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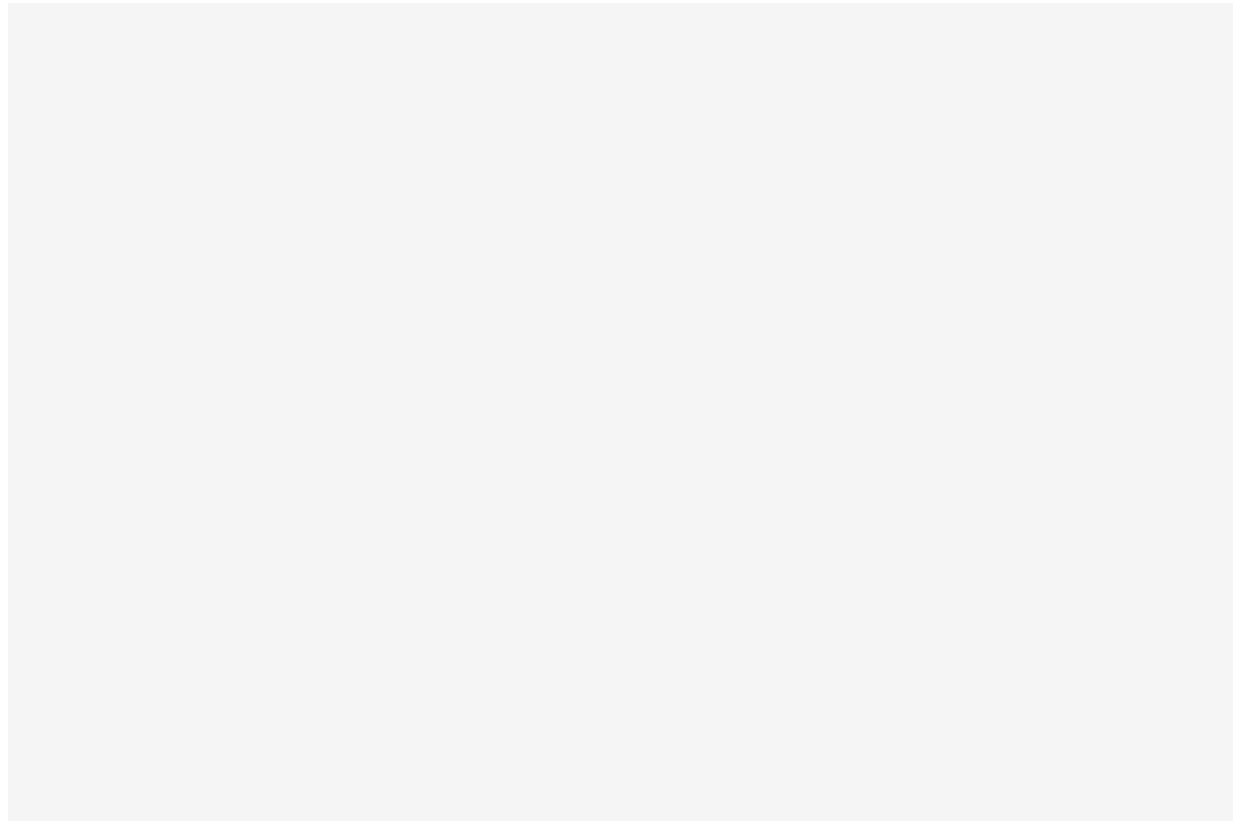
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[Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling/](#)  
February 13, 2025/1:09 p.m. ET  
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## Pete Hegseth Crumbles When Asked What Russia Is Conceding to Ukraine

**Pete Hegseth played right into Vladimir Putin's hand with his alarming confession.**



Omar Havana/Getty Images

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had no clear answer Thursday when asked outright what concessions Russia would be making in peace negotiations with Ukraine.

“You have focused on what Ukraine is giving up. What concessions will [Vladimir] Putin be asked to make?” a reporter asked Hegseth at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

“Um, well that’s—I would start by saying the arguments that have been made that somehow coming to the table right now is making concessions to Vladimir Putin outright, that we otherwise—or that the president or the United States shouldn’t otherwise make—I just reject that at its face,” Hegseth [said](#). “There’s a reason why negotiations are happening right now, just a few weeks after President Trump was sworn in as the president of the United States.

“President Putin responds to strength,” Hegseth added.

REPORTER: You have focused on what Ukraine is giving up. What concessions will Putin be asked to make?

HEGSETH: Um. I would start by saying the arguments that have been made that somehow coming to the table right now is making concessions to Vladimir Putin, I just reject that at... [pic.twitter.com/8KqMe7ohG3](https://pic.twitter.com/8KqMe7ohG3)

— Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) [February 13, 2025](#)

But that interpretation of events flies in the face of what the president’s former allies see in his negotiations with Putin. Speaking with CNN on Wednesday, Trump’s former national security adviser [John Bolton](#) claimed that Putin’s insistence on negotiating through Trump—rather than going through previous administrations or through Ukraine’s leaders directly—was simply because Putin believes “he’ll get more out of it.”

“And he’s absolutely right,” Bolton [said](#).

NATO allies were left reeling Wednesday after Hegseth [pitched](#) that America would effectively end its role as the steward of European security, revealing that the administration’s peace talks with Russia had taken several chips “off the table,” including Ukraine’s possible NATO membership

(something the military alliance had promised in 2008), the possibility of a U.S. presence in Ukraine to enforce postwar security guarantees, and the end of NATO missions to Ukraine.

Hegseth also said Wednesday that Ukraine returning to its prewar borders—before Russia annexed Crimea in 2014—would be “unrealistic,” effectively forcing Ukraine to cede territory to Russia in another striking reversal of the U.S. and NATO’s previous position regarding the former Soviet territory.

The new deal, per Bolton, amounted to Russian propaganda and was practically “written in the Kremlin.”

It was a stunning show of inexperience for the former Fox News host, who apparently needed to walk back some of those brazen settlement terms while speaking before NATO on Thursday. Hegseth insisted that, despite the U.S. having already shown its hand, “everything is on the table” when it comes to arranging peace between Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

“What he decides to allow or not allow is at the purview of the leader of the free world, of President Trump,” Hegseth [said](#) Thursday. “I’m not going to stand at this podium and declare what President Trump will do or won’t do.”

During an Oval Office press conference Thursday unveiling his new [“reciprocal tariff” plan](#), Trump denied telling Hegseth to walk back his comments, describing them as “pretty accurate.”

But the futile backtrack earned him the ire of several national security and defense experts, who argued online that Hegseth had already ceded too much to Russia.

“Hegseth’s lack of experience is already showing,” [posted](#) *The Economist*’s defense editor, Shashank Joshi, on X. “Publicly makes a series of pre-emptive concessions prior to the most important negotiations in many years, and then has to publicly explain that he had no authority to say any of those things.”

Tommy Vietor, a former spokesman for President Barack Obama and the United States National Security Council, also torched Hegseth for the critical negotiating error.

“This was a huge fuckup by Hegseth,” Vietor [wrote](#). “There’s no walking back his initial comments that Ukraine won’t join NATO or gain back all the territory lost since 2014. He wrote Putin a big check that has already been cashed. Maybe don’t make an unqualified Fox News host @SecDef?”

*This piece has been updated.*

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[Trump’s Phone Call With Putin Leaves Europe Reeling](#)

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[Hafiz Rashid/](#)

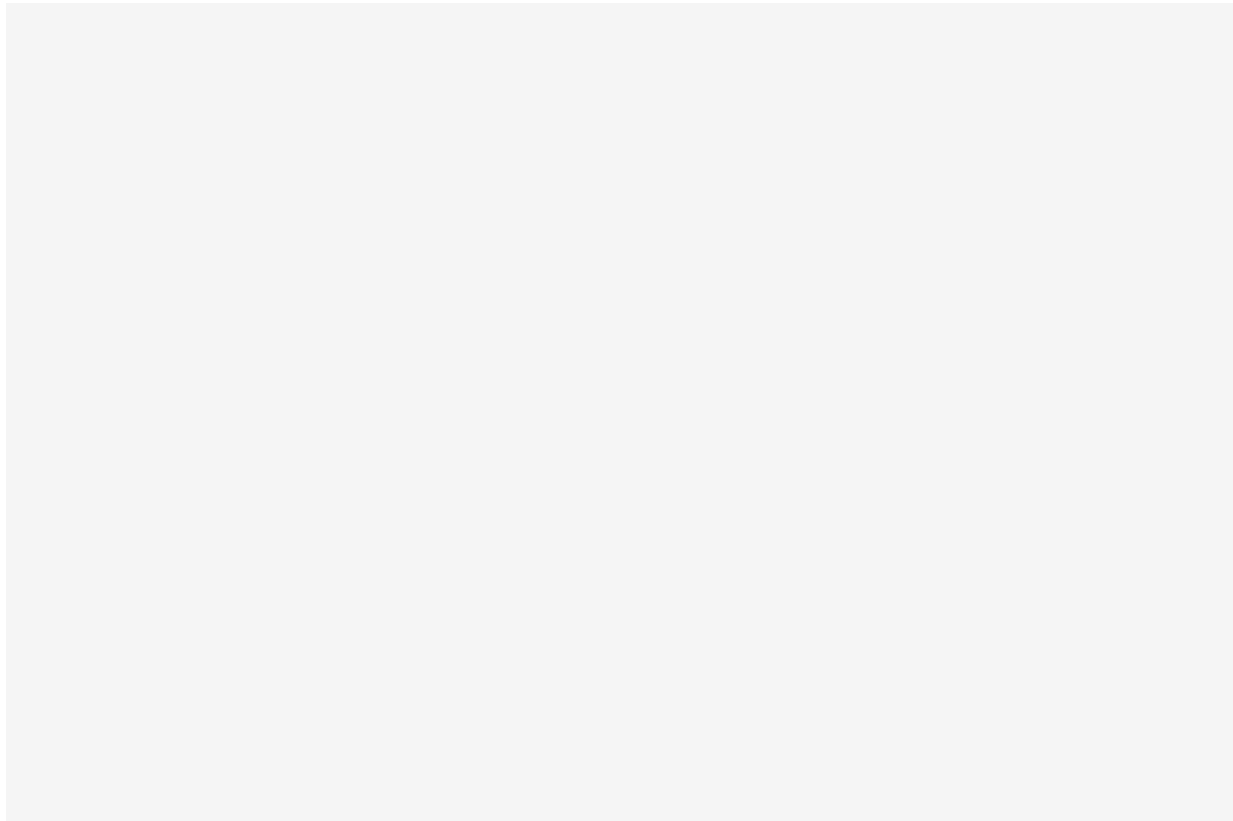
February 13, 2025/12:57 p.m ET

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## Elon Musk’s DOGE Minions Have Found Their New Target: NASA

Conflict of interest, much?



Celal Gunes/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency will soon be headed to an agency very close to his personal interests: NASA.

On Wednesday, the agency's acting administrator Janet Petro told [Bloomberg](#) that NASA was expecting a visit from Musk's DOGE cronies, saying that "they are going to look—similarly to what they've done at other agencies—at our payments."

Musk's company SpaceX is a major contractor with NASA, to the tune of about [\\$14.5 billion](#), and has taken over transporting astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station. It is also under contract to build a vehicle to take humans back to the moon under NASA's Artemis initiative.

Despite those contracts, Musk has repeatedly criticized the agency, calling the Artemis program "extremely inefficient" and missions to the moon "a distraction" from his own personal goal of [colonizing Mars](#). SpaceX is already launching [multiple missions](#) to the red planet in the next decade, and the tech mogul—[fascism enthusiast](#) might want to shift the agency's mission in that direction.

Musk might also take aim at NASA's other contracts to serve his interests. Last year, for example, he [attacked](#) Boeing over its Starliner program. Some of the many young programmers in DOGE, such as [Luke Farritor](#) and [Marko Elez](#), already have connections to SpaceX.

Petro said that NASA's conflict-of-interest policies would apply to DOGE operatives, saying that "any employee or any person that's coming in, we will check out their conflict of interest, make sure they don't have any conflicts of interest with any of the companies that we work with." But Petro herself may soon be replaced by [Jared Isaacman](#), an astronaut who has flown multiple missions for SpaceX, if he is confirmed by the Senate.

It's highly doubtful that any conflict-of-interest policies anywhere in the federal government will be enforced against Musk. For example, a massive \$400 million State Department contract for armored vehicles awarded to Tesla drew criticism, but the department only [responded](#) by removing the word "Tesla" from the contract. NASA could be where Musk's most blatant self-serving actions take place.

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More on wtfElon is doing:

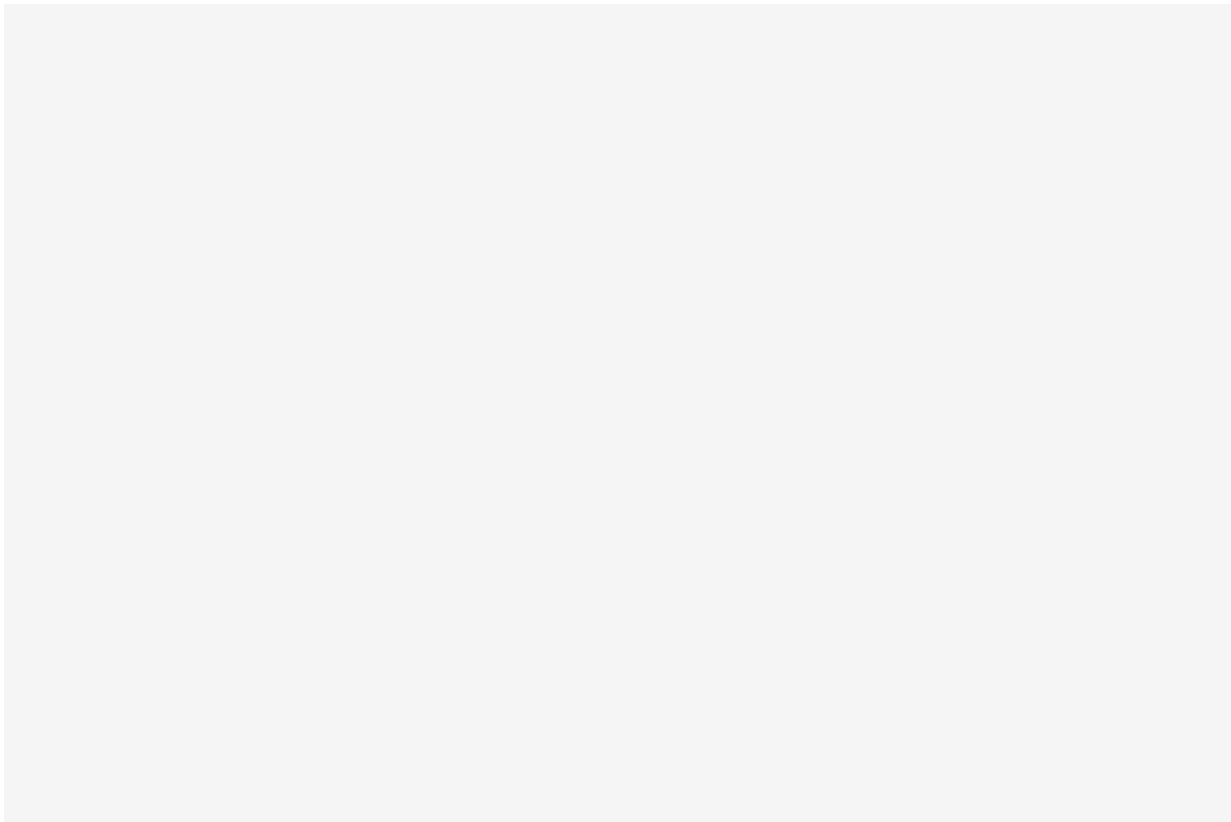
[Trump and Musk Only Know How to Do Two Things With Their Power](#)

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## Trump's Education Pick Refuses to Answer One Very Easy Question

**Linda McMahon, Donald Trump's nominee for education secretary, revealed the chilling next front line in Republicans' anti-DEI crusade.**



Win McNamee/Getty Images

Trump's nominee for education secretary refused to say whether classes like African American history would be allowed in public schools under his administration.

Former WWE executive Linda McMahon faced [questioning from Senator Chris Murphy](#) during her Senate confirmation hearing Thursday regarding the specifics of her anti-DEI enforcement plans.

"West Point has closed down all ethnic clubs. So the Society of Black Engineers can no longer meet because they believe that to be in compliance with this order they cannot have groups structured around ethnic or racial affiliations," the Connecticut senator began, referring to how the military academy [responded](#) to Trump's executive order striking all diversity, equity, and inclusion programs from the federal government. "Would public schools be in violation of this order, would they risk funding if they had clubs that students could belong to based on their racial or ethnic identity?"

"Well I certainly today don't want to address ... hypothetical situations," McMahon said, sidestepping the question. "I would like, once I'm confirmed, to get in and assess these programs—"

"Isn't that a pretty easy one?" Murphy interrupted. "You're saying that it's a possibility that if a school has a club for Vietnamese American students, or Black students, where they meet after school, that they could be potentially in jeopardy of receiving federal funding?"

"Again, I would like to fully understand what that order is and what those clubs are doing."

“That’s pretty chilling,” Murphy said, in response to McMahon’s spineless attempt to avoid admitting that the Trump administration would regulate cultural clubs and activities. “I think schools all around the country are gonna hear that. What about educational programming centered around specific ethnic and racial experiences? My son is in a public school; he takes a class called African American history. If you’re running an African American history class, could you perhaps be in violation of this executive order?”

“I’m not quite certain,” McMahon said. “I’d like to look into it further and get back to you on that.”

“So there’s a possibility . . . that public schools that run African American history classes . . . a class that has been taught in school for decades, could lose federal funding if they continue to teach African American history?”

“No, that’s not what I’m saying. I’m saying that I would like to take a look at these programs and fully understand the breadth of the executive order and get back to you on that” McMahon desperately tried to backtrack.

She did not expound on exactly what “looking into” African American history programs entailed.

“I think you’re gonna have a lot of educators, and a lot of principals and administrators scrambling right now,” Murphy warned. “My time is expired.”

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February 13, 2025/12:24 p.m ET

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## Russia Asks Elon Musk for Help Crushing Dissent

**Elon Musk has access to sensitive information about dissidents and intelligence officials. Russia wants it.**



Aaron Schwartz/CNP/Bloomberg/Getty Images

It looks like Elon Musk's takeover of the federal government could put people's lives at risk across the world.

USAID provided, among other things, funding for groups advocating for human rights and democratic reforms in states mired by autocratic regimes, as a form of U.S. soft power in places such as Russia. When Musk gutted the agency earlier this month, he [baselessly claimed](#) that USAID was "laundering" taxpayer funds into far-left sources.

Now Russia wants to know exactly where the money was going. Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the Russian State Duma, asked the U.S. Tuesday for a list of individuals and opposition groups in Russia who received money from USAID.

"If they recognized the organization as an enemy, let them give us the lists," Volodin said, [according](#) to *The Times* of London.

"Congress will send us the lists—we will give them to the FSB," he continued, referring to the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.

Volodin bragged that exiled opposition figures would be left "hungry and cold" without funding from USAID. "Those who received money from abroad, now let them publicly confess and repent on Red Square," he said.

It's unclear whether Congress, or the U.S. government, will comply with Volodin's request, but Donald Trump has made it more than clear that he's not opposed to giving in to every one of Russia's demands.

The president [bragged](#) Wednesday about a friendly phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin to start negotiations to end its invasion of Ukraine. This week, his secretary of defense ruled out NATO membership for Ukraine, and [said](#) that it was "unrealistic" to expect Russia to forfeit all of its illegally claimed territory. (Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has since [sort of walked back](#) the NATO claim.)

If Musk or Trump genuinely believes that the U.S. was wrongly funding these groups, there is no reason why they wouldn't readily supply this information to the Russian government, which is not only historically hostile to the U.S., but takes [extreme measures](#) to stamp out dissent within its borders.

But this U.S. administration is so far notably less hostile to autocrats, and practically uninterested in democracy.

Should Musk comply, there are many others who might be at risk abroad. As Musk's Department of Government Efficiency sinks its teeth into the far corners of the federal government, it's clear that there are significant national security risks involved, particularly where its [intelligence agencies are involved](#).

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[Elon Musk Escalates Threat to “Delete” Entire Federal Agencies](#)

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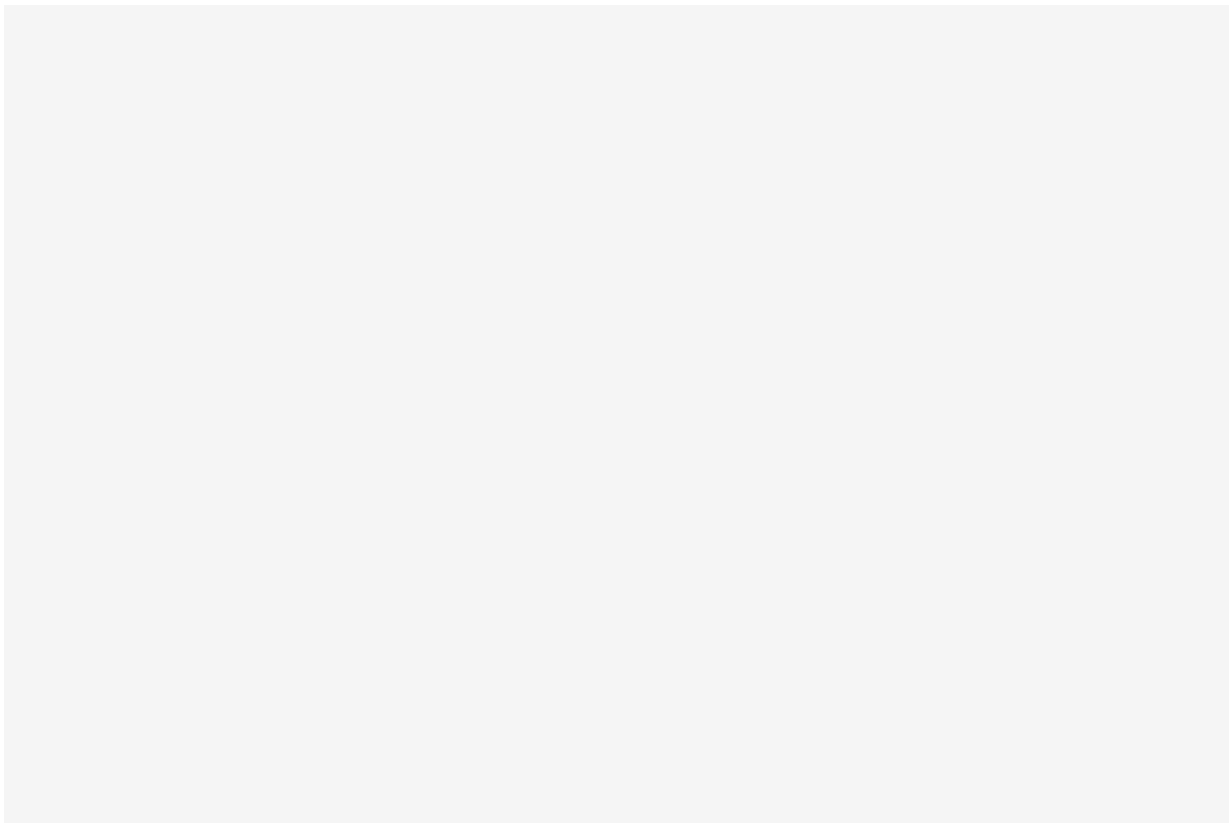
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## Only One Republican Was Brave Enough to Vote Against RFK Jr.

**The country is about to get a lot sicker now that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is head of the Health and Human Services Department.**



Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

The Senate confirmed Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Wednesday to run the Department of Health and Human Services, primarily along party lines. Fifty-two Republican senators [voted](#) in favor of Kennedy, a [known conspiracy theorist](#), to front America’s health policy, while 45 Democrats, one Republican, and two independent senators remained opposed.

Senator Mitch McConnell—a childhood polio survivor—was the singular Republican holdout against Kennedy, marking the third time that the Kentucky lawmaker has voted against one of Donald Trump’s nominees.

“Mr. Kennedy failed to prove he is the best possible person to lead America’s largest health agency,” McConnell said in a statement. “As he takes office, I sincerely hope Mr. Kennedy will choose not to sow further doubt and division but to restore trust in our public health institutions.”



Per [Trump](#), Kennedy will spend his time atop America's public health agency researching the already [thoroughly debunked](#) conspiracy that ties vaccine usage to increased autism rates. But Kennedy's appointment will also have him [oversee](#) a budget of nearly \$2 trillion and a staff of 90,000 federal employees, as well as hand him the reins of critical health programs under the fold of HHS, such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (Dr. Mehmet Oz, the reality TV host and similarly failed 2024 presidential candidate, has been tapped to lead CMS, though a date for his confirmation hearing has not yet been set.)

The 71-year-old's "Make America Healthy Again" agenda has not been laid out in specifics, but Kennedy has vaguely promised to tackle the nation's rising obesity rates, SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps), and has claimed he will work the Department of Agriculture to [eradicate](#) ultra-processed foods from the American market.

Kennedy's history in public health is questionable at best. His stances, which include unscientific beliefs that AIDS is [not caused](#) by HIV and that a large number of vaccines should be stripped from the market, could have major impacts on the agency designed to protect America's health, especially as [bird flu outbreaks](#) begin to dot the country.

And Kennedy's conspiratorial policies have been tied to legitimate harm halfway across the world. Preceding a deadly measles outbreak on Samoa in 2019, Kennedy's anti-vax nonprofit Children's Health Defense spread rampant misinformation about the efficacy of vaccines throughout the nation, sending the island's vaccination rate plummeting from the 60–70 percent range to just 31 percent, according to [Mother Jones](#).

That year, the country reported 5,707 cases of measles—an illness that the U.S. [declared eliminated](#) in 2000 thanks to advancements in modern medicine (read: vaccines)—as well as 83 measles-related deaths, the majority of which were children under the age of 5.

The virulent vaccine conspiracy theorist faced a slew of criticism throughout his confirmation hearings, including condemnation for making millions of dollars off his dangerous vaccine rhetoric, which included money stemming from speaking fees, dividends from his vaccine lawsuits, and leading [Children's Health Defense](#). His aggressive, anti-scientific approach to medicine made at least one senator emotional during his hearing before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

New Hampshire Senator Maggie Hassan [argued](#), at the time, that Kennedy's cashflow from "relitigating and churning settled science" was making it "impossible" for the medical community to move forward with legitimate research into autism and other disabilities.

The hearings also uncovered that Kennedy had paid close to \$1 million to settle a [sexual misconduct case](#) brought by one of the employees at Children's Health Defense, despite repeatedly denying what he had described as "frivolous, unfounded allegations" against him. But that wasn't the only sexual assault claim against him: In 2024, Kennedy was accused of (and sort of apologized for) [groping](#) his children's babysitter, Eliza Cooney, in the late 1990s.

The myriad details of Kennedy's private life—as well as his virulent anti-vax prerogatives—gave pause to a number of lawmakers on the Hill. Kennedy has [publicly admitted](#) to dumping a [dead bear cub](#) in Central Park, believed the 2004 presidential election was stolen from Democrat John Kerry, peddled conspiracies that the CIA killed his uncle, chain-sawed off the head of a dead whale (per his daughter [Kick Kennedy](#)), and late last month was described by his cousin Caroline Kennedy as a ["predator"](#) who is "addicted to attention and power."

In a late January [missive](#) to lawmakers, Kennedy's 2024 running mate Nicole Shanahan promised to "personally fund challengers" to primary senators who dared to vote against Kennedy.

"I will make it my personal mission that you lose your seats in the Senate if you vote against the future health of America's children," the Silicon Valley lawyer and investor said in a video statement at the time. "You're either on the side of transparency and accountability, or you're standing in the way."

Just a reminder before Kennedy's tenure attempts to rewrite history: Since their invention, vaccines have proven to be one of the greatest accomplishments of modern medicine. The medical shots are so effective at preventing illness that they have practically eradicated some of the worst diseases from our collective culture, from rabies to polio and smallpox—a fact that has possibly fooled some into believing that the viruses and their complications aren't a significant threat for the average, health-conscious individual.

*This story has been updated.*

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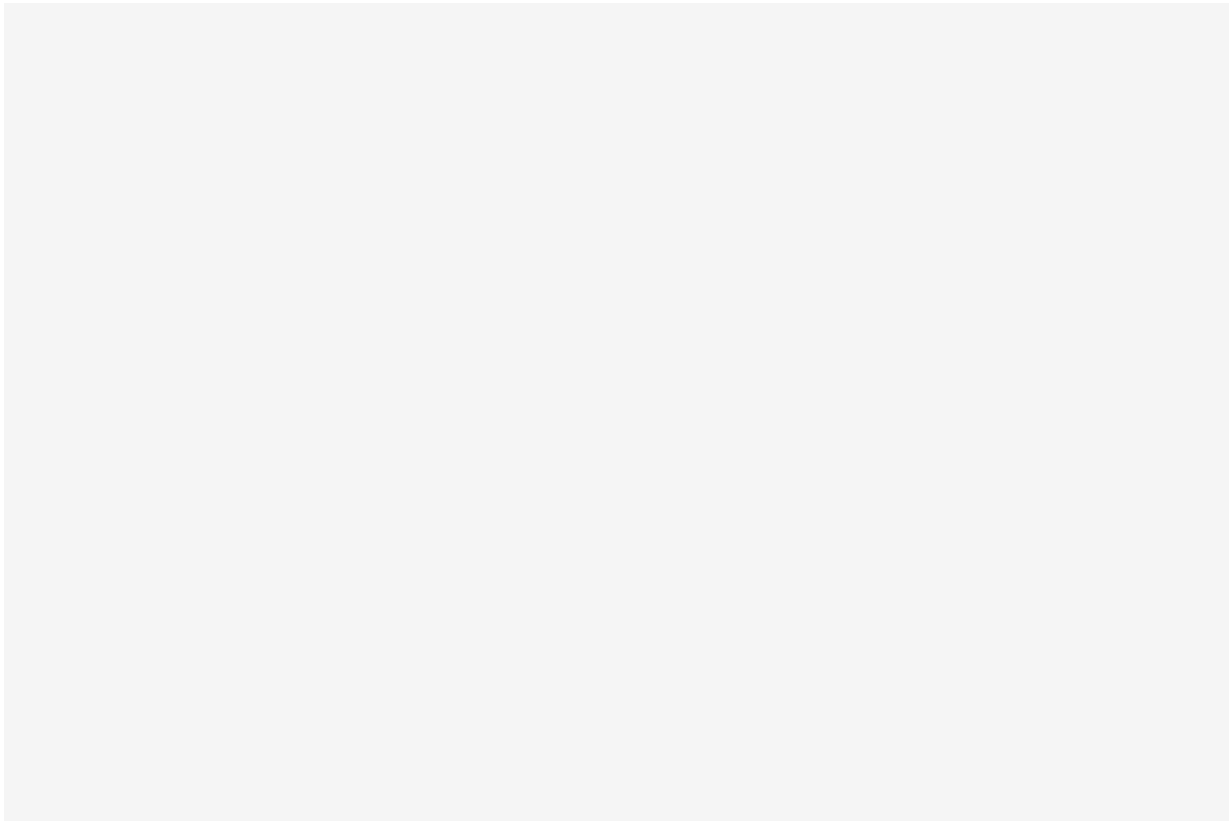
[The RFK Jr. Op-Ed the Los Angeles Times Didn't Want You to Read](#)

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## Elon Musk Escalates Threat to “Delete” Entire Federal Agencies

**President Musk has ramped up his call to wreck the federal government.**



Andrew Hamik/Getty Images

The pseudo-president of the United States is calling for entire government agencies to be “deleted.”

“I think we do need to delete entire agencies, as opposed to leave part of them behind.... It’s kind of like leaving a weed,” Elon Musk [told](#) the World Governments Summit in Dubai in a video speech Thursday. “If you don’t remove the roots of the weed, then it’s easy for the weed to grow back. But if you remove the roots of the weed—it doesn’t stop weeds from ever going back, but it makes it harder.”

The tech mogul was asked about the changes he has been making with his Department of Government Efficiency, and he decided to crow on and on about his newest pet project of dismantling the whole federal government.

“So we have to really delete entire agencies, many of them,” Musk said. “And that’s not to say there won’t be an increase over time of bureaucracy in some new administration, but it will be from a much lower baseline. So certainly it’s a step in the right direction.”

So far, Musk has taken a sledgehammer to the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#), setting off alarm bells, and is already axing programs and grants at the [Department of Education](#). His vision aligns with that of President Trump, who promised to [wipe out](#) the department while campaigning for president.

Musk’s decisions are having drastic consequences all over the world, with even [medical research](#) under threat. Meanwhile, his own conflicts of interest continue, including a [\\$400 million contract](#) for the U.S. government to buy armored Tesla vehicles. It begs the question of how much the tech CEO is personally benefiting from his so-called efficiency crusade.

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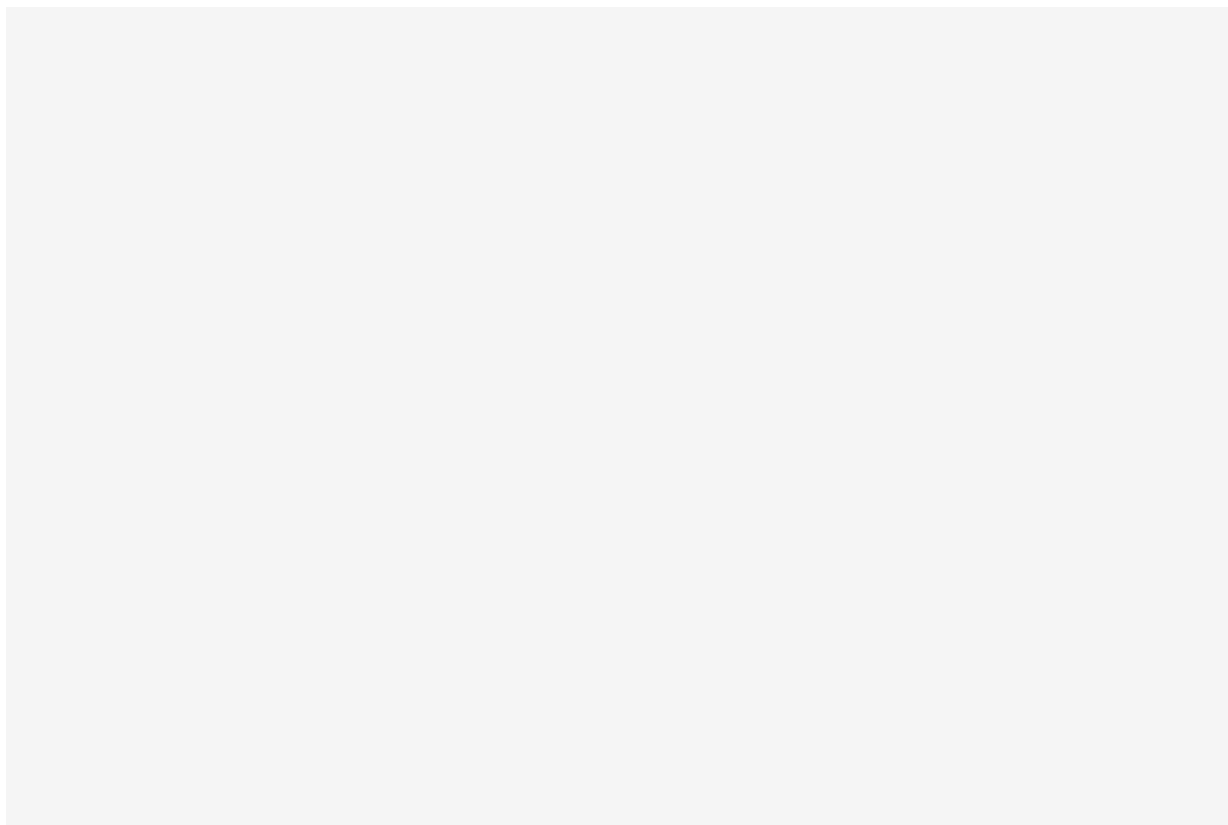
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## Tesla Name Quietly Removed From Federal Contract After Uproar

**The State Department has suddenly deleted any mention of “Tesla” after facing massive backlash over its recent contract.**



Christian Marquardt/Pool/Getty Images

The State Department was set to buy \$400 million worth of armored Teslas from Elon Musk over the next five years. But after a report from [Drop Site News](#) on Wednesday exposed the massive conflict of interest, the department quietly deleted the word “Tesla” and changed the \$400 million line item to a generic “armored electric vehicles.”

“After [@DropSiteNews](#) revealed Tesla was forecast to be given a \$400 million contract for “Armored Tesla,” the State Department altered its spreadsheet to obscure Tesla’s role,” Ryan Grim [wrote](#) on X. “Metadata shows the spreadsheet was revised several hours after our story published.”

“I’m pretty sure Tesla isn’t getting \$400M. No one mentioned it to me, at least,” Musk [wrote](#) on X.

The “armored Tesla” notation was made in December 2024, a month after Trump was elected.

The State Department did not respond to Drop Site News when asked about the sudden edit in the federal contract.

The question then is: Was this just a very dubious mistake? Or a clear cover-up?

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[Democrats Turn First DOGE Hearing Into an Elon Musk Roast](#)

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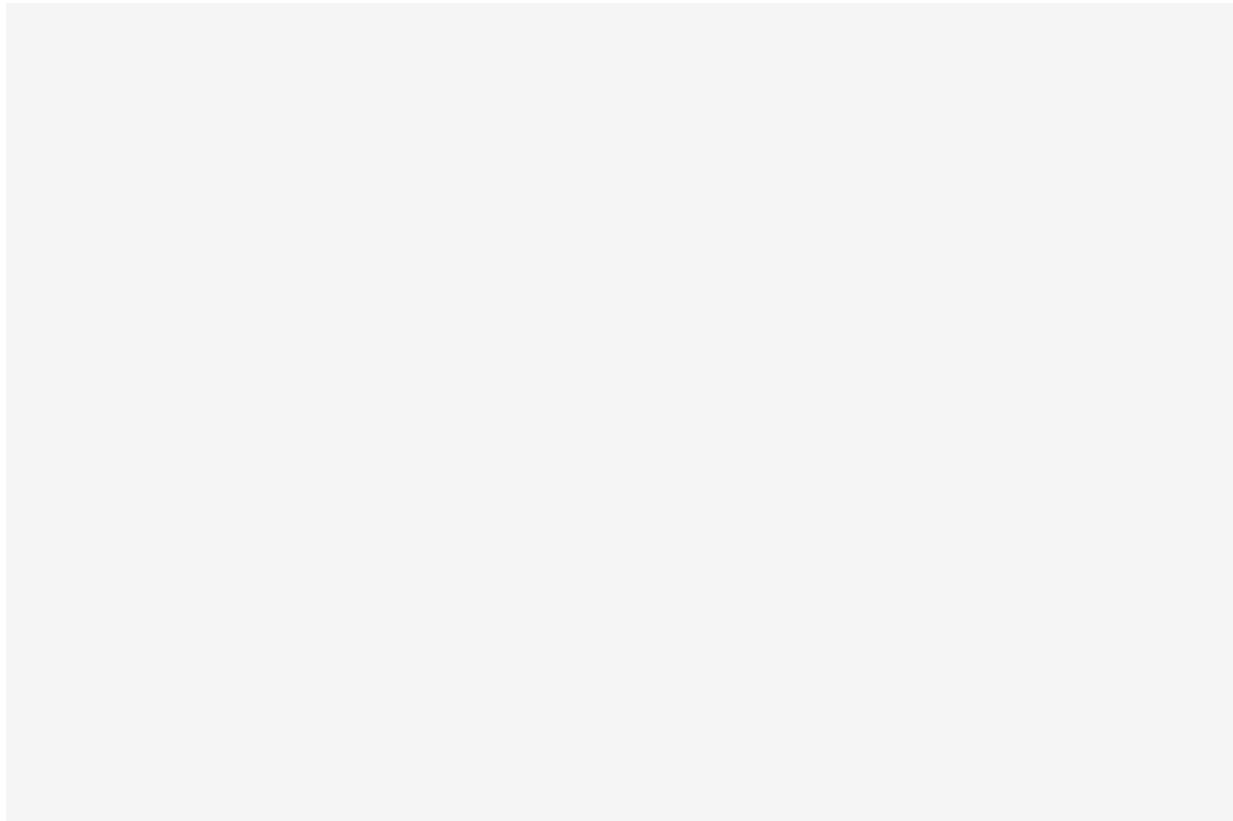
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## **Ex-Ally Rips Trump for Rolling Over for Vladimir Putin**

**John Bolton didn’t hold back when discussing Donald Trump’s latest moves on Ukraine and Russia.**



Logan Cyrus/AFP/Getty Images

Donald Trump claimed that his [phone call](#) with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday would be the beginning of the end for the war in Ukraine—but his former national security adviser doesn't think so.

Speaking with CNN late Wednesday, John Bolton argued that Putin had made a puppet out of Trump, using basic flattery to warm him up before stripping the U.S. leader's position apart. Trump had posted on [Truth Social](#) following the call that Putin had "used my very strong Campaign motto of, 'COMMON SENSE.'"

"I think we know exactly what is going to happen," Bolton [told](#) the network. "President Trump has effectively surrendered to Putin before the negotiations have even begun.

"The positions that Defense Secretary [Pete] Hegseth announced in Brussels—which, I'm sure I'd be stunned if Trump didn't convey them directly to Putin in their phone call—constitute terms of a settlement that could have been written in the Kremlin," Bolton said, noting that the details of the arrangement were practically Russian propaganda.

"It's a complete reversal of the U.S. and NATO position on a number of issues; for example, up until today the official American position was that Ukraine should be returned to full sovereignty and territorial integrity. That's gone," he said.

"The question of NATO membership, as far back as 2008, had been that ultimately Ukraine would become a member. It doesn't look like that's around anymore, either," Bolton continued.

"This is a palpable harm to American national security, because what Hegseth and Trump did today was not only blow up the NATO position on Ukraine, they blew up a thing called the Belovezha Accords," Bolton [said](#), referring to the 1991 agreement between three Soviet states that effectively [dissolved](#) the Soviet Union by declaring their independence from Moscow, creating the countries of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.

"So it means that not only is unprovoked aggression by Russia against Ukraine now OK, every other former Republic in the Soviet Union is vulnerable to the same thing without any indication that the U.S. will do anything about it."

Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio are scheduled to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Munich on Friday to discuss the state of the war. But Bolton believes that Putin is opting to negotiate through Trump because he believes "he'll get more out of it."

"And he's absolutely right," Bolton [said](#).

The damage to America's reputation wouldn't stop in Eastern Europe, according to Bolton, who noted that Beijing would likely be keeping a close eye on how the U.S. reacts to "unprovoked aggression" with regard to Taiwan. Bolton also described new National Intelligence Director Tulsi Gabbard, who was confirmed on Wednesday, as "one of [Trump's] worst nominations," specifying that her controversial background would make it less likely for America's allies to be willing to share intelligence with the United States.

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[Trump's Phone Call With Putin Leaves Europe Reeling](#)

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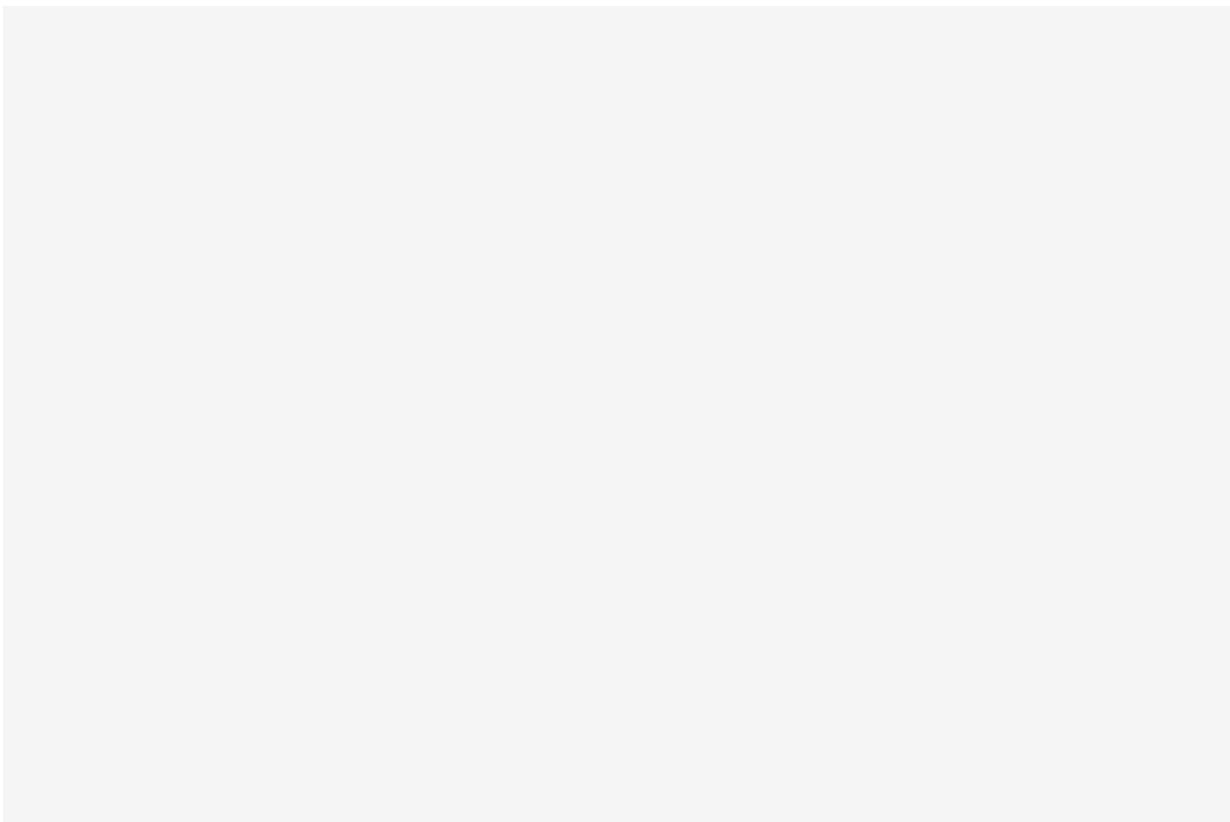
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## Trump Admits He Caved to Putin in Phone Call on Ukraine

**Donald Trump has given Vladimir Putin everything he wants.**



Jim Watson, Emmanuel Dunand/AFP/Getty Images

Donald Trump bragged Wednesday about how easily he folded to his beloved Russian President Vladimir Putin, after handing the fellow autocrat everything he'd been hoping for.

"I just had a lengthy and highly productive phone call with President Vladimir Putin of Russia," Trump [wrote](#) on Truth Social. "We discussed Ukraine, the Middle East, Energy, Artificial Intelligence, the power of the Dollar, and various other subjects."

The president said that they'd spoken about how many Russians and Americans had been killed during World War II, and the two leaders agreed that they wanted to "stop the millions of deaths taking place in the War with Russia/Ukraine."

"President Putin even used my very strong Campaign motto of, 'COMMON SENSE,'" Trump gushed.

"We agreed to work together, very closely, including visiting each other's Nations," Trump added. "We have also agreed to have our respective teams start negotiations immediately, and we will begin by calling President Zelenskyy, of Ukraine, to inform him of the conversation, something which I will be doing right now."

Trump said that he'd instructed Secretary of State Marco Rubio, CIA director John Ratcliffe, National Security Adviser Michael Waltz, and special envoy for the Middle East Steve Witkoff to lead the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine.

Before entering office, Trump had previously [claimed](#) that he would end the war in Ukraine "within 24 hours" of being elected president. When [pressed](#) in September on his actual plan, Trump said, "I'll speak to one, I'll speak to the other, I'll get 'em together."

Already, it's clear that Trump simply intends to give in to Putin's demands. On Wednesday, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth [told](#) U.S. allies that liberating all of Russia's occupied Ukrainian territory was "an unrealistic objective." He also backed down on the American push to have Ukraine join NATO, in compliance with a long-standing [complaint](#) from Putin.

Also on Wednesday, Tulsi Gabbard was confirmed as the director of national intelligence. Gabbard previously faced intense scrutiny for being a Russian stooge, with her own former staffers warning that she often [read and shared](#) articles from Russian state media. She also criticized American hostility toward Putin and pushed propaganda about Ukraine.

After Gabbard's nomination was announced in November, the response in Moscow was "gleeful," according to *The New York Times*. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a Russian newspaper, [fawned over](#) Gabbard, reporting that the CIA and FBI were "trembling" in response to her nomination. The article stated that Ukrainians considered Gabbard to be "an agent of the Russian state."

"Behind closed doors, people think she might be compromised. Like it's not hyperbole," one Republican Senate aide [told](#) *The Hill* in December. "There are members of our conference who think she's a [Russian] asset."

Gabbard was able to overcome any meaningful skepticism on the part of Republicans, as she was confirmed by every single Republican senator, save one: Senator Mitch McConnell. Now, Moscow can rejoice at the installation of an authoritarian sympathizer in Gabbard, and keep its stolen territory from Ukraine, while shutting the country out of a military alliance.

Even an apparent Trump win—the release of Marc Fogel, an American detained in Russia—was the result of [trading](#) a crypto-criminal back to Moscow. Trump previously [railed against](#) prisoner exchanges, claiming that they were extortion.

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[Trump Just Released a Shady Russian Prisoner](#)

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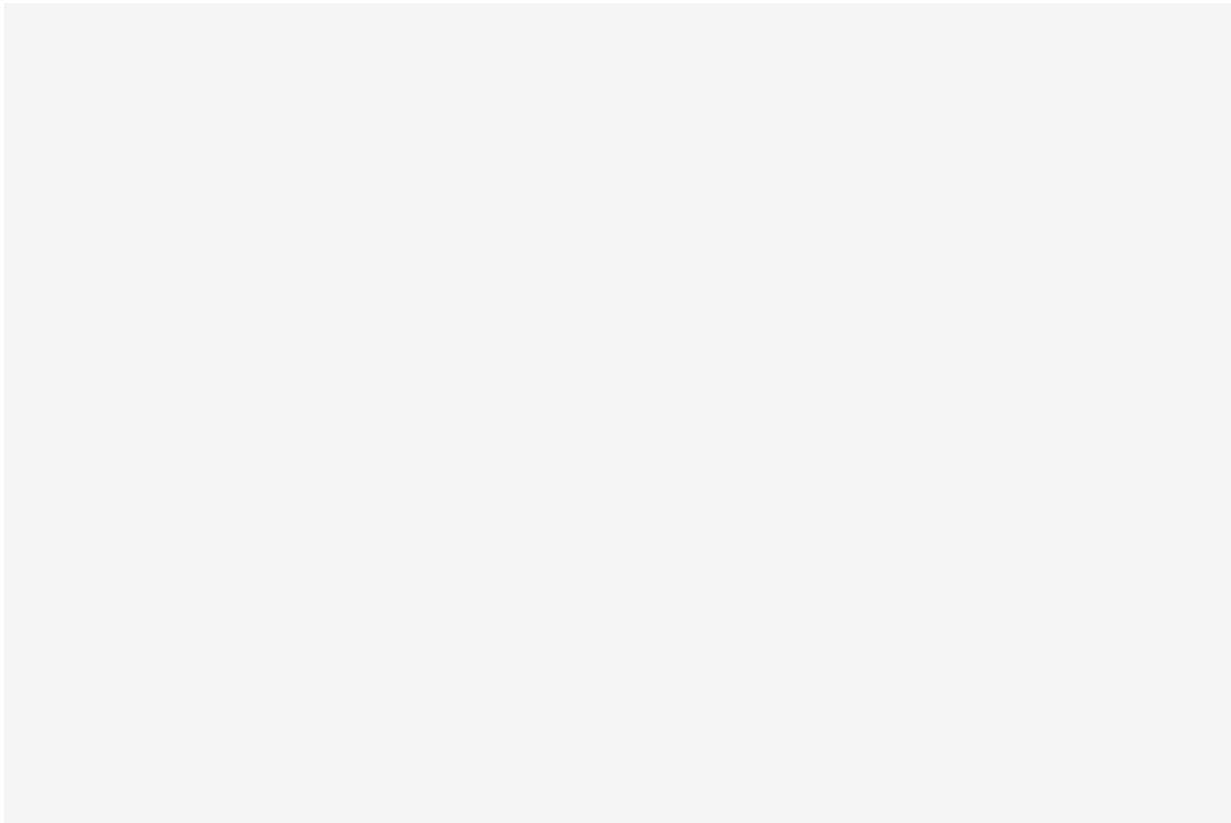
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## Trump Complains About Magnets in Unintelligible Rant

## Donald Trump thinks magnets don't work.



Andrew Harnik/Getty Images

Donald Trump complained about a “new theory” about magnets during a rant about Boeing, while answering questions that were not about magnets or Boeing at all.

After swearing in Tulsi Gabbard Wednesday as his new director of national intelligence, the president embarked on a winding hour-long question-and-answer session with reporters, where he alleged that “billions and billions of dollars” had been “thrown away illegally.”

Trump threw the blame around widely, alleging massive fraud at the Department of Education, until the weave found its way to Boeing, the airplane manufacturer that produces the Boeing 747 the president flies on. Trump [spoke](#) at length and to little effect about how he was “not happy about that whole thing.”

“We signed a very strong contract, I signed a guaranteed maximum contract which they haven’t seen in a long time. And they’re saying they’re getting hurt by it,” Trump [ranted](#), saying that Boeing wanted “more money.”

“But they have to produce the product and we expect them to produce the product. They have to produce the product, they agreed to build planes at a certain price,” Trump rambled. “They’re not used to that. They’re used to having time and material contracts where whatever it costs time and material. No dates. No anything. And it ends up costing five times more.”

Trump’s comments about cheaping out on Boeing are particularly disturbing considering recent [allegations](#) that the company might have cut corners during the production of its 737 Max 9 planes. In any case, it seems that reflecting about things that end up being more expensive than you might expect sent Trump’s brain careening into one of his old rants about magnets on boats.

“Take a look at the Gerald Ford, the aircraft carrier, the Ford. It was supposed to cost \$3 billion. It ends up costing like \$18 billion,” Trump said. “And they make, of course, all electric catapults which don’t work.”

The USS Gerald R. Ford actually cost [roughly \\$13 billion](#) to make, and it’s certainly not clear that its [Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System](#) doesn’t work. But the president wasn’t done.

“And they have all magnetic elevators to lift up 25 planes at a time, 20 planes at a time. And instead of using hydraulic, like on tractors that can handle anything from hurricanes to lightning to anything, they use magnets,” Trump said.

“It’s a new theory. Magnets are going to lift the planes up, and it doesn’t work. And they had billions and billions of dollars of cost overruns,” he said.

While the production of the ship was [delayed and experienced cost overruns](#), it’s not entirely clear why Trump has decided that the magnets on these ships don’t work. But, he has talked incoherently about this technology before. In January 2024, Trump baselessly [claimed](#) that magnets stop working when placed in water, and therefore were a stupid thing to put on a boat. When weaving his way through his grievances, the president’s mind has a tendency to repeat the hits, even the more inane ones.



“You look at the kind of waste, fraud, and abuse that this country is going through. And we have to straighten it out,” Trump concluded.

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