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# Trump fires at least 12 independent inspectors general in late-night purge

The dismissals could clear the way for the president to install loyalists in the crucial role of identifying fraud, waste and abuse in the government.

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President Donald Trump speaks at the White House on Tuesday. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

By [David Nakamura](#)  
and  
[Lisa Rein](#)

The White House late Friday fired the independent inspectors general of at least 12 major federal agencies in a purge that could clear the way for President [Donald Trump](#) to install loyalists in the crucial role of identifying fraud, waste and abuse in the government.

The inspectors general were notified by emails from the White House personnel director that they had been terminated immediately, according to people familiar with the situation, who like others in this report spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private messages. The dismissals appeared to violate federal law, which requires Congress to receive 30 days' notice of any intent to fire the inspectors general.

Some of the government's largest agencies were involved, including the Departments of Defense, State, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Energy.

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Most of those dismissed were Trump appointees from his first term, which stunned the group.

"It's a widespread massacre," said one of the fired inspectors general. "Whoever Trump puts in now will be viewed as loyalists, and that undermines the entire system."

Another fired watchdog said that the new administration "does not want anyone in this role who is going to be independent."

"IGs have done exactly what the president says he wants: to fight fraud waste and abuse and make the government more effective," the second person said. "Firing this many of us makes no sense. It is counter to those goals."

White House aides did not respond to a request for comment.

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Some inspectors general are presidential appointees, while others are designated by the heads of their agencies. They serve indefinite terms and typically span administrations to insulate them from shifts in political winds. A president can remove them but must notify both chambers of Congress in advance.

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During his first term, Trump [fired five inspectors general](#) in less than two months in 2020 — including at the State Department, whose inspector general had played a minor role in the president's impeachment proceedings and had begun investigating alleged misconduct by then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Some lawmakers criticized the move as a retaliatory purge.

Inspectors general are designated to act as watchdogs in federal agencies, with investigatory powers to look into allegations of waste, fraud and abuse.

Before the firings, there were 74 inspectors general across the federal government, some with large staffs numbering in the thousands.

The news left some employees in the offices "absolutely shocked," said one senior executive in an inspector general's office, who was not authorized to speak on the record.

"This is totally unprecedented. It's what we were fearing. There was noise during the transition about him doing this and some statements made during his campaign" by Trump's aides, the executive said.

*Matt Viser contributed to this report.*

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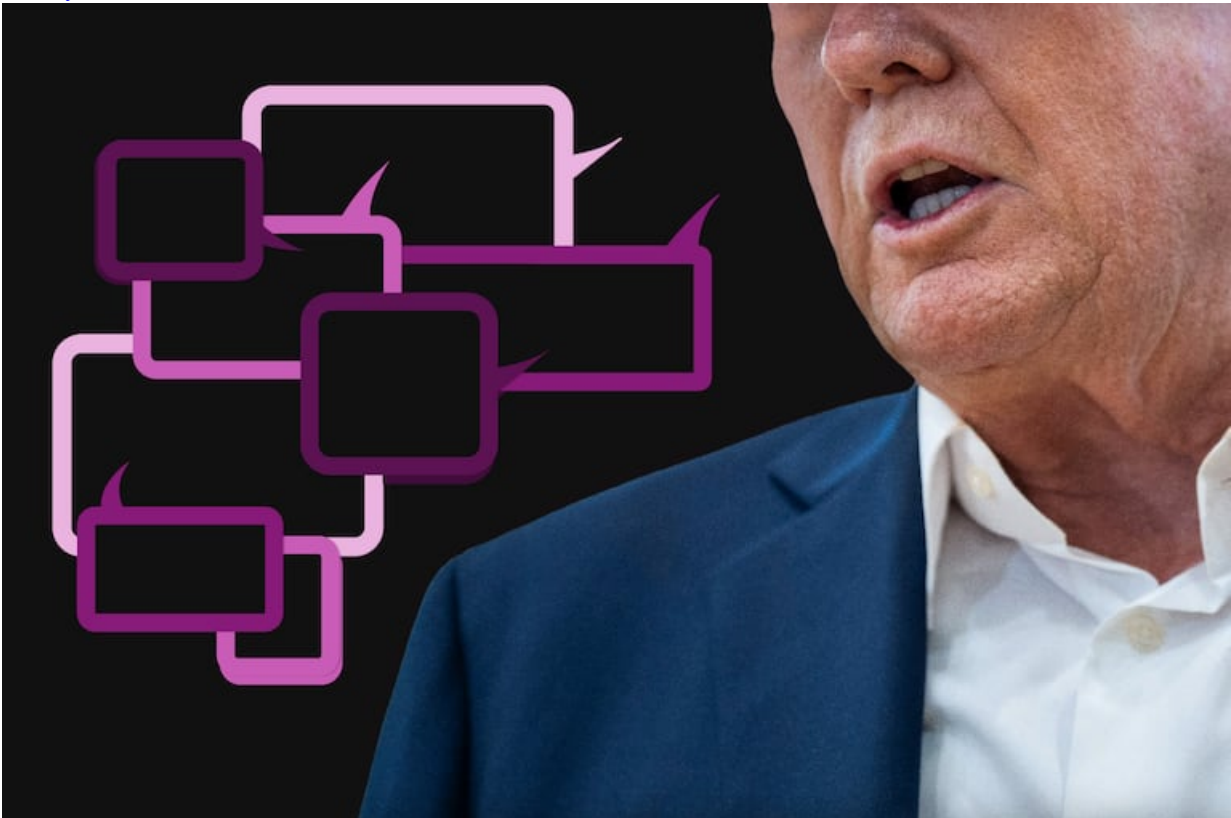
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