

Trump has made eliminating birthright citizenship—a basic constitutional tenet—a key part in his war against undocumented immigrants.

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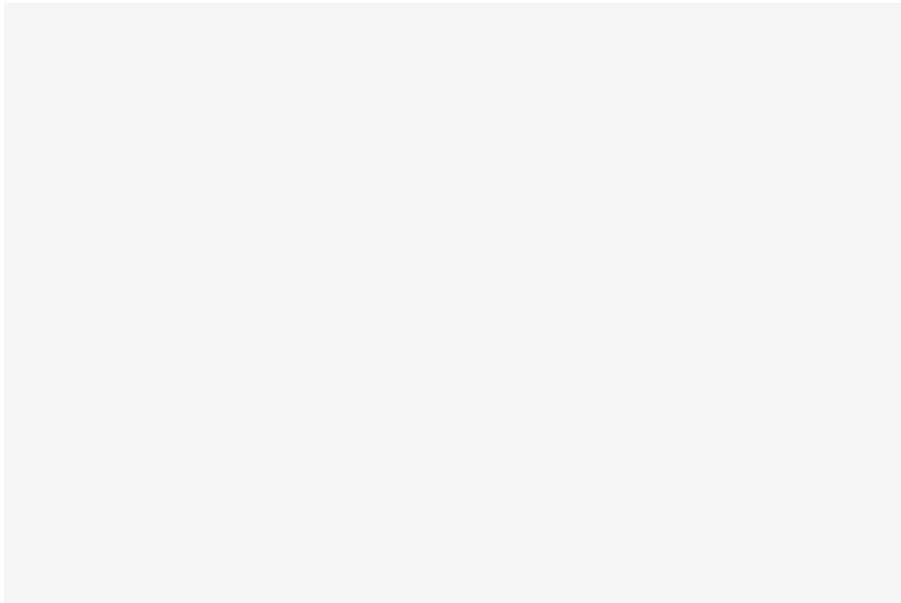


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What’s Next on Trump’s Chopping Block? Look at Pete Hegseth’s Venmo
Hegseth’s Venmo account gives a terrifying insight into what he’s planning.



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth’s shockingly not-private Venmo account shines a light into the shadowy corners of the supposedly antiestablishment warrior’s completely establishment inner circle—and also illuminates the path forward for Donald Trump’s Defense Department, according to a new report from [The American Prospect](#).

The cast of characters listed under Hegseth’s friends on the mobile payment app, which includes Washington elites, defense contractors, and private health care executives, suggests that he plans to steer the Defense Department toward widespread privatization.

Heavily featured in Hegseth’s list of friends are executives at defense firms Palantir and Anduril, which already get millions off of the Defense Department.

Palantir recently [extended](#) an artificial intelligence contract with the U.S. Army that is projected to cost \$401 million over four years, with a ceiling of \$619 million. In October, Anduril [scored](#) a \$250 million contract with the Pentagon to develop a drone defense system, in addition to already supplying counter-drone hardware and software to the U.S. Special Operations Command on a 10-year contract, which is worth up to \$1 billion.

Hegseth’s list of Venmo buddies also includes Mike Gallagher, a former representative from Wisconsin who, after drumming up a lot of anti-China rhetoric as chair of the Select Committee on the CCP, [vacated](#) his seat last year to serve as head of defense at Palantir. His new employer stands to make a killing in AI contracts as a result of a breakdown in U.S. relations with China. Hegseth also had the contact for Christian Brose, chief strategy officer for Anduril.

Hegseth has more ties to Big Tech in the form of former Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown, who leads the anti-antitrust Competitiveness Coalition, as well as Google’s former director of law enforcement and information security Richard Salgado, and Evan Bahr, who served as an adviser to Peter Thiel’s hedge fund, according to TAP’s report. Hegseth’s ties to these sectors indicate that he will likely be open to outsourcing more massive government contracts to Silicon Valley.

Hegseth’s Venmo also revealed ties to several executives of the UnitedHealth Group, including a vice president, a product director, and a public affairs consultant. UnitedHealth is the largest administrator of Medicare Advantage, which is the largest administrator of the private Medicare option.

Hegseth has previously [advocated](#) for the privatization of Veterans Affairs, an agency he does not oversee but that manages the health care of the country’s veterans. He lobbied to restrict access to VA health care to only veterans with service-connected disabilities. In his capacity as head of DOD, Hegseth could push to privatize TRICARE, a health care program servicing uniformed military members, and continue to advocate to strip veterans of their government-offered health care option.

Hegseth’s lapse in personal security—a list of all his buddies available for public viewing—is a disturbing feature for the guy in charge of the Pentagon. Last month, Democratic Senator Tammy Duckworth warned that Hegseth was potentially “vulnerable to blackmail,” given his shady dealings with a woman who accused him of sexual assault in 2017.

“What is he going to be willing to do to pay off the next accuser who might show up after he becomes secretary of defense and has access to the nuclear codes, and the location of U.S. troops around the world?” Duckworth said.

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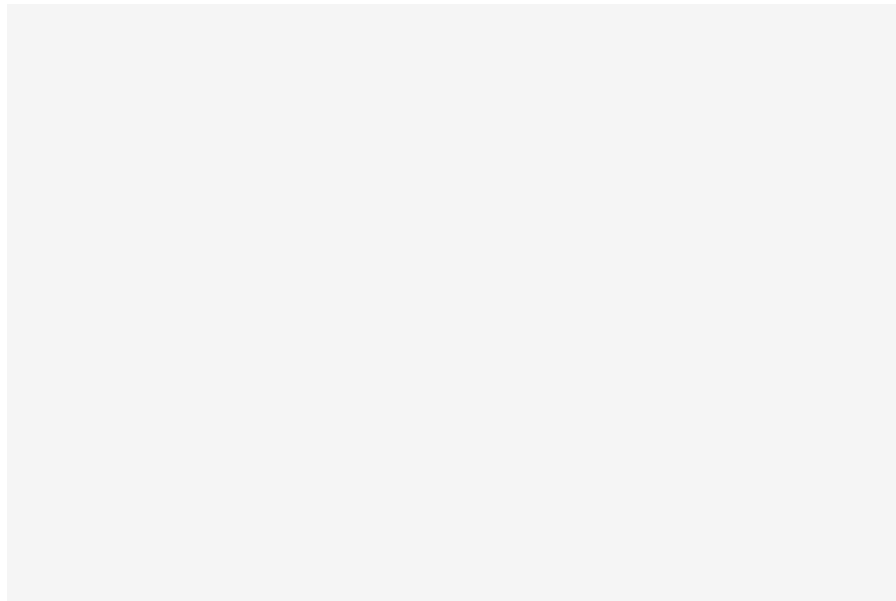
Read more about Pete Hegseth:
[Trump’s Trash Defense Secretary Is Ready to Go to War With U.S. Allies](#)

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Mike Johnson Has Truly Wild Defense for Letting Elon Musk Run Rampant

The House speaker brushed aside concerns about Elon Musk gutting the government.



Drew Angerer/AFP/Getty Images

Elon Musk's overnight ascendancy to the Executive Branch doesn't seem to bother his Republican allies who were actually elected.

Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, House Speaker Mike Johnson appeared nonplussed by the incredible grip that the world's richest man-turned-bureaucrat has over federal agencies.

"Is there an inconsistency by Republicans on one hand where we for years have not wanted 'unelected bureaucrats' downtown and yet ceding Article One powers to the executive branch under Elon Musk?" [asked](#) Fox News's Chad Pergram.

"No, look, I've got to challenge the premise of the question, and you know me, I'm a fierce advocate and defender of Article One," Johnson [responded](#), referring to the Constitutional article that established Congress. "We're going to vigorously defend that."

"But I think there's a gross overreaction in the media to what's happening," Johnson continued. "The executive branch of government in our system has the right to evaluate how executive branch agencies are operating and to ensure that not only the intent of Congress in funding mechanisms, but also the stewardship of precious American taxpayer dollars is being handled well. That's what they're doing by putting a pause on some of these agencies and by evaluating them, by doing these internal audits."

REPORTER: Is there an inconsistency with Republicans railing against 'unelected bureaucrats' in charge and yet ceding Article 1 powers to the executive branch under Elon Musk?

MIKE JOHNSON: No, look ... I think there's a gross overreaction in the media to what's happening pic.twitter.com/F0K7kJ71EM

— Aaron Rupa (@atrupar) [February 5, 2025](#)

The Trump administration's decision to freeze the distribution of trillions of dollars in congressionally appropriated funds was [blocked](#) on Monday by a federal judge who deemed the effort grossly unconstitutional.

Johnson described the freeze and Musk's other attempts to get government agencies as a "long overdue, much welcome development." He insisted that the effort is "not a power grab" while claiming that the halted taxpayer funds were being used to fund drag shows in Colombia and atheism camps in Nepal.

"We see this as an active, engaged, committed executive branch authority doing what the executive branch should do," Johnson said.

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Read more about Elon Musk:

[Republicans Lose Their Minds After Democrats Try to Subpoena Elon Musk](#)

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Republicans Lose Their Minds After Democrats Try to Subpoena Elon Musk

House Republicans just blocked Democrats from trying to force Elon Musk to testify about how he's destroying the government.



Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images
House Oversight Chair James Comer

The Democrats on the House Oversight Committee attempted to subpoena Elon Musk on Wednesday, only for Republicans to block the move, refusing to even entertain debate on having the tech mogul testify before Congress.

Ranking Member Gerry Connolly put forward a motion to subpoena the tech mogul, and the committee quickly devolved into chaos thanks to Republican outrage. Committee Chair James Comer first tried to shut down debate and table the motion upon requests from his Republican colleagues. Democrats on the committee protested, with Republicans calling them out of order.

Ultimately, Comer held a voice vote to table the motion, and ruled that Republicans voting “aye” were in higher numbers.

Then Connolly called for a [formal roll call vote](#). It failed [19–20](#), with many Republican and Democratic members of the 47-person committee either not voting or not being in attendance. For some reason, among those who abstained was Democratic Representative Ro Khanna, whose district includes Silicon Valley and parts of the San Francisco Bay area.

Musk’s actions as part of his “Department of Government Efficiency” initiative have amounted to a takeover of key systems in the federal government, including the Treasury Department’s [payment system](#) and the personnel records of the three-million-strong federal workforce. His henchmen have also set up an [illegal server](#) in the Office of Personnel Management.

Musk has brought in [young and inexperienced](#) software engineers from his own companies with questionable [security clearances](#) to not only take control of sensitive government systems but even make substantial changes that aren't easily tracked or alterable. These actions break the law and even [violate the Constitution](#).

On Tuesday, House Democrats attempted to extract some measure of accountability from Musk, the world's richest man, who [bought](#) his way into the Trump administration, and the effort failed. What is the next course of action?

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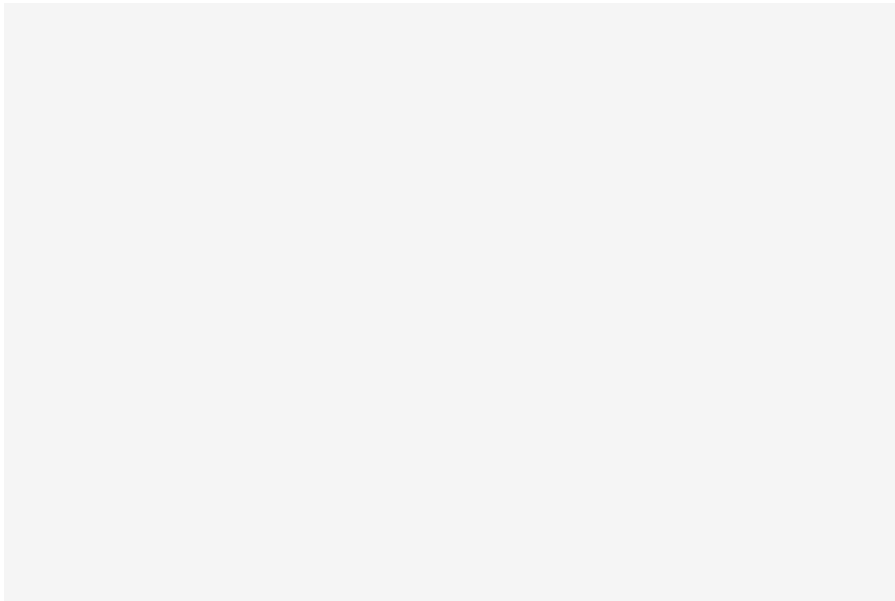
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Authoritarians Around the World Celebrate Trump Destroying USAID

Some troubling world leaders are cheering Trump and Elon's gutting of USAID.



Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

Authoritarian leaders around the world are applauding Donald Trump and Elon Musk's destruction of USAID.

"In just 14 days, Donald Trump has turned the world upside down with just a few measures. In America, gender madness is over, funding for globalist Soros organizations is over, illegal migration is over, and support for the Russian-Ukrainian war is over. In other words, everything that the bureaucrats in Brussels have tried to force down our throats in recent years is over," Hungary's hard-line President Viktor Orbán [wrote](#) on Facebook.

Orbán's top political director, Balázs Orbán, echoed these sentiments. "Couldn't be happier that [@POTUS](#), [@JDVance](#) & [@elonmusk](#) are finally taking down this corrupt foreign interference machine," he [wrote on X](#). "Good riddance!"

Trump's favorite Latin American strongman, Nayib Bukele, also chimed in. "Most governments don't want USAID funds flowing into their countries because they understand where much of that money actually ends up," he [wrote on X](#). "While marketed as support for development, democracy, and human rights, the majority of these funds are funneled into opposition groups, NGOs with political agendas, and destabilizing movements."

And of course Russia—perhaps USAID's biggest foreign hater—had something to say.

"Russian Deputy Security Council Chair Dmitry Medvedev [wrote](#), "Smart move by [@elonmusk](#), trying to plug USAID's Deep Throat. Let's hope notorious Deep State doesn't swallow him whole ..."

"Essentially, [USAID] was the primary transmission belt for globalism as an ideology aimed at the worldwide imposition of liberal democracy, market economics, and human rights, while dismantling sovereign states and overthrowing regimes capable of resisting this on a global scale," the Russian far-right nationalist Alexander Dugin wrote for a right-wing Russian outlet on Monday. "The banning of USAID is a critical, fundamental move, the importance of which, as I said, cannot be overstated. This is especially true because countries like Ukraine largely depend on this agency, receiving significant funding through it. All Ukrainian media, NGOs, and ideological structures were financed by USAID."

USAID was a far from perfect organization. But what does it mean now that all of these men with shaky human rights records (at best) are dancing on its grave?

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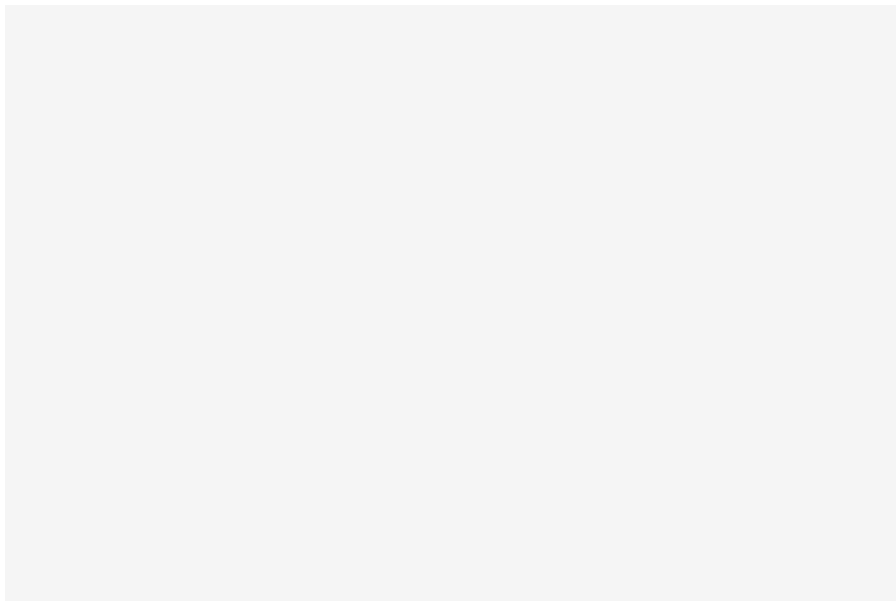
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The Real Threat of Elon Musk’s Treasury Takeover Exposed

Musk’s team is rewriting code in the U.S. Treasury system.



Stefani Reynolds/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Elon Musk’s team of coders are creating a “backdoor” into the U.S. Treasury system, according to legal and I.T. professionals.

“Pushing live production code cooked up by some young coders over a week of [sleepless] nights in place of a legacy system that is fundamental to the operation of the US government is against every programming best practice,” University of Kansas law professor Corey Rayburn Yung [posted](#) on BlueSky.

Highlighting a [Talking Points Memo](#) piece about how Musk’s team is implementing untested code into the U.S. Treasury to create new paths that “block payments and possibly leave less visibility into what has been blocked,” Yung warned that the world’s richest man was creating a “backdoor into the US Treasury.”

“This is incredibly dangerous both because of its intended use (by Elon and Trump) and the risk of other actors exploiting a major security vulnerability to cause a massive disruption to the US government,” Yung continued.

“There’s clearly no QA process, live testing with mocks, technical support for bugs, etc.,” Yung said. “This is insane. It’s the coding equivalent of hammering a complex, fragile machine until it does what you want.”

Musk was appointed as a “special government employee” by the White House, but on Monday, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt couldn’t explain whether he had received security clearance or a background check to operate within the federal government.

A special government employee is “anyone who works, or is expected to work, for the government for 130 days or less in a 365-day period,” according to the [Justice Department](#).

To help him, Musk has tapped a group of college students between the ages of 18 and 25, several of whom have little other professional experience than interning for him at SpaceX or Neuralink.

Musk and his staffers at the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, have had seemingly unfettered access to federal databases containing Social Security numbers, home addresses, medical histories, and other sensitive data.

Last week, Musk’s team was spotted installing a commercial email server into the Office of Personnel Management, in what many considered to be a massive security risk. The server gave the uncleared team potential access to onboarding, job performance reviews, and government employee health care details, which could violate HIPAA laws.

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Read more about Musk:

[Elon Musk Just Completed His Sinister Takeover of USAID](#)

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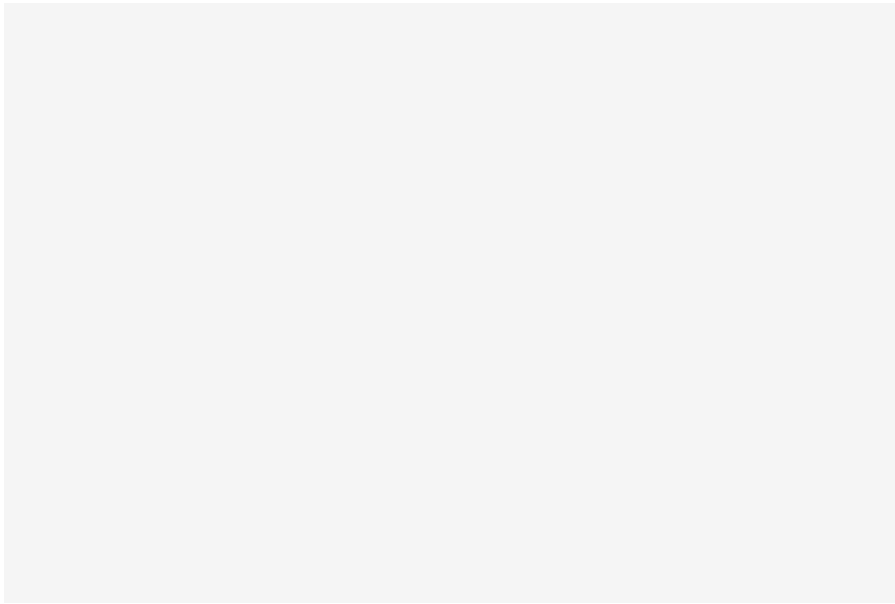
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West Point Caves to Trump's Culture Wars in Bonkers Memo

The military academy has disbanded almost a dozen clubs.



John Greim/LightRocket/Getty Images

The U.S. Military Academy West Point is disbanding 11 affinity groups as a result of Donald Trump's executive orders targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In a [memo](#) Tuesday, the school announced that the Asian Pacific Forum Club, Japanese Forum Club, Korean-American Relations Seminar, Vietnamese-American Cadet Association, Native American Heritage Forum, and Latin Cultural Club were all disbanded and ordered to cease all activities immediately.

The National Society of Black Engineers, the Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers, and the Society of Women Engineers were also shut down.

The Corbin Forum, which "empowers and promotes women's leadership within the Corps of Cadets and Army," was disbanded, and its [web page](#) was removed from West Point's website. Spectrum, a group supporting LGBTQ+ cadets, was similarly ordered to shut down.

The memo also dissolved the Contemporary Cultural Affairs Seminar Club, which supported cadets who were "transitioning from civilian to cadet and cadet to officer."

The dispersal of these groups, meant to provide resources and community to cadets, many of whom are from marginalized backgrounds, was done "in accordance with recent Presidential [Executive Orders](#), Department of Defense guidance, and Department of the Army guidance," according to the memo. No other rationale was provided for the action.

The U.S. Army and Air Force closed their respective DEI offices and programs in January. Last week, after Trump baselessly blamed the government's DEI practices for a deadly plane crash, federal employees at several agencies received [instructions](#) to remove their pronouns from their email signature.

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Read more about Trump's war on DEI:

[Trump Just Made His Comments About D.C. Plane Crash so Much Worse](#)

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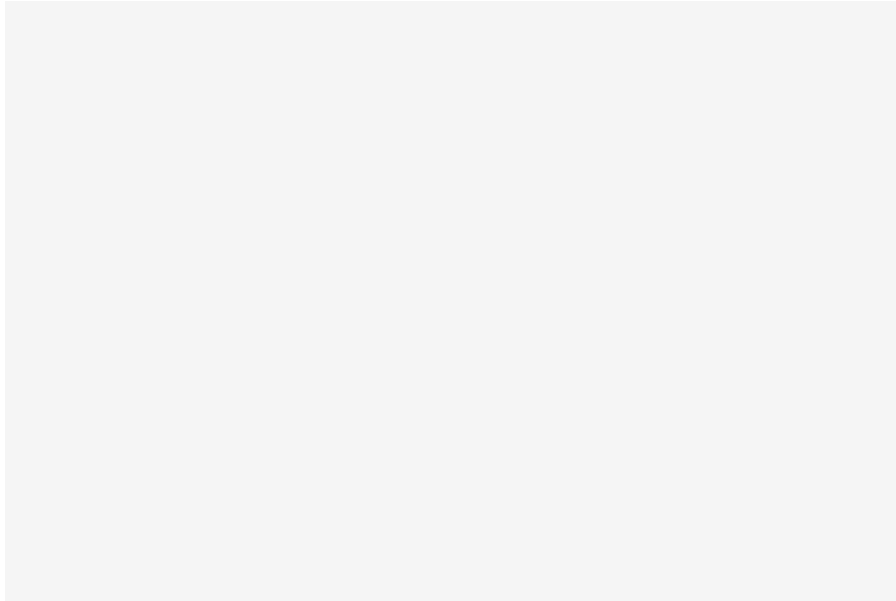
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Trump’s Plan to Ethnically Cleanse Gaza Stuns the Entire World

Donald Trump’s newest comments on taking over Gaza went a step too far for the international community.



Shawn Thew/EPA/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Donald Trump’s foolish pledge to take over the Gaza strip was quickly slammed by major world leaders, including American allies.

The president said Tuesday in a [joint press conference](#) with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the “U.S. will take over the Gaza strip” and send its Palestinian residents to “beautiful area with homes and safety ... so that they can live out their lives in peace and harmony,” boasting that he would turn the territory into “the Riviera of the Middle East.”

Trump’s plan for ethnic cleansing was [immediately panned](#) by the U.S.’s Arab allies. Egypt’s foreign ministry said in a statement that Gaza needed to be rebuilt “without moving the Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip.” Saudi Arabia also issued a statement reaffirming its desire for a Palestinian state as a “firm, steadfast and unwavering position,” contradicting Trump’s statements about the Gulf country earlier in the day.

“The kingdom of Saudi Arabia also stresses what it had previously announced regarding its absolute rejection of infringement on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, whether through Israeli settlement policies, annexation of Palestinian lands or efforts to displace the Palestinian people from their land,” the Saudi statement said.

China also criticized Trump’s harebrained idea, stressing that it supports a two-state solution.

“We oppose the forced relocation of people in Gaza and hope that the relevant parties will take the ceasefire and post-war governance in Gaza as an opportunity to push the Palestinian issue back on the right track,” said Lin Jian, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Turkey, a member of NATO with U.S. military bases, harshly criticized Trump’s plan, with the country’s foreign minister [calling](#) Trump’s plan to deport Gaza’s Palestinians to neighboring countries “unacceptable.”

“Deportation (of Palestinians) is something neither we nor the region can accept. Even thinking of it is absurd. Even launching a debate on it is wrong,” Hakan Fidan told the state-run Anadolu Agency.

Of course, the people actually living in Gaza are not fans of the idea either. [Palestinians of all factions](#) came out against Trump’s ethnic cleansing scheme, with Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri saying the president’s remarks “are ridiculous and absurd, and any ideas of this kind are capable of igniting the region. We consider them [the plan] a recipe for generating chaos and tension in the region because the people of Gaza will not allow such plans to pass.”

Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, said, “These calls represent a serious violation of international law. Peace and stability will not be achieved in the region without establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital on the borders of 1967, based on the two-state solution.”

Perhaps Palestine’s U.N. envoy Riyad Mansour put it best.

“For those who want to send the Palestinian people to a ‘nice place’, allow them to go back to their original homes in what is now Israel,” Mansour said, using Trump’s own words. “The Palestinian people want to rebuild Gaza because this is where we belong.”

Trump’s plan has even drawn [skepticism](#) from Republicans in Congress, with Senators Lindsey Graham, John Thune, Josh Hawley, and others puzzled at the idea. It’s going to be a hard sell for the president to convince his “America First” supporters, let alone the rest of the country, to invade, ethnically cleanse, and then occupy Gaza against the will of its long-suffering people.

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