

NEWS ANALYSIS

Trump's Threat to Musk:
More 'Abuse of Power'

President Views Government as His Tool

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — Amid the fireworks of his spectacular breakup with Elon Musk last week was a striking admission by President Trump that once could have led to subpoenas.

As he lashed out at Mr. Musk for disloyalty, Mr. Trump threatened to cut off the billionaire's federal contracts in retaliation, effectively acknowledging what his critics have long said, that he looks at the government as his personal instrument for dispensing favors to friends and penalizing those who cross him.

In the old days, that might have been cause for a corruption investigation. In the modern era, it's just another Thursday. Mr. Trump has long since abandoned the kinds of rules and traditions that would constrain a president from employing the power of his office to personally steer federal contracts to allies and away from enemies. And even more remarkable, he has no hesitation about saying it out loud.

"The Musk quote is just fur-

ther proof that Trump and the late King Louis share a common view of the world: The state, it is me," said Trevor Potter, the president of the Campaign Legal Center and a former Republican chairman of the Federal Election Commission. "And yes, this is an example of Trump publicly and improperly threatening to use the enormous contracting power of the federal government as a weapon to punish someone for criticizing him. It is a complete abuse of power."

Mr. Trump's second term so far has been a 140-day quest for "retribution," the word he used during his campaign, one that has bent, broken and busted through seemingly every boundary of the presidency. He has used the highest office in the land to take revenge against prosecutors, F.B.I. agents, law firms, news organizations, generals, Harvard University, former Biden administration officials and, yes, former Trump adminis-

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Musk May Be Gone After a Spat,
But His Team Burrows In Deeper

This article is by Christopher Flavelle, Coral Davenport, Nicholas Nehamas, Kate Conger and Zach Montague.

Elon Musk's blowup with President Trump may have doomed Washington's most potent partnership, but the billionaire's signature cost-cutting project has become deeply embedded in Mr. Trump's administration and could be there to stay.

At the Department of Energy, for example, a former member of the Department of Government Efficiency is now serving as the chief of staff.

At the Interior Department, DOGE members have been con-

verted into federal employees and embedded into the agency, said a person familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity out of fear of retaliation. And at the Environmental Protection Agency, where a spokeswoman said that there are two senior officials associated with the DOGE mission, work continues apace on efforts to dismantle an agency that Mr. Trump has long targeted.

"They are still internally going forward; we don't really feel as if anything has stopped here," said Nicole Cantello, a former lawyer for the E.P.A. who represents its union in Chicago.

Whether DOGE keeps its curb-

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As College Students Move Out, Scavengers Get Ready to Cash In

By ALEXANDER NAZARYAN

Valentino sneakers that retail for \$980. A Tovala toaster oven, originally \$390. A Clear Home Design Lucite table, which would have cost \$899 — except in this case, it was free.

Lena Geller found those items, and many others, in the trash room of her apartment building in Durham, N.C., after scores of Duke University students had moved out at the end of the spring semester.

"It feels wrong for this much stuff to have been thrown out," Ms. Geller wrote in an article for INDY Week, where she's a staff writer. She kept a spreadsheet of the roughly 70 items she found in the trash, estimating, after doing some research, that they originally retailed for \$6,600 in total.

"I've had a few friends text me after reading the piece, like, 'We should put together some kind of business plan,'" Ms. Geller, 26, said in an interview. "It does feel like most of the stuff that I got was just sitting there. I do think there's a lot of money to be made."

Every year, as graduation season ends, many departing students throw away or simply abandon expensive household items and luxury goods instead of donating or taking them back home. Local residents and scavengers are stepping in, rescuing items to reuse or sell, then touting their finds on social media.

Peter Valley, a 47-year-old soft-

ware company founder, has been selling discarded books from college students for years. To him, and many other scavengers, college campuses are a virtually inexhaustible source of goods that can be resold, kept or donated.

"My earliest success was dumpster diving at Caltech in Pasadena," he said. "My girlfriend and I dumpster-dived a couple

thousand dollars' worth of books from the campus recycling center. That was a big 'aha' moment, where I realized that this could be a real business."

These days, Mr. Valley is primarily focused on his software business. Reselling books nets him a monthly income in what he describes as a "low four-figure amount." At his peak, he said, he

had five-figure months.

Some scavengers post haul videos of their finds on social media. Late spring sees an explosion of such content because that is when college students move out of their dormitories. "The stuff college kids waste is crazy," a TikTok user with the handle @bethanytaylorr posted last month. Her 27-second

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Butting Heads Over Bulls

Droves of South Koreans enjoy watching the majestic creatures fight. Activists want the practice banned. PAGE A6

Japan's Military Muscle

A highly visible missile base on Okinawa is meant to get attention from both China and the U.S. PAGE A4

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A Town's Big-Screen Moment

The blockbuster horror movie "Sinners" has brought welcome attention to its setting of Clarksdale, Miss., known as the birthplace of the blues. PAGE A11

Boys and Young Men Fall Back

In education, mental health and transitions to adulthood, fewer are thriving, according to researchers. PAGE A12

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Star After Leaving Death Row

The story of Sunny Jacobs, 77, fashioned into an Off Broadway play and TV movies, was later questioned. PAGE B6



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No Rest for the Undead

The legacy of George Romero, king of the zombie movie, lurches on. Above, "Dawn of the Dead" from 1978. PAGE C1

Art Treasures Are at Risk

Cuts made by the Trump administration leave few caretakers to oversee a huge federal collection of works. PAGE C1

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Will the Vacationers Come?

Despite signs that economic uncertainty has consumers pulling back on spending, businesses in summer hot spots are hopeful for a strong domestic tourism season this summer. PAGE B1

Tax Cuts Stir Debt Debate

The legislation that Republicans are pushing is expected to add \$2.4 trillion to the debt, failing to live up to the pledges the party has made about fiscal discipline. News Analysis. PAGE B1

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Lisa Schwarzbaum PAGE A20



SPORTS D1-7

Alcaraz Wins 5½-Hour Thriller

Facing a two-set deficit, Carlos Alcaraz fought off three match points and surged past No. 1 Jannik Sinner to capture his second French Open title. PAGE D3



TRUMP DEPLOYS NATIONAL GUARD TO L.A.



National Guard troops faced off with protesters in Los Angeles on Sunday. The mayor called the president's escalation "chaotic."

Conspiracy Theories Haunting Trump Officials

This article is by Glenn Thrush, Alan Feuer and Adam Goldman.

WASHINGTON — Dan Bongino, the intense and voluble media personality tapped by President Trump to be a top F.B.I. official, appeared on Fox News last month to deliver news that should not have been news: Jeffrey Epstein, he said with glum resignation, had not been murdered after all.

"I've seen the whole file," said Mr. Bongino, sitting next to his boss, Kash Patel, the bureau's director. "He killed himself"

Investigations into Mr. Epstein's 2019 death in a Manhattan prison cell found serious management errors but no evidence of criminality. Yet Mr. Trump, once a friend of the financier accused of

sexually abusing dozens of teenage girls, has long suggested Mr. Epstein was silenced by shadowy clients of his sex trafficking ring. In a 2023 episode of his popular podcast, Mr. Bongino, now the bureau's No. 2 official, implored listeners, "Please do not let that story go."

They obliged. A Trump-allied podcaster suggested the F.B.I. leaders were "beholden to some unseen powers." A former F.B.I. agent who has been critical of the bureau posted a parody of a law

Supporters Fume Over
a Failure to Prove
Fringe Claims

firm ad with Mr. Bongino standing next to a sign that read "Trust Me & Bro Consulting." Tucker Carlson, a friend of Mr. Bongino's, said Trump appointees were "making a huge mistake, promising to reveal things and then not revealing them." Alex Jones, a founding father of the modern conspiracy movement, referred to Mr. Patel's own handling of the Epstein case as flat-out "gaslighting."

Mr. Patel and Mr. Bongino, partisan showmen placed in positions previously held by people with greater experience, earned their bona fides in Mr. Trump's camp by promoting conspiracy theories, making promises of what they would accomplish under Mr. Trump when he returned to power based on fictional or exaggerated

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TEAR GAS AT PROTESTS

Rare Use of Federal Force
After Days of Clashes
Over ICE Raids

This article is by Shawn Hubler, Adam Nagourney, Sarah Mervosh and Livia Albeck-Ripka.

LOS ANGELES — Tensions boiled over in Los Angeles on Sunday for a third day, hours after President Trump took the extraordinary action of ordering at least 2,000 National Guard members to assist immigration agents clashing with demonstrators.

Near downtown, federal law enforcement officials fired canisters of tear gas at a group protesting immigration raids. Department of Homeland Security officers were among those who fired less than lethal rounds outside the Metropolitan Detention Center, where a crowd had been growing since the morning. The officers included at least one member of ICE's Special Response Team, which wears military fatigues.

The announcement late Saturday by Mr. Trump — who said that any protest or act of violence that impeded officials would be considered a "form of rebellion" — was an escalation that put Los Angeles, and California, squarely at the center of his administration's immigration crackdown.

The state's governor, Gavin Newsom, called the rare use of federal powers to bypass his authority "purposefully inflammatory" on Saturday night, adding that there was "no unmet need" and that the deployment was "the wrong mission and will erode public trust."

On Sunday, Mr. Newsom asked Pete Hegseth, the defense secretary, in a formal letter to rescind Mr. Trump's order to deploy the National Guard in Los Angeles. "We didn't have a problem until Trump got involved," Mr. Newsom said in a social media post. "This is a serious breach of state sovereignty — inflaming tensions while pulling resources from where they're actually needed."

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RAIDS The focus of the administration's immigration crackdown is shifting to workplaces. PAGE A15

DEPORTATION Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia's lawyers say court orders were defied. PAGE A15

Foiling Drones
With Civilians
And Old Guns

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT and DARIA MITIUK

PEREIASLAV, Ukraine — Clad in khaki fatigues, the Ukrainian volunteers lounged on a concrete terrace as dusk swallowed the surrounding fields. Music trickled from a phone, mingling with bursts of laughter — a fleeting ease before what they had been warned would be a "hot night."

They were members of one of many civilian units guarding the skies around the capital, Kyiv, on a recent Saturday night, their job to shoot down incoming Russian drones using old machine guns supplied by the Ukrainian Army. As they do every night, the volunteers — university professors, builders, salesmen — stood ready at their base in Pereiaslav, a town 50 miles southeast of Kyiv, waiting for the signal to deploy.

At 11:35 p.m., Mykhailo's phone rang. He picked it up, then shouted, "Let's go!"

The chase was on.

Mykhailo and the other two members of his crew jumped into a gray pickup parked at the foot of the terrace and sped off, racing through narrow roads into the countryside. They pulled up beside an open field a few minutes

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