

## Elon Musk's Enemy, USAID, Was Investigating Starlink's Contracts in Ukraine

The agency was in the midst of a probe into the billionaire's equipment at the time of Musk's assault.

By Lucas Ropek

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Since coming into power, Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has barraged USAID, the international aid agency that dispenses food and supplies to nations all over the world. It is likely that the agency will soon be shuttered and could be subsumed into the U.S. State Department. Now, new reporting shows USAID was actually investigating equipment from one of Musk's companies at the time that he attacked the agency.

The Lever reported Tuesday that USAID's inspector general was in the process of investigating its own public-private partnership between Musk's Starlink and the Ukrainian government at the time that the billionaire's DOGE crippled the agency. Publicly available information about that probe is still online. An announcement from last May reads: "The USAID Office of Inspector General, Inspections and Evaluations Division, is initiating an inspection of USAID's oversight of Starlink satellite terminals provided to the Government of Ukraine. Our objectives are to determine how (1) the Government of Ukraine used the USAID-provided Starlink terminals, and (2) USAID monitored the Government of Ukraine's use of USAID-provided Starlink terminals."

Musk has called the agency "evil" and a "criminal organization," though the fact that USAID was investigating the Starlink activities may suggest ulterior motivations for the billionaire's vitriol. It's unclear what the Starlink probe's status is right now.

Musk's "criminal" remarks are funny since it increasingly looks like Musk's DOGE activities represent breaches of federal law and, therefore, may be construed as rampant criminal behavior. On Tuesday, the Washington Post noted that officials at half a dozen federal agencies had raised concerns over whether what Musk was doing was illegal. Those agencies included the "Treasury Department, the Education Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the General Services Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the White House budget office, among others," the newspaper reported. DOGE also suffered its second lawsuit this week, when union groups that protect federal workers sued the organization over its hijacking of the Treasury computer systems. The litigation alleges that DOGE may be violating a federal privacy law by allowing Musk's stooges to access certain systems.

DOGE has been staffed by a bunch of kids in their 20s who are now engaged in unprecedented, legally risky work. As far as I can tell, it's basically Elon being followed around by a bunch of "Gregs." If the bottom ever falls out of this thing and DOGE runs into legal trouble, it's easy to imagine that Musk's army of anti-bureaucracy grunts might be considered expendable. USAID has a long, controversial history and has often been accused by foreign governments of being a front for the CIA. While the agency dispenses aid to foreign countries, it has often been entangled in scandals. It hardly represents, as Sean Hannity recently put it, "radical DEI, woke, transgender, you know, leftist, Green New Deal madness." Given its history, it's obvious that Musk's battle against the agency will play well with voters who earnestly believe Trump wants to "destroy the deep state." That said, Elon Musk literally works for the deep state, so I don't know how his being in charge is any better.

*This story has been updated to clarify the nature of USAID's probe.*

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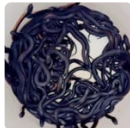
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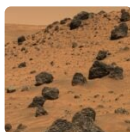
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