

# Trump's Administration first 100 days

## A Transformative Presidency

Here is a selection of “a few” articles and videos out of the dozens that have been published and which I came across. Pick and choose.

I highlighted in yellow what I consider the most useful

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## General Overview

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<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/04/28/us/trump-100-days-actions.html>

A heart-felt general overview by a moderate conservative columnist for the New York Times

David Brooks

### How to Destroy What Makes America Great

*The New York Times*, April 3, 2025

By David Brooks, Opinion Columnist

I'll let others describe the economic carnage President Trump's tariffs have already begun to wreak. I want to describe the damage they will do to the American psyche and the American soul.

Trump is building walls. His trade policies obstruct not only the flow of goods but also the flow of ideas, contacts, technology and friendships as well. His immigration policies do the same. He assaults the institutions and communities most involved in international exchange: scientific researchers, universities, the diplomatic corps, foreign aid agencies and international alliances like NATO.

The essence of the Trump agenda might be: We don't like those damn foreigners.

The problem is that great nations throughout the history of Western civilization have been crossroads nations. They have been places where people from all over met, exchanged ideas and came up with new ones together. In his book “Cities in Civilization,” Peter Hall looked at the most innovative places down through the centuries: Athens in the fifth century B.C., Florence in the 15th century, Vienna from the late 18th century to the eve of World War I, New York from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, the Bay Area later on.

They were all meeting spots for people from different nations. Hall writes, “People meet, people talk, people listen to each other's music and each other's words, dance each other's dances, take in each other's thoughts. And so, by

accidents of geography, sparks may be struck and something new come out of the encounter.” This, he continues, happens in junction points, places that encourage global interaction. Such places have common characteristics: They are unstuffy, un-classbound, nonhierarchical, informal.

Economic innovation explodes, he writes, “in places with a rich network of import channels, which in turn provide channels for new ideas.”

This used to be America. A crossroads nation, we attracted highly driven immigrants who wanted to be where the action was. We championed free trade. British colonialism and American internationalism made English the closest thing we have to a global language.

This used to be our future. In a 2009 essay for Foreign Affairs called “America’s Edge,” Anne-Marie Slaughter argued that power in the 21st century would accrue to nations that put themselves in the center of networks, and that America was well suited to play that role. We have a diverse populace with global connections, alliances across two great oceans, the greatest universities with large foreign student bodies.

All that is being damaged. But that’s not even my main concern. My main concern is over the spirit and values of the country. People’s psychologies are formed by the conditions that surround them. The conditions that Trump is creating are based on and nurture a security mind-set: they’re threatening us; it’s a zero-sum, dog-eat-dog world; we need to protect, protect, protect. We need to build walls.

Once again, the problem is that if you look at the cultures of societies at their peak, that is pretty much the opposite of the mentality you find. In “Civilisation,” his own survey of the high points of Western history, the art critic Kenneth Clark concluded that great periods are built on great confidence — a nation’s confidence in its laws and its capacities. That shared culture of confidence naturally infused people with social courage, a venturing spirit.

Think, for example, of the kind of people who drive innovation and dynamism. What are they like?

*They put themselves in unfamiliar situations.* They are enthusiastic about novelty. The journalist Adam Hochschild once wrote: “When I’m in a country radically different from my own, I notice much more. It is as if I’ve taken a mind-altering drug that allows me to see things I would normally miss. I feel much more alive.”

*They have diversive curiosity.* Their interests and enthusiasms span many spheres. Nobel laureates are at least 22 times as likely as the average scientist to have a side hobby as a magician, actor, dancer or some other type of performer.

*They have social range, a wide variety of friends.* In the decades before he published “On the Origin of Species,” Charles Darwin exchanged regular letters with at least 231 scientists in 13 different fields, as varied as economics and biology.

*They are able to combine disparate worldviews.* Creativity often happens when somebody combines two galaxies of ideas. Pablo Picasso combined Western portraiture with African masks. Johannes Gutenberg combined woodblock engraving, coin-making and the wine press to create his printing press.

*They are driven toward continual growth.* They seek to expand their interests and attachments, to engage in continual self-improvement. You can spot such people because they have gone through different chapters. Always learning, they have shifted their interests and worldviews over the years, torn down one way of making meaning and built up something new. Ralph Waldo Emerson was onto something when he wrote, “Not in his goals but in his transitions man is great.”

There’s a name for the values and posture I’m describing here: cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan has roots in one town and one nation but treasures and learns from many other national streams. In a phrase I’ve used here before, her life is a series of daring explorations from a secure base.

Sometimes it seems like the 21st century has witnessed one attack after another upon cosmopolitanism — from Sept. 11 onward. Leader after leader appeals to fear of impurity and threat. This mean world vibe not only reduces contact between peoples but also squelches the venturesomeness that has been America’s best defining trait. Trump called Wednesday Liberation Day, but Stagnation Day might be more like it.

If America is still America, these tariffs will represent the turning point of the Trump presidency. People will be outraged by the useless economic pain they are causing and, more subtly, revolted by the cowardly values they represent.

### JD Vance: What President Trump achieved in his first 100 days

The president and I campaigned on reversing Joe Biden's failures. And we're delivering.

***The Washington Post***, May 2, 2025

By JD Vance

*JD Vance is vice president of the United States.*

President Donald Trump has accomplished more in his first 100 days than most administrations accomplish in four years. The bold steps he has taken to end the Biden border crisis, stand up for America's working class and unleash U.S. energy dominance will forever be remembered as the opening acts of our nation's Golden Age.

In his first hundred days, President Trump has taken more executive actions than any president before. He has made long overdue reforms to tame the federal bureaucracy. He has assembled a world-class Cabinet and nominated officials to key posts faster than ever.

Most important, the Trump administration is keeping its promises.

The president and I campaigned on reversing Joe Biden's failures and returning to the successful, proven policies of President Trump's first term — and expanding on them. And we're delivering.

The most immediate measure of success has been the near elimination of illegal immigration.

To end the Biden border crisis, our administration put out a simple message: If you come here illegally, you will be removed. By declaring a national emergency at the border and reinstating "Remain in Mexico" on day one, President Trump made clear he meant business.

The results speak for themselves. In March, the Border Patrol recorded the fewest border crossings ever, down about 95 percent from the 4,488 daily average just one year prior. Since Inauguration Day, the administration has arrested more than 150,000 illegal immigrants and deported more than 139,000. Only nine illegal immigrants were released into the United States, nearly all of whom either required medical aid or had been witnesses to a crime. During the same time frame in 2024, Biden released more than 184,000 illegal immigrants throughout the country.

A secure border means less crime and fewer illegal narcotics plaguing our cities. In March, I was fortunate enough to see our law enforcement's work at the border firsthand at Eagle Pass, Texas, once the epicenter of the invasion. I thanked several of the Border Patrol agents for the work they do, to which they responded with their own gratitude to the president for finally allowing them to do their jobs.

In his first term, President Trump also began the critical process of reindustrializing the American economy and rebalancing relations with our trading partners. That includes some like China, which have taken advantage of our workers for decades.

He was elected again to finish the job, and that's exactly what we're doing.

In February, the president met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two leaders committed to pursuing a more balanced trade relationship and to doubling the total bilateral trade between our nations. To that end, I traveled last week to New Delhi, where, after meeting with the prime minister, I announced we had reached a negotiating framework for a U.S.-India bilateral trade agreement — a critical step toward a final deal that champions American manufacturers and farmers. We need a long-term solution to commerce with partners such as India. America can no longer sit by as generation after generation of politicians fails to defend our workers in trade negotiations, preferring instead to rely on cheap, foreign labor — either in offshore factories or through low-paid, migrant workers imported here.

President Trump understands this better than anyone, which is why he's building a more level playing field for America's labor force.

Our trade negotiations with India are hardly alone. In the weeks since Liberation Day, the Trump administration has heard from 130 different trading partners seeking negotiations, with nearly 20 already having sent written proposals. Fair, reciprocal trade means more American jobs, especially in manufacturing. This administration's first full jobs report showed immediate signs of our industrial comeback, with 10,000 new manufacturing jobs added in February alone.

And March was among the highest for private-sector growth in the past two years, adding almost 100,000 more jobs than economists predicted.

Of course, President Trump recognizes that America's industrial renaissance will require cheap, plentiful energy. With more power, our manufacturers and innovators will be able to build more, driving down the costs of everything from cars to semiconductors to homes.

On his first day in office, the president terminated the Democrats' Green New Deal ambitions and declared a national energy emergency. In the days since, our administration's agency heads have ripped down countless layers of red tape to make American companies more competitive and American energy more affordable. The United States is energy-dominant, with our nation's net natural gas exports the largest in the world.

The benefits are making their way to American consumers. The Trump administration is taming the historic inflation the Biden administration left the nation, and Americans are paying less for everyday essentials. Meanwhile, deregulation has handed freedom of choice over home appliances such as showers, lightbulbs and stoves back to American households.

By building a level playing field for American industry, this administration is once again making America the economic envy of the world. Since taking office, President Trump has welcomed well over \$5 trillion in announced investments, a historic statement of confidence in his economic leadership that's expected to create close to half a million new jobs. The president is making our economy prosperous again. He is making our neighborhoods safe again. He is ending wokeness at our universities and beyond. He is fighting for common-sense values, including freedom of expression and freedom of religion. He is building up our military to make it stronger than ever, both to secure the homeland and to promote peace overseas.

In just 100 days, the Trump administration has begun to tear down the barriers standing between our nation's working class and the American Dream. Factories are reopening, jobs are returning, and the forgotten men and women of our country are leading its comeback. This is more than a recovery from the Biden years; it's the revival of the spirit that led our ancestors to build the greatest nation on Earth. As President Trump is fond of saying, the best is yet to come.

There were over 5,800 comments following this piece. Here is the summary

#### Conversation summary

The comments overwhelmingly criticize the Trump administration, particularly focusing on its handling of immigration and broader governance. Many commenters express disdain for the administration's approach, citing issues such as unconstitutional executive orders, economic mismanagement, and divisive policies. There is a strong sentiment that the administration's actions have damaged the country's global standing and domestic well-being, with some commenters drawing parallels to authoritarian regimes. The comments reflect a deep dissatisfaction with the administration's first 100 days, highlighting perceived failures in leadership and policy execution. [Show less](#)

 This summary is AI-generated.

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## Who's Who in the White House?

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For the details you can go here:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx24gze60yzo>

### **Vice President JD Vance**

Trump's second-in-command has wasted little time staking out his role. Vance has welcomed the fight and dismissed the concerns of fellow Republicans deemed insufficiently loyal to Trump. The vice president has served as the face of a Euro-skeptic White House. "Have you said thank you once?" Vance asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy before an Oval Office visit went off the rails.

### **Speaker Mike Johnson**

As Speaker of the House, Johnson owes his gavel to Trump. The first 100 days will look easy in comparison to what lies ahead. The easiest part will likely be trying to codify some of the White House's DOGE office's cuts into laws. Johnson will face a taller order in trying to squeeze Trump's sweeping tax cuts and immigration plans through a narrowly controlled chamber. Thus far, Johnson has faced down internal dissent over Trump's tariffs.

### **Secretary of State - Marco Rubio**

Senate Democrats hoped their former colleague would moderate Trump's foreign policy as secretary of state. Rubio has instead presided over a dramatic reduction in the size and scope of the State Department, starting with the US Agency for International Development, which Musk described as having been fed "into the wood chipper." Rubio has been vocal on immigration, defending actions like deporting migrants to El Salvador and canceling student visas for people he said were engaged in pro-Palestinian protests (some visas have been reinstated). As the nation's top diplomat, Rubio has put pressure on Ukraine to accept a peace deal with Russia.

### **Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem**

Former South Dakota Governor Noem is in a key role in the administration, overseeing US security, including its borders, cyber-threats, terrorism and emergency response.

The agency has a \$62bn (£48bn) budget and employs thousands of people. It incorporates a wide variety of agencies under its umbrella, ranging from Customs and Border Protection to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

### **Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent**

Call him the market whisperer. A former hedge fund manager who now finds himself as the Treasury secretary at the center of the US's most complex trade negotiations in decades. Wall Street counts him as a moderating influence, and shares tend to go up when Bessent speaks. But Trump is a protectionist at heart, and it remains to be seen if Bessent's relatively trade-friendly views will win out.

### **Attorney General Pam Bondi**

Bondi is among a handful of the president's personal lawyers who now wield power. As US attorney general, she's made it a point to go after "domestic terrorists" attacking Tesla dealerships. Following Trump's lead, Bondi has directed prosecutors to seek the death penalty against Luigi Mangione, who is charged with shooting UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. She praised the DOJ's landmark antitrust victory over Google, though it remains to be seen how she'll handle Big Tech going forward.

### **Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth**

Hegseth, a military veteran and Fox News host with no prior political experience, was confirmed as defence secretary less than a week after Trump's inauguration.

His appointment was highly anticipated amid ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza. "Nobody fights harder for the troops," Trump said of Hegseth.

After Hegseth's nomination it emerged that he was investigated in 2017 for an alleged sexual assault. He was never arrested or charged and denies the allegation.

### **Education secretary - Linda McMahon**

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) co-founder and Trump transition co-chair, McMahon, was picked for education secretary.

A long-time Trump ally, McMahon led the Small Business Administration during Trump's first presidency and donated millions of dollars to his presidential campaign.

Trump has promised to shut down the education department - a job McMahon could be tasked with if she wins Senate confirmation.

"I wholeheartedly support and agree with this mission," she said during her confirmation hearing.

### **Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**

The Washington Post/The Washington Post via Getty Images

Many might know RFK Jr. as a vaccine skeptic or the face behind Make America Healthy Again, but he's also floated big cuts in his role as health secretary. Proposed changes at the FDA, CDC, and NIH could influence programs like HIV/AIDs prevention and food facility inspections. RFK Jr. recently directed all food companies to remove synthetic dyes from their products by 2027, and he's criticized other private sector industries, like weight-loss drugs.

### **Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick**

A Wall Street billionaire, Lutnick is Trump's secretary of commerce and a big tariff advocate. He called for reciprocal tariffs during his confirmation hearings and has accused other nations of ripping America off. Unlike Bessent, his counterpart at Treasury, Lutnick is much more loquacious in his TV appearances, and not always to the White House's benefit. He urged Americans not to worry about a recession even as Trump was conceding that tariffs might bring short-term pain.

### **White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt**

As the youngest White House press secretary, Leavitt, 27, is often the public face of the second Trump administration's policies. She's known to spar with reporters during press briefings, particularly when it comes to thornier subjects like tariffs and immigration. The sometimes-combative dynamic was on display when talking about the deportation of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Maryland man: "Based on the sensationalism of many of the people in this room, you would think we deported a candidate for Father of the Year."

### **Chief of Staff Susie Wiles**

The first woman to serve as a president's chief of staff, Wiles largely stays out of the spotlight but plays a big role wrangling the many dueling personalities in Trump's orbit — Mac Stipanovich, a longtime Florida operative, told Politico that "she is an expert in unstable, dysfunctional, famous men." Wiles has been a part of Trump's inner circle for years. Level-headed and controlled, she keeps the administration's machinery running.

### **Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller**

#### **Stephen Miller**

As White House deputy chief of staff, Miller is again the point man of Trump's immigration policy, though he's considerably more powerful than during the president's first term. Miller has helped lead Trump's ramp-up of deportations and invocation of the 1798 Alien Enemies Act. Outside immigration, Miller has taken an active role in Trump's clashes with Big Law. Repel Habeas Corpus

#### **an American far-right political advisor**

A member of the Republican Party, His politics have been described as extremist and anti-immigration.

### **White House Executive Associate Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations Tom Homan**

The official White House border czar, Homan is the man behind mass deportations. He has defended sending alleged gang members to El Salvador, and promised "another flight every day" of migrants being sent out of the country in an interview in March. Homan worked at ICE under former President Barack Obama and during Trump's first term, and is listed as a contributor to **conservative road map Project 2025**.

] is an American law enforcement officer and political commentator who served as acting director of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from January 30, 2017, to June 29, 2018. In November 2024, then president-elect Donald Trump designated Homan as "border czar", whose official title is White House Executive Associate Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations, during Trump's second presidency.

Homan advocates deportation of illegal immigrants and opposes sanctuary city policies. Within the government, he was among the most strident proponents of separating children from their parents as a means of deterring illegal entry into the country. After 2018, he began contributing to Fox News as a commentator.

### **Russell Vought**

Though Vought served in Trump's first administration, he's perhaps best known as one of the key authors of Project 2025. Trump has tried to distance himself from the playbook, but many of its priorities echo in his agenda so far: firing federal employees, mass deportations, and abolishing the Education Department, to name a few. Vought is the director of the Office of Management and Budget and helps carry out the DOGE agenda.

A self-described Christian nationalist, Vought is the founder of the **Center for Renewing America**,<sup>[1]</sup> an organization that opposes critical race theory<sup>[2]</sup> and advocates for the idea of America as a "nation under God".<sup>[1]</sup> He has also played a significant role in **Project 2025, an initiative led by the Heritage Foundation** that aims to advance conservative policies and reshape the federal government.<sup>[3]</sup> In May 2024, he was appointed Policy Director of the Republican National Committee's platform committee.

### **Peter Navarro Senior Counselor to the President for Trade and Manufacturing**

One of Trump's top trade advisors, Navarro is the mastermind behind the tariffs that have scrambled markets and global trade. He was a fixture in Trump's first term and has been a long-time hawk on trade with countries like China. He has returned with his protectionist, anti-trade policies after a stint in jail for refusing to comply with a subpoena from the January 6 committee. When announcing Navarro's appointment, Trump said he "was treated horribly by the Deep State." Navarro has publicly clashed with Musk over tariffs.

### **Elon Musk**

The de facto leader of the White House DOGE office has wielded unmatched power at the center of the administration's efforts to slash the federal workforce. He has retained his brazen persona, speaking his mind more openly than many conventional political appointees. Musk has criticized Trump's tariffs, dismissed a fellow White House advisor as "a moron," and went so far as to suggest that Social Security is a "Ponzi scheme." Faced with Tesla investor backlash, Musk has signaled that he will be stepping back from DOGE.

**Laura Elizabeth Loomer** (born May 21, 1993) is an American far-right[a] political activist, conspiracy theorist,[b] and internet personality. She was the Republican nominee to represent Florida's 21st congressional district in the 2020 United States House of Representatives elections, losing to Democrat Lois Frankel. She also ran in the Republican primary for Florida's 11th congressional district in 2022, losing to incumbent Daniel Webster.

Loomer has worked as an activist for several organizations, including Project Veritas, the Geller Report, Rebel News, and InfoWars. She has described herself as being "pro-white nationalist" and a "proud Islamophobe", repeatedly making anti-Muslim statements in public settings.

More on Loomer

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/04/who-is-laura-loomer>

• **Nasty MAGA Infighting Means Trouble for Trump, *The New York Times***

*Laura Loomer is unhappy* see [HERE](#)



About their devotion to Trump

<b>The Chilling Displays of Devotion That Trump Demands of His Enablers</b>
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April 17, 2025



Credit...Ben Wiseman

By [Frank Bruni](#)

Mr. Bruni is a contributing Opinion writer who was on the staff of The Times for more than 25 years.

Other presidents have used televised meetings in the Oval Office to strike noble poses. President Trump is using them to strike sadistic ones. I'll never shake the scene of him and Vice President JD Vance taunting and berating President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine in February for his inconvenient resistance to Russia's invasion of his country. But that horror has been paired with and maybe even usurped by what we all watched early this week, when Trump and President Nayib Bukele of El Salvador bantered jovially about a Maryland man's wrongful deportation to a prison in Bukele's country that sounds pretty much like the 10th circle of Hell.

The question hovering over their meeting was whether either would lift a finger to correct what a Justice Department lawyer admitted was an "administrative error." The context was the administration's apparent determination to ignore a Supreme Court ruling that, while vague in some ways, clearly sounded an alarm about the fate of that prisoner, Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia. The stakes were Abrego Garcia's freedom and safety, his family's welfare and — make no mistake — the rule of law.

And yet Bukele and Trump laughed. And smiled. And traded compliments, Bukele cooing about what a strong leader Trump is, Trump babbling about Bukele's youthful glow, both of them making clear that they had no intention whatsoever to save Abrego Garcia or give him the due process he was denied. It was inane. It was grotesque. And it was witnessed by a gaggle of administration lackeys whom Trump had gathered around him in a perverse show of solidarity, by which I mean sycophancy.

Their presence and their performances warrant special attention, because they underscore one of the most consequential dynamics of this second Trump administration: the enlistment and indoctrination of aides who will validate every fiction that Trump asks them to, obey all of his orders and shield him from any accountability. They're a breed apart from the team around him during his first presidency; they were specifically chosen, and have been carefully groomed, to be. That's what we saw during Bukele's repellantly jocular visit to the White House.

The group of senior administration officials beholding and praising Trump and Bukele weren't so much a murderers' row as a flatterers' phalanx. Kristi Noem, the secretary of homeland security, was there, and upon being asked by Trump if she could "maybe say a couple of words about the border," she went into adjectival and adverbial overdrive.

"It's just been absolutely phenomenal what a great leader can do," she gushed, the absolute phenomenon being what a groveling follower like her will say. Rather than acknowledging the grave issues raised by Abrego Garcia's case, she celebrated the partnership by which Bukele accepts deportees — no questions asked — from the United States into his gulag.

Attorney General Pam Bondi was up next, and she selectively and misleadingly characterized Abrego Garcia as a proven gang member whose deportation was by the book and whose fate at this point is beyond the Trump administration's control. Those statements were as ludicrous as her utterance of them was unsurprising. This is the same Bondi who traveled to Pennsylvania in 2020 to promote Trump's stolen-election lies. The same Bondi who indicated, after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and other senior administration officials breached national security by discussing war plans in a group chat, that she would probably not conduct any investigation or consider any charges. She has this obsequious thing down pat. Genuflection is her cardio.

She sat on a gold couch with Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, whose transformation into Trump fanboy was fitful at first but is now complete. Before Trump turned on Zelensky, Rubio repeatedly and emphatically urged steadfast American support for Ukraine. Immediately after that Oval Office atrocity, he took to social media to congratulate



Trump: “Thank you @POTUS for standing up for America in a way that no President has ever had the courage to do before. Thank you for putting America First.”

That was a helpful warm-up for the Trump-Bukele lovefest, during which Rubio play-acted bafflement at the fuss that so many Americans were making about Abrego Garcia. “I don’t understand what the confusion is,” Rubio said. That’s because understanding it would put him at odds with a boss who would make him pay dearly for that.

Trump surely stages these exhibitions of flattery and fealty in part because the adulation and subjugation are a rush and because he believes that they make him look commanding, regal. But there’s more at work than that. Every time he gooses Vance, Rubio, Bondi, Noem or any other key aide to endorse and expound on a questionable or downright reprehensible action of his, he binds them to it. They’re now doubly, triply, quadruply committed. Any micro-possibility of dissent is gone.

Especially given how they have seen Trump treat the dissenters from his previous administration. Right after his inauguration, he withdrew government security details from John Bolton, his former national security adviser, and Mike Pompeo, his former secretary of state, even though Iran has made death threats against both of them. They were insufficiently subordinate. So they will be inadequately protected.

A week ago, Trump directed the congenitally compliant Bondi to open investigations into two other officials from that first administration, Christopher Krebs and Miles Taylor. Both had the gall to take public issue with Trump, who has characterized that candor as treason.

He’s punishing them, of course. But he’s also creating the climate of fear in which the members of his cabinet bow down to him. And, if they’re smart, tremble.

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## *The theories / ideologies / visions*

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HERITAGE FOUNDATION PROJECT 2025 UNITARY EXECUTIVE THEORY ANTI DEI THE FEDERALIST SOCIETY
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>> The FEDERALIST SOCIETY

**Federalist Society**, American organization of strongly conservative and libertarian lawyers, judges, politicians, government officials, legal scholars, and law students, founded as a student association in 1982 and originally including members from the law schools of the University of Chicago, Yale University, and Harvard University. The society’s declared purpose is “to promote the principles that the state exists to preserve freedom, the separation of powers is central to our constitution, and that it is the duty of the judiciary to say what the law is, not what it should be.” It is generally recognized as the leading representative and vehicle of the conservative legal movement, whose goals since the 1970s have been to advance conservative legal scholarship and to shift the ideological balance of the American legal establishment to the right. Headquarters are in Washington, D.C.

The Federalist Society is dedicated to challenging what it calls “a form of orthodox liberal ideology” within the legal academy that “advocates a centralized and uniform society.” From its inception, the organization has championed conservative political values and legal principles, including the sanctity of private property and the free-enterprise system, federalism and states’ rights, limited government, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, and freedom of speech. It has also played a major role in developing and promoting compatible techniques of constitutional and statutory interpretation—known as originalism and textualism, respectively—that supposedly prevent judicial misreadings of the law by emphasizing the public meanings of the words in which a constitutional or legal provision was expressed at the time it was written rather than the intentions of the provision’s drafters

**The Heritage Foundation** is an American conservative think tank based in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1973, it took a leading role in the conservative movement in the 1980s during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, whose policies were taken from Heritage Foundation studies, including its Mandate for Leadership.

The Heritage Foundation has had significant influence in U.S. public policy making, and has historically been ranked among the most influential public policy organizations in the United States.

**Heritage leads Project 2025**, also known as the 2025 Presidential Transition Project, an extensive plan that includes appointing ideologically aligned civil servants, restricting abortion access, opposing LGBTQ+ rights, transforming federal agencies for political purposes, and imposing strict immigration policies.

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## *On executive power – Testing the rule of law*

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**Watch the videos (both on cahier de prépa)**

- **How Trump is testing the limits of presidential power**
- **“The Legal Theory Behind Trump’s Plan to consolidate power**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ebdz4DIdiPM&ab\\_channel=TheWallStreetJournal](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ebdz4DIdiPM&ab_channel=TheWallStreetJournal)**

### **Trump’s Maximalist Assertion of Presidential Power Tests the Rule of Law**

The United States has never seen an effort to expand presidential authority at the scale of Donald J. Trump’s second term.

By [Charlie Savage](#)

Charlie Savage has been writing about presidential power for more than two decades. He reported from Washington. *The New York Times* April 30, 2025

Nearly every president has pushed the bounds of executive power to try to achieve something specific. And a handful of presidents who took office during a true national crisis, like the Civil War or the depths of the Great Depression, swiftly made a series of legally aggressive moves to grapple with the challenges facing the country.

But the sheer volume and intensity of the power grab President Trump has undertaken in the first 100 days of his second term is unlike anything the United States has experienced.

**The rule of law** in the United States has been traditionally understood to use checks and balances to prevent too much concentration of arbitrary executive power. But the **maximalist approach** in the early days of Mr. Trump’s second term is testing the fundamental structures of American democracy in a way that has never been seen before.

Mr. Trump, pursuing a confrontational style of presidential politics, has unleashed an assault on counterweights to his authority:

attacking judges,  
sidelining Congress’s role in making decisions about taxes and spending,  
steamrolling internal limits on the executive branch and  
using the levers of government to try to force outside centers of power like law firms and universities to submit to his will.

Akhil Reed Amar, a Yale Law School professor, said the broader picture was of an administration that was “proudly lawless and anti-law.”

In a recent interview with Time magazine, Mr. Trump was repeatedly pressed on his attempts to increase presidential power. While his answers largely meandered off topic, he denied that he was expanding executive authority, said he was deploying power as it was meant to be used and claimed an electoral mandate for his actions.

**“I think I’m using it properly, and I’m also using it as per my election,” he said.**

Yet Mr. Trump has flaunted his disrespect for the other branches of government. When it comes to the courts, he has denounced judges who rule against him and called for their impeachment while his administration has exploited loopholes and sidestepped complying with some of their injunctions.

He and the president of El Salvador all but openly mocked a Supreme Court order to facilitate the return of a man who was deported to a Salvadoran prison despite an immigration judge’s order not to send him there, acting as though bringing him back was impossible. Mr. Trump’s appointees fired a prosecutor because he spoke candidly to a judge about that mistake.

When critics accuse Mr. Trump of being too aggressive in his use of executive power, his team dodges the question of whether he is abusing his authority by stating that the power legally exists. But the administration is also pushing to change mainstream understandings to expand the authorities available to him.

For example, Mr. Trump has repeatedly challenged the power of the legislative branch. He unilaterally dismantled agencies Congress has said shall exist as a matter of law. And he fired civil servants, inspectors general and independent agency heads in defiance of job protections lawmakers wrote into statutes.

His goal appears to be to get the Supreme Court's conservative majority to strike down those statutes and enshrine into law **the so-called unitary executive theory**. Developed by the Reagan administration's legal team, **the theory is a revisionist interpretation of the Constitution**. It would undercut the power of Congress to structure the government and expand presidential power, rendering the executive branch more comprehensively subject to Mr. Trump's whims.

Mr. Trump has also assumed some of the traditional constitutional control delegated to lawmakers over decisions about government spending and taxation. He froze the expenditure of funds that Congress appropriated, and he unilaterally imposed taxes on almost all imported goods from around the world.

Mr. Trump claimed the power to institute those sweeping tariffs by invoking a 1977 emergency powers law that allows him to impose economic sanctions to address an "unusual and extraordinary threat" from abroad. That law does not mention tariffs and has never been used in that way before. Scholars of presidential power can identify seeds for some of Mr. Trump's moves in precedents set by past presidents, but they expressed shock at the number of contestable actions he has initiated and the aggressive use to which he has put them. Many of his executive orders, they say, are difficult to connect to mainstream understandings of the law.

"We've been for a long time marching toward greater executive power and more feckless Congresses — Republicans and Democrats both, but a couple things seem to be different here," said Michael W. McConnell, a Stanford law professor and a former federal appeals court judge appointed by Mr. Bush.

"One is just the volume — it's an incredible spate of activity on all kinds of different fronts, and at some point volume begins to have a qualitative feel to it," he said. "The second is that it seems to me that a lot of it is being done with much less legal care. Every president makes mistakes, but there has been a lot more sloppiness and I just can't believe they could possibly have been approved by the Office of Legal Counsel."

That office, an arm of the Justice Department, has traditionally been the center of executive branch lawyering and acted as an internal check on the presidency. It decides which proposed actions would be lawful or go too far, including vetting the legal and factual claims in draft

executive orders before approving them. But Mr. Trump has largely sidelined it.

Control over legal vetting of Mr. Trump's actions has shifted to inside the White House and the orbit of his most influential policy aide, Stephen Miller. While not a lawyer, Mr. Miller has played a key role in legal staffing decisions and has advanced a view that because presidential elections are conducted nationally, Mr. Trump embodies democratic legitimacy far more than lawmakers or judges.

"The whole will of democracy is imbued into the elected president," Mr. Miller told reporters in February.



The White House deputy chief of staff, Stephen Miller, has the most influence over legal vetting of Mr. Trump's actions. Credit...Eric Lee/The New York Times

That perspective has bled into legal filings. One spurned a judge's demand for information about the administration's decision to finish transferring a group of Venezuelan migrants to a Salvadoran prison under a wartime law, the Alien Enemies Act, despite his order to turn the planes around. The judge should back off, the administration insisted, claiming that Mr. Trump wields "plenary authority" over the matter derived from the Constitution and the "mandate of the electorate."

The administration made that claim as part of an unusually aggressive invocation of the state secrets privilege, a power the executive branch can use to prevent the exposure of sensitive national security information in court. Typically, presidents used it only for classified information, which they showed to judges in private. Neither is the case in the current clash.

Mr. Trump appears to see even less reason for self-constraint than in his first term. His hammerlock has only tightened over the Republican Party, which in turn controls the legislative branch, meaning he has no fear of impeachment. One Republican senator, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, recently admitted that "we are all afraid" of Mr. Trump.

He has also been unleashed in part thanks to the Supreme Court, whose six Republican appointees last year granted presidents broad immunity from prosecution for crimes committed using their official powers, especially in their interactions with the Justice Department.

The president, far more than in his first term, has cast aside a post-Watergate norm that the White House should stay out

of law enforcement decisions. After years of baselessly accusing Barack Obama and Joseph R. Biden Jr. of directing investigations into him, he has made a reality the very weaponization of the Justice Department he once railed against.

Already, Mr. Trump has ordered prosecutors to scrutinize a top cybersecurity aide during his first term, Christopher Krebs, who fell from his favor by contradicting conspiracy theories that voting machines had been hacked to rig the 2020 election in favor of Mr. Biden.

Mr. Trump directed a similar review by the Department of Homeland Security into Miles Taylor, another first-term official who criticized him. And last week, Mr. Trump ordered the Justice Department to scrutinize ActBlue, the Democratic Party's top fund-raising platform.

Mr. Trump is turning the department into his personal instrument in other ways, installing his own defense lawyers as its leaders. Among other actions, they dropped a corruption case against Mayor Eric Adams of New York in what a U.S. attorney denounced as an unethical abuse of law enforcement power to coerce his help in enacting the president's deportation agenda. The move prompted a wave of resignations by prosecutors.

Image

It is too early to know how the system will stand up to this broad and multifaceted effort to concentrate greater power over the government and American society in Mr. Trump's hands.

At the moment, Congress is providing no check on him. If Democrats retake the House in the 2026 midterm elections, they could start trying to perform oversight or conduct impeachment hearings. Still, after the 2018 midterms, Mr. Trump vowed to stonewall their subpoenas. And while the House twice impeached him, Senate Republicans protected him from conviction.

Several judges have started to raise the possibility of holding Trump administration officials in contempt for defying their orders. But courts generally must rely on the Justice Department to prosecute criminal contempt. Even if a judge appointed a special prosecutor, the department controls federal marshals and prisons, and Mr. Trump could pardon a defendant.

The Supreme Court has yet to rule on the merits of any of Mr. Trump's moves. But in recent weeks, the justices issued an extraordinary order to block, for now, further deportations under the Alien Enemies Act even though the department said there were no plans for any. Some observers have interpreted the apparently 7-to-2 vote as a sign that a majority of the justices are skeptical that the administration can be trusted.

Professor Amar pointed to another guardrail that appears to be somewhat effective: the financial markets, whose negative reaction to Mr. Trump's tariff policies and the prospect that the president would fire the Federal Reserve chair seem to have prompted him to pull back.

But most of what the president is doing is not subject to market feedback.

When Mr. Trump was blowing through norms in his first term, Professor Goldsmith argued against alarmism, saying that institutional constraints would hold. But, he says, matters are "much more precarious this time" because Congress has been doing nothing to curb the White House and Mr. Trump has neutralized internal checks on the executive branch.

"That is massively different, and it just leaves the courts out there by themselves with civil society," he said. "The administration hasn't crushed them yet, but they are trying to. I definitely think this situation is a much more dangerous threat to the rule of law than the last time."

Charlie Savage writes about national security and legal policy for The Times.

## The executive ignoring the rule of law? Institutional crisis

OK it gets a bit technical – It's for the law geeks among you. But the general idea is that they're pushing ahead to stretch the executive power and are calling into question what they refer to as "Injunction dysfunction" – the fact that one federal judge in one district can block an order after one person filed a complaint, effective immediately, universally and nationwide.

This is really well explained in the text about the Birthright Citizenship case that is being examined by the Supreme Court

See Stephen Miller's tweets about this in the power point.

**A battle looms over rule of law as some courts start to flex their muscles against Trump**

Whether federal courts can force Trump to comply with their orders is an essential question for US democracy. The US supreme court and other federal courts have begun flexing their muscles to push back on Donald Trump's efforts to defy judicial orders, escalating a hugely consequential battle over the rule of law.

The supreme court issued a significant order early Saturday morning blocking the federal government from removing people from the United States who had been detained in northern Texas. Separately, US district Judge James Boasberg has found probable cause to hold the government in contempt for defying his orders to halt deportations.

In another case, the US district Judge Paula Xinis has forced the government to provide daily updates in its efforts to comply with court orders to "facilitate" the return of Kilmar Ábrego García – the man who was wrongly deported to El Salvador.

**It is a dynamic that underscores how a constitutional crisis between Trump and the courts is likely to be a push and pull between the government and judges that is simmering through the legal system and could very well break it.**

**"The president is testing how much the judiciary still meaningfully constrains him," Ben Raderstorf, a policy associate at the watchdog group Protect Democracy wrote in a blog post titled "there is no rubicon".**

Whether the courts can force compliance with their orders is an essential question for American democracy, where a pillar of the rule of law is the willingness of litigants to accept court rulings, especially the ones they disagree with.

"The quality of judicial independence that federal judges have enjoyed throughout most of our history has depended much more on norms than it has on rules," said Stephen Burbank, a professor emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania. "Of course, a major concern from that perspective is that Trump pays no attention to norms."

Trump said on Tuesday he did not think due process was a requirement before deporting someone.

"Look, we are getting some very bad people, killers, murderers, drug dealers, really bad people, the mentally ill, the mentally insane, they emptied out insane asylums into our country, we're getting them out. And a judge can't say: 'No, you have to have a trial,'" he said. "No, we are going to have a very dangerous country if we are not allowed to do what we are entitled to do."

In its Saturday ruling, the supreme court had temporarily blocked the administration from deporting people being held in a detention center in Anson, Texas, under the Alien Enemies Act (AEA).

At the beginning of April, the supreme court had allowed deportations under AEA to move forward as long as migrants received adequate notice they were being deported under the law. "The notice must be afforded within a reasonable time and in such a manner as will allow them to actually" challenge their deportation prior to it occurring, the supreme court said.

But in filings last week, lawyers for detainees challenging the Texas deportations told the US supreme court their clients were being presented with English-only notices informing them they were being deported under the AEA, but no information about how to challenge it.

In an extraordinary move, the US supreme court issued a decision temporarily halting the deportations before a lower court, the US court of appeals for the fifth circuit, had even ruled on the matter. The court moved to intervene quickly even though a government lawyer had said in a hearing in a related case on Friday that there were no plans for planes to take off that day. (...)

However significant, the US supreme court's ruling is only temporary and the government is likely to ask it to lift it and resume the deportations. The court's response is likely to set off the next round of its fight with Trump. Some conservative voices, including Sean Davis, CEO of the Federalist, and Trump ally Mike Davis, have already started attacking the justices on the court.

"If the Supreme Court is going to ignore the law and the Constitution, then the president is obligated to ignore the Supreme Court and put it in its place," Sean Davis said in a post on X on Saturday. "When we're done deporting illegals, it's time to start deporting rogue judges," he wrote in another post.

"Let's hope our Supreme Court justices get their heads out of their asses. They wear robes, not capes," Mike Davis, who runs the Article III project, a conservative group focused on the courts, wrote on X.

Steve Deace, a prominent conservative talkshow host, also suggested Trump was entitled to ignore the courts. "Essentially courts are claiming you can bypass due process to illegally invade America, but then must be granted due process to have your invasion repelled. That is not a country, but judicial insurrection to undo the last election. Trump should ignore it and do what he was empowered by the sovereign will of the people to do," he wrote in a post on X.



You can listen to Justice Amy Coney Barret getting a lawyer defending the Trump administration to admit that they may not comply with a federal judge's decision. It is very technical. This is a recording of a Supreme Court hearing on the Birthright Citizenship Case.

'You Resisted Justice Kagan': Amy Coney Barrett Grills Trump Lawyer At Birthright Citizenship Case

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PatvmMgSjs&ab\\_channel=ForbesBreakingNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PatvmMgSjs&ab_channel=ForbesBreakingNews)

## Injunction Dysfunction Is a Threat to Our System

By [Andrew C. McCarthy](#)

*The National Review*, April 17, 2025

### ***Nationwide rulings by judges in single districts distort American politics***

Nationwide injunctions — or perhaps, as Justice Neil Gorsuch has acidly observed, we should call them “universal” or even “cosmic” injunctions — are a distortion of our constitutional order. Alas, they are proliferating because of other, more deeply seated distortions.

**A nationwide injunction occurs when a single unelected judge, seated in just one of 94 federal districts throughout the nation — say, the District of Hawaii, home to just 0.4 percent of our population — issues a ruling that binds the entire country, forbidding the government (most often, the president through subordinate executive agencies) from executing a policy, regulation, or statutory interpretation.**

A judge's role in our system is vital but modest. As Chief Justice John Marshall admonished in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), establishing the authority of courts to review the constitutionality of congressional statutes: “It is emphatically the duty of the Judicial Department to say what the law is.”

To say what the law is. Not to *write* or *enforce* it. The courts are the nonpolitical branch. It is not for them to make policy, the prerogative given to the political branches accountable to the people whose lives are affected. The judge's burden is to dispose of cases or controversies — justiciable claims of concrete harm brought by a plaintiff allegedly aggrieved by the defendant — by saying what the law is. Because a court merely interprets the law within the four corners of the dispute, it settles the legal rights of the parties and nothing more.

By issuing nationwide injunctions, however, judges effectively make policy by nullifying the policy choices of the elected administration. This does not stop at settling the rights of the parties to the lawsuit; it saddles others similarly situated, and frequently the entire country and its government, for as long as the injunction is in place. As litigation goes, that can be months and sometimes more than a year.

Justice Neil Gorsuch's critique (in a 2020 concurring opinion in *Department of Homeland Security v. New York*) focused on the havoc that nationwide injunctions wreak on the administration of justice — the race to the courthouse, the tendency toward emergency stays rather than the customarily deliberate pace of litigation. He was joined in that opinion by **his fellow originalist**, Justice Clarence Thomas, whose own 2018 concurrence in *Trump v. Hawaii* **portrayed nationwide injunctions as so counter-constitutional that Congress could not legitimate them; by his lights, they need eradication, not restraint.**

It's not just conservative jurists who take issue with this practice; there is agitation on both sides of our political divide. At a 2022 forum at Northwestern University's law school, Justice Elena Kagan, the Supreme Court's most formidable progressive voice, asserted: “It just can't be right that one district judge can stop a nationwide policy in its tracks and leave it stopped for the years that it takes to go through the normal process.” Last year, asking the Supreme Court to vacate the suspension of President Biden's student-loan-forgiveness gambit, then-Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar cited Thomas and Gorsuch in inveighing against “universal remedies” that simultaneously sow systemic chaos and undermine limits on judicial power.

Most profoundly, nationwide injunctions run roughshod over the separation of powers, the Constitution's structural safeguard of liberty and self-governance. This is not the resolution of disputes among individual parties that the Framers envisioned. One unaccountable judge, with no constitutional responsibility for national defense, foreign relations, or immigration enforcement, in a district that may be not only unrepresentative of the country at large but remote from the matter in controversy, is empowered to supplant with his own policy preferences, for example, the border security initiatives on which the elected president ran and won. (Recall when Trump 45 border enforcement policies were strategically challenged in Hawaii, where Obama had appointed his law school classmate, Judge Derrick Kahala Watson, to the bench.)

As former Attorney General William Barr detailed in a 2019 speech, nationwide injunctions enmesh the courts in the political process to the detriment of both: The judiciary compromises its legitimacy as a detached arbiter, while the president loses his leverage in negotiating with opposition party leaders in Congress — what’s the rationale for compromise if a judge will block the administration wholesale? Wayward practice thus moves our politics into the courtroom, where activist interest groups and confederations of state attorneys general (one for the blue team, one for the red) usurp the role of the electorate and its very different perceptions of the public interest. (...)

These are not hidden flaws. For 174 years after constitutional governance commenced in 1789, no federal judge issued a nationwide injunction. As noted by the *Harvard Law Review* and former Bush 43 Justice Department official Jack Goldsmith, **the pace picked up in the 60-plus years between the Kennedy and Biden administrations, which saw 127 nationwide injunctions. Of these, about half (64) were issued during Trump’s first four-year term — more than double what Presidents Obama (12) and Biden (14) faced in their combined dozen years in office.** Significantly, almost half of the combined injunctions issued during the Bush-43 and Obama administrations (8 out of 18) were issued by judges appointed by the president’s own party; by contrast, since 2017, judges appointed by the president’s opposition party have issued virtually all such injunctions (Trump, 92.2 percent; Biden, 100 percent).

To be sure, we can read too much into it. There are some willful progressive judges who have blocked, and are now blocking, Trump’s agenda. **That said, in his fledgling second term, Trump has been purposely edgy, strategically violating laws in the hope of getting the current Supreme Court (with six Republican appointees, three chosen by Trump) to invalidate dubious limitations on presidential power and reverse precedents that are foundational to the administrative state — such as *Humphrey’s Executor*, which approved Congress’s creation of “independent” agencies insulated from executive control.**

Furthermore, Trump has mimicked the imperious Obama and Biden distortions of prosecutorial discretion, formerly a mere resource-allocation doctrine (grappling with the unremarkable fact that there are finite enforcement resources for combating widespread crime). Like his two predecessors, Trump sees the doctrine as license to ignore his oath to execute the law faithfully — refusing to enforce Congress’s requirement that TikTok divest of China-controlled ownership, fabricating “national emergencies” as a pretext for his unilateral imposition of tariffs, deporting without due process of law Venezuelan aliens to El Salvador to be held in a notorious prison, and so on. **Questions about nationwide injunctions aside, a president who serially violates the law inexorably draws judicial ire.**

The court system is skewed, and the judges are too activist, it’s true. But the surge of injunctions emerged seamlessly from other long-standing anomalies. The progressive administrative state has overrun federalism. (...)

Having massively delegated legislative power to unaccountable bureaucrats at regulatory agencies, Congress has receded, thereby subverting separation-of-powers principles that make the legislature the most important branch. Congress’s powers to make law and guide federal agencies have shifted decisively to the executive branch. Hence there has been a rise of pen-and-phone government by executive order and bureaucratic regulation. With Congress having abdicated its constitutional role as the dispositive counterweight against executive excess, the courts — encouraged by the activist litigators — fill the void, in effect becoming the political check on the president.

The result is destructive of republican democracy and the legitimacy of the judiciary. It would be best to outlaw nationwide injunctions, but reining them in would at least be a curative step.

### The ‘Modest’ Ruling That Could Kneecap Our Legal System

May 16, 2025



**By Stephen I. Vladeck, *The New York Times*, May 16, 2025**

*Mr. Vladeck is a professor of law at Georgetown and writes the [One First](#) weekly Supreme Court newsletter.*

It is often difficult to persuade anyone other than lawyers to care about the more technical, procedural minutiae of Supreme Court decisions. But Thursday's oral argument in three Supreme Court cases challenging President Trump's efforts to restrict birthright citizenship is a powerful example of how such technicalities can sometimes be even more important than the substantive legal question the justices are purportedly answering.

The Trump administration is asking the justices, in effect, to let the president's (almost certainly unlawful) limits on birthright citizenship go into effect across most of the country without actually upholding them. If a majority of the court agrees, it will not just lead to widespread chaos and uncertainty over which babies born in the United States to immigrant parents are and are not citizens; it will also make it much harder for courts to halt any unlawful government action on a nationwide — or even statewide — basis. Such a holding would be a self-inflicted judicial wound, one from which the American legal system, and perhaps the rule of law itself, will not quickly recover.

The substantive legal question at the heart of the three cases the court heard on Thursday is whether Mr. Trump can deny citizenship to children born in the United States to at least some noncitizen immigrant parents. Three lower courts (in Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington State) all said no, he could not — and issued what are known as “nationwide” injunctions. Such rulings barred the federal government from relying upon Mr. Trump's executive order to deny citizenship not just to children born to the named plaintiffs, but also to those born in the United States to any immigrant parent.

In a bit of legal chicanery, the Trump administration is not asking the Supreme Court to hold that the executive order is lawful. Rather, it's seeking relief it characterizes as more “modest” but which would be, in reality, much broader: It is asking the justices to do away with the use of nationwide injunctions. If the court agrees, lower federal courts could only block government officers from acting against specific plaintiffs and no one else — unless they successfully bring their own lawsuits or the Supreme Court conclusively resolves the question. Not only would filing lawsuits challenging the same federal policy in each federal court across the country take a lot of time and money, but such a ruling would also leave open the possibility that while these cases progress, children born to immigrants could be denied citizenship based on any number of random factors: the rules in the state in which they are born, the status of their parents' lawsuits and even the date on which they entered the world.

The massive real-world implications of such a technical ruling wouldn't be limited to birthright citizenship. Many of the dozens of injunctions federal courts have issued against other unlawful behavior by the Trump administration are also “nationwide.” Small groups of plaintiffs have been able to, among other things, halt the Department of Government Efficiency's access to Americans' Social Security data, block mass firings by government agencies and require federal agencies to spend and disburse money Congress has allocated. If the administration successfully convinces the Supreme Court to strip federal district courts of their ability to rule on a nationwide basis, the court wouldn't formally be upholding what Mr. Trump is doing in any one of those cases, but it would be kneecapping many of the current (and future) attempts to block him.

Nationwide injunctions are, to be sure, imperfect. Critics argue that they tend to ratchet up the stakes of individual lawsuits, they can often short-circuit the ordinary percolation of legal issues through the lower federal courts and, during ordinary times, they run the risk of dragging the lower federal courts more directly into nationwide policy disputes. In a world in which federal courts could trust the executive branch to go out of its way to comply with court orders, a request to eliminate nationwide injunctions might, indeed, seem like a “modest” response.

But these aren't ordinary times, and this executive branch can't be trusted. Consider, in this regard, litigation over the government's efforts to conduct mass summary removals of Venezuelan nationals under the Alien Enemies Act. Initially, the American Civil Liberties Union successfully obtained a single nationwide ruling blocking those efforts against anyone who might be subject to the policy. But on April 7, the Supreme Court ruled that challenges to the Trump administration's uses of that statute had to be brought on a case-by-case (or at least district-by-district) basis. Practically overnight, the government started moving detainees into districts that didn't yet have court orders blocking



the use of the act and out of districts that did. It was a transparently cynical attempt to use the act without either a court order saying it could or in overt defiance of a court order saying it couldn't. None of that would have been necessary if the A.C.L.U. had been allowed to bring a single nationwide suit. **This week, the question for the justices in the birthright citizenship cases is not whether they are going to reaffirm the 14th Amendment's guarantee of citizenship, but whether they're going to undermine it indirectly — through a ruling disguised as a technical, procedural holding that takes away a tool that has been used consistently over the past decade to rein in presidents of both parties. If the justices side with the Trump administration, they will end up making it that much harder for lower federal courts to stop systemic bad behavior by this or any future administration — even when everyone agrees it is lawless.**

You can also read [Why Is This Supreme Court Handing Trump More and More Power?](#)

*The New York Times*, May 5 2025

## *On Foreign Policy – A new world order?*

**VIDEO Fareed Zakaria on Foreign policy Fareed's Take: Trump's revolution in foreign policy**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_w-H7x4FwA&ab\\_channel=CNN](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_w-H7x4FwA&ab_channel=CNN)

● **PODCAST The Dark Heart of Trump's Foreign Policy | The Ezra Klein Show – A very long conversation with Fareed Zakaria (But you can listen to the first minutes which are already of great interest)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=305ZAppMIN8&ab\\_channel=TheEzraKleinShow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=305ZAppMIN8&ab_channel=TheEzraKleinShow)

● **A very good interactive overview of his policies so far by the Washington Post**

How Trump has reshaped U.S. foreign policy in his first 100 days

By Maham Javaid, Artur Galocha and Álvaro Valiño, May 3, 2025

<https://wapo.st/4dRAyaJ>

Opinion - Guest Essay

### **Trump Is Destroying a Core American Value. The World Will Notice.**

*The Washington Post*, May 18, 2025

**By Michael Posner**

Mr. Posner is a lawyer and human rights advocate who was the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor from 2009 to 2013.

In the late 1980s, Joseph Nye, the Harvard political scientist who died this month, developed the concept of soft power. His central premise, that the United States enhances its global influence by promoting values like human rights and democracy, has guided U.S. foreign policy for decades across both Republican and Democratic administrations.

President Trump has made clear that he fundamentally rejects this vision. As president, he has ordered a sweeping overhaul of the State Department that will cripple its capacity to promote American values abroad. At the center of this effort are drastic cuts to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor — the State Department's core institution for advancing soft power, which I led under President Barack Obama. Unless Congress intervenes, the debasement of the bureau's role will impair America's ability to challenge authoritarianism, support democratic movements and provide independent analysis to inform U.S. foreign policy. The long-term result will be a United States that is weaker, less principled and increasingly sidelined as authoritarian powers like Russia and China offer their own transactional models of global engagement.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor was created with bipartisan congressional support in 1977, a time when lawmakers sought greater influence over foreign policy in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and America's support for authoritarian regimes in countries like Chile and South Korea. President Jimmy Carter's religious

convictions and deep commitment to human rights gave the fledgling bureau early momentum. Still, its purpose was always practical: to ensure U.S. foreign aid and trade decisions were informed by credible assessments of human rights conditions around the world. That's why every year, the bureau prepares congressionally mandated human rights reports.

In its early years, it struggled to defend its existence. Foreign governments resented being called out in its annual reports and attacked its legitimacy. Many State Department traditionalists viewed its focus on human rights as an unhelpful distraction from the realpolitik topics they were much more comfortable addressing. It also drew criticisms of hypocrisy, mostly from the left, for condemning the records of other countries in the face of unresolved human rights problems here in the United States. Others accurately pointed out that even as the State Department's human rights reports documented serious abuses, the United States continued to provide substantial aid to governments like Ferdinand E. Marcos's Philippines, Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire, Hosni Mubarak's Egypt and numerous military regimes across Latin America.

These tensions have not disappeared. But over nearly five decades, the bureau has evolved to confront them. Governments, companies, judges and nongovernmental organizations have all come to rely on its annual country reports. It plays the lead role in preventing the United States from funding foreign security forces that violate human rights. And its policy engagement has guided the U.S. approach to international conflicts, repressive regimes and civil wars. That progress is now at risk. The Trump administration's proposed "reforms" would hamstring my former agency's ability to uphold its mission in three major ways.

First, under the guise of what Secretary of State Marco Rubio calls streamlining, the administration plans to eliminate two offices, one that oversees grants, the other focused on promoting internet freedom in closed societies and on championing human rights in corporate conduct and international bodies like the United Nations. As part of a departmentwide downsizing, the bureau's overall staff will also be cut by at least 15 percent.

While modest streamlining might make sense, these sweeping cuts will severely compromise Democracy, Human Rights and Labor's ability to act as a counterweight to regional State Department bureaus and U.S. embassies, which by design give precedence to diplomatic relationships over human rights. Mr. Rubio has said that he wants to give regional bureaus more power to decide when human rights issues should be considered or ignored.

Inevitably, the effect of this shift will be to relegate human rights to the sidelines of U.S. foreign policy. During the first Obama administration, I was able to focus U.S. attention on issues that regional bureaus or U.S. embassies had chosen not to prioritize, including extrajudicial killings in Pakistan, restrictions on civil society in Cambodia, increasing authoritarianism in Hungary, security force abuses in Nigeria and the broad denial of rights of the Sahrawi people in Western Sahara by Morocco. Senior U.S. officials still need to hear about such issues to make informed policy decisions. A diminished Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor will prevent this from happening.

It will also undermine the government's ability to act when opportunities for human rights progress arise. Take Myanmar, for example. In 2011, Myanmar's military leaders signaled an interest in opening to the West. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on the bureau to lead an effort that freed more than 1,100 political prisoners and negotiated access to prisons by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The bureau's expertise makes these kinds of interventions possible.



Clinton tours the Shwedegon Pagoda, a Buddhist temple in Rangoon, Myanmar, in 2011. Credit...Saul Loeb/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Second, the Trump administration's plan will significantly narrow the scope of the annual human rights reports. This year's reports will no longer include sections on freedom of assembly, free and fair elections, gender-based violence, arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, or violent crimes targeting vulnerable populations. The administration has not offered any justification for deleting these sections, which will deprive the entire world of important information about human rights abuses.

Finally, the Trump administration's proposed restructuring will eliminate the Human Rights and Democracy Fund, the primary funding source for the bureau's democracy promotion programs, which provide a lifeline to embattled human rights defenders worldwide. Oddly, the bureau is planned to be housed within the State Department's budget office, even though it will almost certainly no longer have any funds to disburse. While administration officials suggest that future funding could flow through regional bureaus, given the Trump administration's approach to date, that possibility is highly unlikely to materialize.

In 2020, Mr. Nye poignantly wrote, "human rights should not be framed as pitting values against U.S. national interests, because values are part of America's national interest."

We may learn more this week about when the administration plans to carry out its overhaul, as Mr. Rubio is slated to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Lawmakers from both parties need to stand up to him and demand that the State Department continue to support the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, which is an essential engine of soft power in U.S. foreign policy. It is in our long-term national interest that they stop it from burning out.

**« Les Etats-Unis vus par Trump ne comptent que sur la force. Ils n'ont que faire de leur pouvoir de séduction, de leur soft power »**

[Chronique Alain Frachon, éditorialiste au « Monde »](#)

Moins de trois mois après son retour à la Maison Blanche, le président américain poursuit la mise en pièces des institutions établies par les Etats-Unis au lendemain de la seconde guerre mondiale, explique, dans sa chronique, Alain Frachon, éditorialiste au « Monde ».

**Le Monde**, 20 mars 2025

Enfant gâté dans une chambre pleine de jouets, Donald Trump détruit ce que ses prédécesseurs lui ont légué : l'ordre libéral international (nous dirons l'OLI). Il casse avec application cet ensemble d'institutions mises au point par les Etats-Unis au lendemain de la seconde guerre mondiale. Le système avait bien des défauts, mais il n'est pas impossible qu'on le regrette assez vite.

La pyramide institutionnelle imaginée en 1945 est ambitieuse : d'abord l'ensemble onusien, puis un réseau d'alliances avec les alliés européens (l'OTAN) et asiatiques ; l'appui au projet d'union sur le Vieux Continent ; la promotion du libre-échange ; le soutien à la démocratie ; enfin, l'attachement – au moins dans les formes – aux règles ainsi définies en lieu et place des seuls rapports de force. La gauche y a souvent vu le paravent de l'impérialisme américain. La droite s'est méfiée d'un machin destiné à brider la souveraineté des nations. Et tout le monde – à commencer par les Occidentaux – a été infidèle à l'OLI, encore appelé « pax americana ».

A quoi assiste-t-on aujourd'hui ? Incarnation d'un conservatisme éclairé, cultivé et tolérant, le Britannique Chris Patten explique : « *Trump et sa bande de cireurs de pompes ignares sont en train de vandaliser le réseau d'organisations, d'accords et de valeurs très largement mis en place par l'Amérique au lendemain de la seconde guerre* ». Cité dans le *New York Times*, le 19 février, Lord Patten ajoute que, « *dans l'ensemble* », ledit « *réseau (...) nous a donné, à nous comme aux Etats-Unis, beaucoup de paix et de prospérité* ».

### **Le droit des puissants**

L'OLI est en perte de crédibilité depuis plusieurs années déjà. Les causes en sont multiples. Trump première manière avait asséné quelques coups de pioche. Moins de trois mois après son retour à la Maison Blanche, il poursuit la mise en pièces.

Mépris affiché pour l'ONU – Washington va réduire sa contribution. Les Américains ont quitté l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS). Trump va laisser mourir l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC) et il s'acharne à ériger un

mur de droits de douane autour des Etats-Unis. L'accord de Paris sur le climat est abandonné. Celui sur le contrôle du programme nucléaire de l'Iran a été torpillé dès 2018. L'OTAN est volontiers dénigrée et sa crédibilité ainsi affectée.

En violation de la Charte de l'ONU, Trump défend le droit des puissants à élargir par la force leur territoire national. Il conspu l'Union européenne : « *Une organisation créée pour nous entuber* » et des gens « *vraiment horribles, horribles* ».

Rien ne justifie pareille régression, ni la lutte contre les déficits, ni la rivalité multiforme avec la Chine. Trump n'avance qu'une explication : cet ordre international ne servirait, dit-il, qu'à escroquer les Etats-Unis. Il leur coûte trop cher.

Avec Trump, on quitte une Amérique pilier du bloc occidental entourée d'amis pour une autre Amérique qui plonge aussi ses racines dans l'ADN national : un pays pratiquant non pas l'isolationnisme, mais un interventionnisme à tendance unilatéraliste. Moi, l'Amérique, toute seule, super-puissance comme les autres, dépourvue de message universel, ne revendiquant aucun « exceptionnalisme », se défiant de ses alliés et de tout engagement extérieur. Telle est la définition de la « *grandeur* » nationale vue par le riche golfeur de Mar-a-Lago.

### Un certain bilan

Ce pays-là ne compte que sur la force. Il n'a que faire de son pouvoir de séduction, son soft power. Pour Trump, Hollywood est peuplé d'« *ennemis de l'Amérique* ». Sabotée par le « coprésident » Elon Musk, l'agence de développement américaine, l'Usaid, utile SAMU en Afrique et ailleurs, représentait 0,7 % du budget fédéral. L'Usaid et Hollywood étaient aussi, pas uniquement, deux armes idéologiques au service des Etats-Unis. Moscou et Pékin ne s'y trompent pas et applaudissent au démantèlement du soft power américain.

Le plus étonnant dans cette posture est que l'OLI, s'il a échoué sur le plan du maintien de la paix, n'a, à bien des égards, nullement démerité. Le cadre institutionnel n'explique pas tout, bien sûr, mais, sans parler de causalité directe, on peut faire valoir ceci : en 1950, 59 % de la population mondiale vivait dans l'extrême pauvreté ; 8,5 % aujourd'hui – chiffres cités par Martin Wolf dans le *Financial Times*, le 11 février. Avouons-le, elles affichent tout de même un certain bilan, ces atroces années du libre-échange et de l'OLI !

Le Sud s'est rapproché du Nord. Même si les inégalités ont explosé à l'intérieur de nombre de pays, l'Occident, sous le règne de cet ordre international, a perdu le monopole de la richesse. L'émergence de la Chine est éminemment redevable au « système » mis en place par les Etats-Unis. Pour autant, l'économie américaine n'a cessé d'afficher des taux de croissance à rendre jaloux les Européens.

Avec tous ses défauts, sa part d'hypocrisie et son occidentalocentrisme, l'OLI n'en représente pas moins une tentative de réguler les relations entre Etats. Sur son site *Substack*, l'Américain Paul Krugman salue « *l'effort fait par les Etats-Unis après la seconde guerre mondiale pour être une super-puissance un peu différente, qui cherchait à entretenir des alliés, pas des sujets, à favoriser le développement, pas la prédation, à mettre en place des institutions globales, pas un système impérial, à promouvoir la règle de droit, pas les seuls rapports de force* ». Nombre de présidents américains ont porté des coups à l'idéal ainsi affiché. Trump, lui, pourrait en être le fossoyeur.



[Opinion - Fareed Zakaria](#)

### America used to broadly support freedom. Not anymore.

President Trump's actions make one question whether America is still a force for good in the world.

*The Washington Post*, March 2, 2025

Over America's long history, Americans have often hesitated to support foreign wars and international machinations. George Washington's Farewell Address warning against entangling alliances cast a long shadow. But from the nation's beginnings, Americans have usually known whom to root for — those who seek freedom — and whom to condemn — those who try to crush liberty.

Across the United States, you will find statues honoring people such as the 18th-century Polish patriot Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the 19th-century Hungarian freedom fighter Lajos Kossuth, who sought liberation for their people

from the Russian and Habsburg empires — and who found enthusiastic support in an America that was still a young and weak nation. When Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, even though it initially stayed out of the war, America organized what was then the largest food aid effort in history to help the victim of aggression. During the Cold War, though it could not help militarily, Washington refused to recognize the Soviet annexation of the three Baltic republics, which are now proud and independent nations. America as a superpower sometimes acted unwisely — in places such as Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan — but even in those cases, it saw its involvement as the protection of freedom and democracy.

Not anymore. The strangest aspect of the past few weeks of American diplomacy — which culminated in the disaster at the White House on Friday — is that the president of the United States has seemed utterly unwilling to say plainly that he supports the victim of aggression against the aggressor who started the war. Or that he admires Ukrainian democracy more than Russian dictatorship. Instead, he and Vice President JD Vance spent Friday's photo op at the White House publicly scolding Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, telling him to say thank you (which he has repeatedly) and accusing him of being disrespectful. Zelensky's fault was simply to point out that Ukraine had in fact signed a ceasefire deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2015 but that Putin had continually violated it. President Donald Trump used the occasion to remind all that he felt a special bond with Putin.

Zelensky did not handle himself well. He got emotional, responded too often and took the bait that Vance laid for him. He should have studied how French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer handled Trump: constant flattery and deference. Churchill said of his relationship with his American counterpart, "No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt."

But Zelensky is leading a nation at war that has lost tens of thousands of people. He is fighting for his survival. And he and his nation are fighting for the values of freedom and democracy that America has supported since its founding — against a rapacious dictatorship that actively seeks to undermine the United States, its interests and its allies at every turn. It should not be hard to figure out where your sympathies lie.

Friday's turn of events took place after weeks of diplomacy in which the Trump administration has bullied its neighbors, asked Canada to cease to exist as a country, pressured Denmark to sell Greenland and Panama to hand over the Panama Canal. It has threatened to impose higher tariffs on its allies than its foes. And it has shuttered almost all the food and medicine programs it promised to the poorest people in the world. Conservative former British cabinet minister Rory Stewart asks on X, "Was it for this that the US spent 80 years building power and alliances? Not to be a force for good. But instead to impoverish neighbours, threaten those it protected, rob minerals from war-torn countries, and break its promises to 100s of millions of the poorest in the world?"

Trump is not just changing American foreign policy. He is reorienting America's moral compass, a compass that has been firmly set since the country's founding almost 250 years ago.

### **« Les Européens doivent dessiner une Europe post-Amérique, et l'Ukraine sera leur premier grand test »**

**Tribune** Gesine Weber, Spécialiste de sécurité et défense européenne

Les pays du Vieux Continent n'ont plus d'autre choix que de tenter d'imaginer un avenir où les Etats-Unis n'assureront pas leur sécurité, estime la spécialiste de sécurité et défense européenne Gesine Weber, dans une tribune au « Monde ».

**Le Monde** 3 mars 2025

Lorsque, en 2017, le président français, Emmanuel Macron, a appelé à renforcer l'indépendance de la défense de l'Europe, notamment en réduisant sa dépendance vis-à-vis de Washington, ses appels ont été considérés dans de nombreux Etats européens comme un affront à l'Alliance transatlantique. Mais depuis l'invasion russe de l'Ukraine en 2022, et au vu des dernières déclarations de l'administration du président américain, Donald Trump, les Européens se disent de plus en plus qu'ils auraient, en effet, été mieux avisés de

consolider la défense européenne afin de ne plus compter sur les Etats-Unis pour l'assurer.

Au lieu de prendre au sérieux les multiples signaux d'alerte — que ce soit le pivot de Barack Obama [président des Etats-Unis de 2009 à 2017] vers l'Asie, l'élection de Trump en 2016, le chaotique retrait américain d'Afghanistan, l'invasion russe de l'Ukraine ou les tensions avec l'administration du précédent président américain, Joe Biden, sur une accession de l'Ukraine à l'OTAN —, les Européens sont collectivement retournés à leur torpeur. Même s'ils ont relevé les défis qui se sont posés à eux avec un degré d'engagement variable (l'effort européen dans le dossier ukrainien doit être cependant souligné), ils ont fini par se rendormir profondément, rassurés par l'idée que Washington resterait un partenaire sur lequel

l'Europe pourrait compter pour assurer sa sécurité. Même si ses demandes lui coûtent quelques efforts supplémentaires.

L'actualité montre cependant que cette vision de l'ordre de sécurité européen comporte une erreur politique et conceptuelle d'importance : elle considère la coopération transatlantique comme un élément constitutif de l'ordre européen, en oubliant les tensions ou même les conflits ouverts entre alliés. Aussi, petit à petit, les Européens se sont-ils faits à l'idée de « *défendre l'Europe avec moins d'Amérique* ». Mais pas sans elle.

### **Mendier n'est pas une stratégie prometteuse**

On peut objectivement supposer, certes, qu'il est dans l'intérêt stratégique des Etats-Unis de s'engager un minimum dans la sécurité de l'Europe. Compte tenu de la hausse des dépenses européennes de défense et du transfert progressif du « fardeau » vers les Etats européens, l'OTAN constituerait pour les Etats-Unis un instrument sans pareil dans leurs négociations avec leurs alliés européens. Un instrument précieux notamment pour convaincre les Européens de s'aligner sur des politiques-clés aux yeux de Washington, en particulier dans l'Indo-Pacifique.

Ce raisonnement est néanmoins erroné, car il part du principe que les Etats-Unis, en raison de leurs objectifs de politique étrangère à court terme et de leur « grande stratégie » à long terme, ont véritablement intérêt à s'engager aux côtés de leurs alliés et à renforcer ces alliances qui accroissent leur pouvoir. Sauf que le gouvernement Trump ne semble guère disposé à adopter cette vision des choses, notamment sur l'Europe. Les Européens n'ont donc d'autre choix que d'adapter la leur et de tenter d'imaginer un avenir où les Etats-Unis n'assureront pas leur sécurité.

Les Européens doivent aujourd'hui dessiner une Europe post-Amérique, et l'Ukraine sera leur premier grand test. Les discussions entre les délégations américaines et russes à Riyad et le vote américain contre une résolution de l'ONU condamnant l'invasion russe de l'Ukraine, trois ans après le début de la guerre, illustrent bien ceci : les intérêts de l'Europe et des Etats-Unis ne convergent pas nécessairement aux yeux de Trump.

Afin de s'assurer une place à la table des négociations, il est essentiel que l'Europe élabore des propositions qu'elle puisse soumettre aux Etats-Unis. Il n'est cependant pas certain que mendier une place à la table des négociations soit une stratégie très prometteuse auprès de l'administration Trump ; en particulier si les Européens proposent déjà de prendre des engagements significatifs sans pouvoir obtenir quoi que ce soit en retour. Il est fort probable que les Etats-Unis demanderont aux Européens d'assurer la plus grande

**Gesine Weber** est spécialiste de sécurité et défense européenne et chercheuse pour le cercle de réflexion German Marshall Fund of the United States à Paris.

part de la sécurité ukrainienne, il est en revanche très improbable qu'ils soient prêts à les soutenir publiquement et politiquement, notamment en cas de confrontation militaire avec la Russie.

### **Le scénario d'une « OTAN dormante »**

Les Européens doivent donc, en parallèle, s'atteler à la fabrication de leur propre table pour négocier entre eux l'avenir de l'ordre de sécurité européen. Les récentes réunions de dirigeants européens avec le président ukrainien, Volodymyr Zelensky, ainsi que l'optimisme de la Commission européenne quant à une adhésion de l'Ukraine à l'UE d'ici à 2030 constituent des signaux forts. Après ces engagements initiaux, toutefois, l'Europe devra fortement accroître sa puissance militaire pour être en mesure d'exercer une force de dissuasion suffisante.

D'un point de vue plus structurel, les Européens doivent aussi faire leur deuil d'une OTAN bâtie autour d'un pilier américain et d'un pilier européen, et y voir avant tout une alliance entre Européens, où les Etats-Unis ne jouent que le rôle de « *filet de sécurité* ».

Concrètement, les Européens pourraient prendre une longueur d'avance en étudiant le scénario d'une « OTAN dormante », susceptible de gagner prochainement du terrain dans les cercles républicains. Dans ce scénario, l'Europe pourrait proposer aux Etats-Unis de ne lui apporter qu'un soutien politique ou un soutien militaire minimal en cas de réaction militaire collective au titre de l'article 5 du traité de l'OTAN, tandis qu'elle prendrait la direction militaire des opérations.

Tout cela ne signifie pas que les Européens doivent rompre toute collaboration avec les Etats-Unis sur la question de la sécurité européenne. Mais au lieu de se débattre contre un retrait américain partiel ou complet de l'OTAN, ils feraient mieux d'élaborer un plan de transition vers un nouvel ordre de sécurité européen.

Les Européens doivent clairement informer Washington des domaines dans lesquels ils ont besoin de son soutien dans le court, le moyen et le long terme, mais aussi de la manière dont les engagements américains pourront être progressivement supprimés. Avec un plan solide en main, l'Europe aura de meilleures cartes pour s'assurer que les Etats-Unis lui accorderont le soutien minimal dont elle a besoin pour exercer une force de dissuasion efficace et poursuivre sa stratégie. Un tel plan de transition pourrait aussi ouvrir la voie à un nouvel ordre de sécurité transatlantique plus sain, un véritable partenariat qui laisserait moins de place à la dépendance, aux comportements resquilleurs et aux risques de coercition.

*Traduit de l'anglais par Valentine Morizot.*



## Trump's tariffs make the 'post-American world' a reality

President Donald Trump and right-wing Republicans have accelerated the arrival of a "post-American world," surpassing any vision of past anti-globalization activists.

Column by Ishaan Tharoor - *The Washington Post*, April 9, 2025

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**For a generation, analysts and commentators have been discussing the advent of a "post-American world."** The term, popularized by journalist and broadcaster Fareed Zakaria in a 2008 book, was a warning to the Washington establishment not to be too comfortable with the peerless status of the United States as the world's superpower. China was on the rise, the U.S. share of global wealth and power was growing smaller and the old certainties of the Pax Americana were on the wane.

Western leftists, aligned with counterparts in the Global South, who for years decried the imperial overreach and sprawling military footprint of the United States, yearned for the shift. They bridled at the confluence of U.S. corporate interests and Washington lawmaking. And they wished the United States would strike a humbler pose in an increasingly "multipolar" world, while doing more to address the yawning inequities spawned by free-trading globalization.

It's one of the ironies of the moment that President Donald Trump and right-wing Republicans have done the most to accelerate the arrival of a "post-American world," sounding a death knell anti-globalization activists of decades past would have struggled to envision.

Trump's usage of emergency powers to impose sweeping, blanket tariffs on foreign goods has roiled global markets and spread havoc. The uncertainty and confusion he has provoked — including through dozens of new "reciprocal" tariffs that the administration calculated through metrics rejected by most economists — could reshape the global economic order. As they express outrage over Trump's methods, U.S. allies and adversaries alike are plotting their response. China's foreign ministry invoked the legacy of Ronald Reagan, who spoke famously against tariffs.

"The turn toward unilateralism by the Trump administration does not suddenly make everyone else a protectionist. It only leads them to want to protect themselves from the United States," Jeffry Frieden, a political science professor at Columbia University and author of "Global Capitalism," told my colleagues. "Whatever international economic order emerges from the current chaos, the role of the United States in it will be fundamentally transformed."

### Trump wants to reset the table on trade

**For Trump and his allies, what's happening now is necessary "medicine."** Trump views global trade in zero-sum terms: He appears to think trade deficits are a sign of American weakness (rather than, say, a reflection of the power of the U.S. consumer). He believes U.S. purchases of foreign goods are "subsidies" to other countries with money that should be spent at home. And he sees tariffs as a tool to raise funds and bring back manufacturing to the hollowed-out industrial heartlands of the United States.

There are plenty of reasons to be skeptical of Trump's economic rationale. But the White House is also overhauling a status quo that long undergirded U.S. primacy on the world stage.

"The United States spent eight decades building an international system of rules, norms and values that has produced the longest period of great power peace and global prosperity in human history," Zakaria wrote last month. "Its alliances are the greatest force multiplier for its influence around the world. The United States has been the greatest beneficiary of this system, even now, decades later, still setting the agenda and dominating the world economically, technologically and militarily."

On Tuesday, Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong echoed the point. "What the U.S. is doing now is not reform. It is rejecting the very system it created," he said in a speech before the city-state's parliament. "These measures will accelerate the fracturing of the global economy," he added. "Instead of flowing based on economic efficiency, capital and trade will increasingly be diverted based on political alignment and strategic considerations."

Even as the tariffs were set to take effect, the Trump administration appeared locked in numerous bilateral negotiations with countries eager to scale back the levies slapped on their exports. Those deals could lead to agreements Trump will tout as victories, though the deeper damage done can't be overlooked. Trump "may

eventually roll back tariffs for those countries that negotiate with him ... But the erratic and arbitrary nature of the policies, and the willingness to exploit U.S. economic might to extort concessions, will undermine American standing nearly everywhere,” wrote the Atlantic’s Michael Schuman.

Tesla cars burned in Verden, Germany, on March 29, a day of global anti-Elon Musk protests. Police said investigations into what caused the fire are ongoing. (Video: Reuters)

**There are signs the rest of the world is recalibrating in the face of Trumpian disruption.** Foreign arrivals at U.S. airports dramatically declined in the past weeks, per data compiled by Goldman Sachs. European officials are contemplating their own payments platform that would break their reliance on Visa, Mastercard and PayPal. Amid new restrictions and revocations of student visas, Indian university applicants are weighing options for education in countries like Germany or Australia, rather than the United States — whose universities, as hotbeds for global talent, were long cast as a major factor in the U.S. competitive edge.

A full-blown trade war with China is imminent, with Trump’s 104 percent tariff on many Chinese exports going into effect at midnight. China’s leadership takes his desire to wean the United States off Chinese-made goods and Chinese-dominated supply chains seriously and are hunkering down for a long, bruising fight.

“Chinese leaders know the ultimate goal [for Trump] is decoupling, so the game is to steel themselves for that ultimate outcome,” Yanmei Xie, an independent expert on Chinese politics, told my colleagues. “If the U.S. is

not even in a dealmaking mindset, then caving doesn’t bring you anything. The only choice is to adapt.”

Trump’s Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick singled out China as a target of U.S. strategy, suggesting companies such as Apple would eventually decide to relocate their manufacturing back in the United States to avoid tariffs. “The army of millions and millions of human beings screwing in little, little screws to make iPhones, that kind of thing is going to come to America,” Lutnick said on Sunday during an interview with CBS’s “Face the Nation.” “It’s going to be automated and great Americans — the tradecraft of America, is going to fix them,” he added.

This vision has drawn criticism from across the political spectrum in the United States. Writing for MSNBC, sociologist Jessica Calarco argued that Trump’s nostalgia for the mid-20th century — when American factory workers could live out stable, middle-class lives — ignored the strength of unions, the relative high tax rates and other strong social policies that helped secure the “good life.” Those protections don’t exist in the same fashion now and Trump’s measures, she wrote, “risk putting us all in a more precarious position — pushing us back to Gilded Age levels of inequality, and to a time when the ‘good life’ was accessible only to the robber barons.”

Economic historian Niall Ferguson saw the tariffs as a precursor to American decline and retreat. “Americans will come to miss globalism and policing the world,” he wrote in the right-wing Free Press. “They will belatedly realize that there is no portal through which the United States can return to the 1950s, much less the 1900s.” Ferguson cast the moment as the “end of American empire.”

### Behind the words of JD Vance's historic Munich speech

By [Philippe Bernard](#), [Assma Maad](#), [Manon Romain](#) and [William Audureau](#) Published on February 21, 2025, at 8:01 pm (Paris), updated on February 21, 2025, at 8:02 pm

News analysis - On February 14, at the Munich Security Conference, US Vice President JD Vance violently attacked European democracy. Le Monde publishes his speech in full, with added context and explanation.

*Russia's war on Ukraine was the focus of the Munich Security Conference, but US Vice President JD Vance barely mentioned it in his February 14 speech. Instead, he launched into a violent attack on European democracies. Calling on them to break the "firewall" with the far right and attacking European rules on civil liberties, Vance cast the US as an adversary of the rule of law, which has prevailed in Europe since 1945. Le Monde publishes this speech in full, with added context and explanation.*

Well, thank you, and thanks to all the gathered delegates and luminaries and media professionals. And thanks especially to the hosts of the Munich Security Conference for being able to put on such an incredible event. We’re, of course, thrilled to be here. We’re happy to be here.

And, you know, one of the things that I wanted to talk about today is, of course, our shared values. And, you know, it’s great to be back in Germany. As you heard earlier, I was here last year as a United States senator. I saw Foreign



Minister—excuse me, Foreign Secretary David Lammy and joked that both of us last year had different jobs than we have now.

But now it's time for all of our countries, for all of us who have been fortunate enough to be given political power by our respective peoples, to use it wisely to improve their lives.

And I want to say that, you know, I was fortunate in my time here to spend some time outside the walls of this conference over the last 24 hours, and I've been so impressed by the hospitality of the people, even, of course, as they're reeling from yesterday's horrendous attack.

And the first time I was ever in Munich was with my wife, actually, who's here with me today, on a personal trip. And I've always loved the city of Munich, and I've always loved its people. And I just want to say that we're very moved, and our thoughts and prayers are with Munich and everybody affected by the evil inflicted on this beautiful community. We're thinking about you, we're praying for you, and we will certainly be rooting for you in the days and weeks to come.

Now—[applause]—thank you. *I hope that's not the last bit of applause that I get, but—* [laughter] We gather at this conference, of course, to discuss security. And normally, we mean threats to our external security. I see many great military leaders gathered here today.

But while the Trump administration is very concerned with European security and believes that we can come to a reasonable settlement between Russia and Ukraine, and we also believe that it's important in the coming years for Europe to step up in a big way to provide for its own defense, the threat that I worry the most about vis-à-vis Europe is not Russia, it's not China, it's not any other external actor. And what I worry about is the threat from within, the retreat of Europe from some of its most fundamental values—values shared with the United States of America.

Now, I was struck that a former European commissioner went on television recently and sounded delighted that the Romanian government had just annulled an entire election. He warned that if things don't go to plan, the very same thing could happen in Germany, too.

### **Criticizes Thierry Breton**

The American vice president was referring to a comment by French former European Commissioner Thierry Breton. Breton, speaking [on the radio station RMC](#) was reacting to a discussion between Alice Weider, the head of Germany's far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AFD) party, and Elon Musk, held on X, on January 9. Breton pointed out that the platform's owner had "the right to say what he wants," but not on social media platforms. Indeed, these platforms, as long as they are made available in Europe, are subject to the [European Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#) regulation, which requires digital platforms to monitor speech and content on them, notably to prevent misinformation or illegal content.

Urging the EU and its member states to enforce their laws on online content, Breton then said the following sentence: "Let's apply our laws, in Europe, when they risk being circumvented and can, if not applied, lead to interference. We've done it in Romania, we'll obviously have to do it, if necessary, in Germany." At the time, the sentence was taken out of context and widely shared on social media. Some saw it as an admission that Europe had annulled the elections in Romania, and that it might do the same in Germany. As reported by [Libération](#), this claim was echoed by Musk himself, who [portrayed Breton as the "tyrant of Europe."](#) The former commissioner's response to the billionaire was that the EU has no power to cancel any election in its member states.

Now, these cavalier statements are shocking to American ears. For years, we've been told that everything we fund and support is in the name of our shared democratic values.

Everything from our Ukraine policy to digital censorship is billed as a defense of democracy, but when we see European courts canceling elections and senior officials threatening to cancel others, we ought to ask whether we're holding ourselves to an appropriately high standard. And I say "ourselves" because I fundamentally believe that we are on the same team. We must do more than talk about democratic values. We must live them.

Now, within living memory of many of you in this room, the Cold War positioned defenders of democracy against much more tyrannical forces on this continent. And consider the side in that fight that censored dissidents, that closed churches, that canceled elections. Were they the good guys? Certainly not, and thank God they lost the Cold War. They lost because they neither valued nor respected all of the extraordinary blessings of liberty, the freedom to surprise, to make mistakes, to invent, to build.

As it turns out, you can't mandate innovation or creativity, just as you can't force people what to think, what to feel, or what to believe. And we believe those things are certainly connected. And unfortunately, when I look at Europe today, it's sometimes not so clear what happened to some of the Cold War's winners.

I look to Brussels, where EU commiss—commissars warn citizens that they intend to shut down social media during times of civil unrest the moment they spot what they've judged to be, quote, "hateful content."

### **Anticipates a 'shutdown' of social media platforms**

Vance refers to statements dating back to July 2023. After [the fatal shooting of Nahel, a 17-year-old](#), led to riots that swept through France, which were partly fueled by a wave of videos of destruction shared on social media, Emmanuel Macron [put forward the controversial idea](#) of putting "ourselves in a position to regulate or cut them off."

Three weeks later, Breton, France's European Commissioner at the time, after having been asked to comment by some 60 NGOs that were hostile to the idea, [made a statement on the possibility](#) of a temporary shutdown of the platforms, though only "in extreme cases," [within the context of the EU's DSA regulation on online platforms](#). Nevertheless, in the name of defending freedom of speech, he stated he was opposed to the platforms being "blocked or degraded on an arbitrary and unjustified basis."

The European regulation provides for the possibility that, "as a last resort," the matter could be referred to the appropriate judicial authorities, if a platform owner or access providers have failed to take action themselves. This measure does not target the very broad category of "hate content," but rather messages that constitute criminal offenses, and pose a "serious" threat to people's safety or lives.

In this passage, Vance uses the term "commissars" to refer to the European Commissioners, rather than "commissioners," which he had used a few minutes before. This choice of word is not neutral. The term refers to the political commissars of the Soviet era, who were responsible for communist propaganda, and who, as an institution, gradually became the morality police for Soviet officers.

Or to this very country, where police have carried out raids against citizens suspected of posting anti-feminist comments online as part of, quote, "combating misogyny on the internet, a day of action."

### **Believes anti-feminism has been criminalized**

In March 2024, on the day before International Women's Day, the German authorities interrogated 45 suspects across 11 of the country's Länder (states), in the context of a day of action against "misogyny on the internet." Yet the apprehended individuals were not targeted for having expressed "anti-feminist" opinions. Instead, they were accused of having made "misogynistic posts with criminal relevance," according to a joint statement by the national prosecutor's office and the federal criminal police office. This offense includes non-consensual sharing of nude photos and videos, insults of a sexual nature, statements advocating sexual assault or rape, and sharing videos of torture or killing.

I look to Sweden, where, two weeks ago, the government convicted a Christian activist for participating in Quran burnings that resulted in his friend's murder. And as the judge in his case chillingly noted, Sweden's laws to supposedly protect free expression do not, in fact, grant—and I'm quoting—"a free pass to do or say anything without risking offending the group that holds that belief."

### **Criticizes Sweden's freedom of speech laws**

Vance refers to Salwan Momika, a Christian Iraqi man, who was shot dead in his apartment, in the suburbs of Stockholm, in January. Momika, who had arrived in Sweden as a refugee in 2018, had burned several Qurans in 2023. These acts led to angry protests in several Muslim countries.

The US vice president also mentions his accomplice, Salwan Najem, another Iraqi refugee who also participated in these Quran burnings, and who was condemned for inciting hatred against an ethnic group, in February. In its judgement, the court stated that criticizing a religion was, in fact, legal in Sweden. However, the presiding judge, Göran Lundahl, highlighted that this criticism was not without limits: "Expressing one's opinion about religion does not give one a free pass to do or say anything and everything without risking offending the group that holds that belief."

Here, Vance criticizes freedom of speech in Sweden, which he believes to be backsliding, as he had said for the rest of Europe. Just like Trump, Vance holds free speech in high esteem, and considers it to be one of the US's foundational

principles. According to his view of the concept, no speech may be prohibited by law, not even hate speech, which is considered a criminal offense in European countries.

And perhaps most concerning, I look to our very dear friends, the United Kingdom, where the backslide away from conscience rights has placed the basic liberties of religious Britons, in particular, in the crosshairs.

A little over two years ago, the British government charged Adam Smith-Connor, a 51-year-old physiotherapist and an army veteran, with the heinous crime of standing 50 meters from an abortion clinic and silently praying for three minutes—not obstructing anyone, not interacting with anyone, just silently praying on his own. And after British law enforcement spotted him and demanded to know what he was praying for, Adam replied, simply, it was on behalf of the unborn son he and his former girlfriend had aborted years before.

Now, the officers were not moved. Adam was found guilty of breaking the government’s new “buffer zones” law, which criminalizes silent prayer and other actions that could “influence” a person’s decision within 200 meters of an abortion facility. He was sentenced to pay thousands of pounds in legal costs to the prosecution.

### **Denounces the condemnation of an anti-abortion activist in the United Kingdom**

The US vice president refers to an event that occurred in November 2022, in Bournemouth, in the south of England. Adam Smith-Connor, a physiotherapist and British army veteran, prayed in front of an abortion clinic, breaching a "safe zone" which had been set up to keep anti-abortion activists a certain distance away from abortion centers. This safe zone had been instituted by a local council order in October 2022, in order to keep activists away and guarantee that women going to the center are not harassed or intimidated. Any person breaching such a zone incurs a fine, or even a criminal charge. The British daily newspaper *The Guardian* had notably reported that a clinic worker had witnessed a patient who had injured herself trying to climb over a wall to avoid being intimidated by protestors.

In praying in front of the center, Smith-Connor breached the zone's security perimeter. He also refused to leave, despite having been ordered to do so by a police officer. The veteran was put on trial for having refused to pay his fine, and was ordered to pay over £9,000 in court fees. Following a 2023 law, these safe zones were implemented around abortion clinics in England and Wales in October 2024.

Vance is known for having a hostile stance on the right to abortion. In 2022, he declared that he would like a nationwide ban on abortion in the US. However, in 2024, Trump's then-running mate walked back these remarks, and declared that abortion legislation was up to each state to decide.

Now, I wish I could say that this was a fluke—a one-off, crazy example of a badly written law being enacted against a single person. But, no, this last October, just a few months ago, the Scottish government began distributing letters to citizens whose houses lay within so-called “safe access zones,” warning them that even private prayer within their own homes may amount to breaking the law. Naturally, the government urged readers to report any fellow citizens suspected guilty of thoughtcrime. In Britain, and across Europe, free speech, I fear, is in retreat.

### **Lies about a Scottish law that protects women who choose to have an abortion**

Once again, Vance deceptively summarizes UK abortion rights law. Here, he takes aim at a Scottish law on "Safe Access Zones," which came into force in September 2024. This law aims to protect women who choose to have an abortion from anti-abortion activists who try to "influence or alarm them" in front of hospitals and clinics. With this law, anti-abortion protestors can neither demonstrate within 200 meters of these establishments, nor hold silent vigils.

However, counter to what the US vice president claimed, this law does not forbid private prayer in people's homes. Gillian Mackay, who had proposed the law in the Scottish parliament, firmly condemned his statements on Facebook: "This is shocking and shameless misinformation from Vice President JD Vance. He is one of the most powerful people in the world but he is peddling total nonsense about what my Act has done."

Moreover, the letters he mentioned in his speech do not say anything about a possible offense linked to prayer in people's homes, but are rather simply aimed at informing the zone's residents of what the zones mean for them. "The letter does encourage people to report anything they think could break the law," the Scottish MP has stated, explaining: "This is the same encouragement Police Scotland would give for every other law in the country and isn't unique to this Act." Mackay has demanded that the US Embassy to the UK correct the record after Vance's statement, which she described as "misinformation."

And in the interest of comity, my friends, but also in the interest of truth, I will admit that sometimes the loudest voices for censorship have come not from within Europe but from within my own country, where the prior administration threatened and bullied social media companies to censor so-called misinformation —misinformation like, for example, the idea that coronavirus had likely leaked from a laboratory in China. Our own government encouraged private companies to silence people who dared to utter what turned out to be an obvious truth.

#### **Shares an unsubstantiated opinion on the origins of Covid-19**

For Vance, the theory that alleges that the SARS-CoV-2 virus had originally leaked out from a laboratory was an "obvious truth." It is true that the Wuhan Institute of Virology has come under suspicion, as it had been conducting experiments on coronavirus strains in bats, which were found to be close to Covid-19, in limited-security laboratories. John Ratcliffe, the new CIA director, had barely entered office after having been nominated by Trump, when his agency declared, in January, that it now favored the lab leak theory, though it said it had a "low confidence" level on its assessment.

To date, no proof has been put forward that SARS-CoV-2 had escaped from a lab, that lab workers had contracted the virus, nor that the Chinese institution had possessed a virus strain that could have been a direct progenitor of Covid-19.

The majority of scientists continue to consider that the zoonotic origin theory is still the most probable one. The virus was first detected at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale market, and the spread pattern of the first cases and genetic diversity of the first strains of the virus are coherent with a zoonotic origin, according to a study published in the journal *Nature*. Genetic traces of the virus were also found mixed with those of animals who could likely have transmitted the virus to humans, like the raccoon dog, a fact which China only acknowledged three years later. At the end of 2024, analyses awaiting publication also showed that the animals present at the market had, themselves, been sick.

There are still unknown elements to the story. The exact transmission route that SARS-CoV-2 took is still a mystery, and Beijing has blocked all investigations that would, even vaguely, trace Covid-19's origins back to China. Nevertheless, several studies have shown that the bushmeat and wildlife trade, going from rural zones to wet markets, has been a vector for zoonotic disease transmission over almost 20 years.

So, I come here today not just with an observation but with an offer. And just as the Biden administration seemed desperate to silence people for speaking their minds, so the Trump administration will do precisely the opposite, and I hope that we can work together on that.

In Washington, there is a new sheriff in town. And under Donald Trump's leadership, we may disagree with your views, but we will fight to defend your right to offer it in the public square, agree or disagree. *[Applause.]*

Now we're at the point, of course, that the situation has gotten so bad that, this December, Romania straight up canceled the results of a presidential election based on the flimsy suspicions of an intelligence agency and enormous pressure from its continental neighbors.

Now, as I understand it, the argument was that Russian disinformation had infected the Romanian elections, but I'd ask my European friends to have some perspective. You can believe it's wrong for Russia to buy social media advertisements to influence your elections. We certainly do. You can condemn it on the world stage even. But if your democracy can be destroyed with a few hundred thousand dollars of digital advertising from a foreign country, then it wasn't very strong to begin with. *[Scattered applause.]*

#### **Condemns the annulment of Romania's presidential election**

The annulment of the second round of Romania's presidential election, which was decided by the country's Constitutional Court on December 6, 2024, was a first for this kind of case in Europe. It followed the success of a pro-Russian candidate, Calin Georgescu, despite the country being fundamentally pro-European. Georgescu, who had not participated in any debates nor spent any money on his campaign, came first in the first electoral round.

The "flimsy suspicions of an intelligence agency" which Vance cites refer to an analysis conducted by the Romanian intelligence services. According to their reports, a combination of videos was associated with keywords and then shared – for a hidden fee – by over a hundred influencers, who, in total, had more than 8 million active subscribers. This resulted in the name "Georgescu" becoming one of the top-ranked trends in content promoted online, ahead of the election.

The Romanian authorities have not been able to prove Moscow's interference was behind this, but they stand convinced that the Russian interference campaign was real, and an investigation is ongoing. "We have elements confirming that Russia is trying to manipulate influencers in [some] European countries, including France," said French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, on December 18, 2024.

Vance himself came close to acknowledging this interference, as he declared, a little further on, that the US "believe[s]," just like the Europeans do, that "it's wrong for Russia to buy social media advertisements to influence your elections." The true aim behind his reference to the Romanian election would seem less to be about denying Russian involvement than to undermine the state of the principle of democracy in Europe, which, according to him, if it "can be destroyed with a few hundred thousand dollars of digital advertising from a foreign country, then it wasn't very strong to begin with." This would imply that it's not worth very much – a staggering judgement, coming from the vice president of a man who pardoned over 1,500 people who had been charged with crimes for the January 6, 2021 Capitol assault.

Now, the good news is that I happen to think your democracies are substantially less brittle than many people apparently fear, and I really do believe that allowing our citizens to speak their mind will make them stronger still. Which, of course, brings us back to Munich, where the organizers of this very conference have banned lawmakers representing populist parties on both the left and the right from participating in these conversations.

### **Criticizes the ban on populist parties at the Munich Security Conference**

The far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party and the left-wing Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance party, both of which are hostile to supplying arms to Ukraine and have been seen as sympathetic to Russian interests, were not invited to attend the Munich Security Conference. The organizers cited the behavior of the two parties' MPs during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's speech at the Bundestag in June 2024, as the elected representatives walked out of the chamber. However, while appearing to criticize the absence of populist parties "on both the left and right," the American vice president had made his choice: He later spoke to Alice Weidel, leader of the AfD.

Now, again, we don't have to agree with everything or anything that people say, but when people represent—when political leaders represent an important constituency, it is incumbent upon us to at least participate in dialogue with them.

Now, to many of us on the other side of the Atlantic, it looks more and more like old, entrenched interests hiding behind ugly, Soviet-era words like "misinformation" and "disinformation," who simply don't like the idea that somebody with an alternative viewpoint might express a different opinion, or, God forbid, vote a different way, or, even worse, win an election.

Now, this is a security conference, and I'm sure you all came here prepared to talk about how exactly you intend to increase defense spending over the next few years in line with some new target. And that's great, because as President Trump has made abundantly clear, he believes that our European friends must play a bigger role in the future of this continent. We don't think—you hear this term, "burden sharing," but we think it's an important part of being in a shared alliance together that the Europeans step up while America focuses on areas of the world that are in great danger.

But let me also ask you, how will you even begin to think through the kinds of budgeting questions if we don't know what it is that we're defending in the first place? I've heard a lot already in my conversations—and I've had many, many great conversations with many people gathered here in this room—I've heard a lot about what you need to defend yourselves from, and, of course, that's important. But what has seemed a little bit less clear to me and certainly, I think, to many of the citizens of Europe, is what exactly it is that you're defending yourselves for. What is the positive vision that animates this shared security compact that we all believe is so important?

And I believe deeply that there is no security if you are afraid of the voices, the opinions, and the conscience that guide your very own people. Europe faces many challenges, but the crisis this continent faces right now, the crisis I believe we all face together, is one of our own making.

If you're running in fear of your own voters, there is nothing America can do for you. Nor, for that matter, is there anything that you can do for the American people who elected me and elected President Trump.

You need democratic mandates to accomplish anything of value in the coming years. Have we learned nothing, that thin mandates produce unstable results? But there is so much of value that can be accomplished with the kind of democratic mandate that I think will come from being more responsive to the voices of your citizens.

If you're going to enjoy competitive economies, if you're going to enjoy affordable energy and secure supply chains, then you need mandates to govern, because you have to make difficult choices to enjoy all of these things. And, of course, we know that very well in America.

You cannot win a democratic mandate by censoring your opponents or putting them in jail—whether that's the leader of the opposition, a humble Christian praying in her own home, or a journalist trying to report the news. Nor can you win one by disregarding your basic electorate on questions like who gets to be a part of our shared society.

And of all the pressings—challenges that the nations represented here face, I believe there is nothing more urgent than mass migration. Today, almost one in five people living in this country moved here from abroad. That is, of course, an all-time high. It's a similar number, by the way, in the United States—also an all-time high.

The number of immigrants who entered the EU from non-EU countries doubled between 2021 and 2022 alone. And, of course, it's gotten much higher since. And we know the situation, it didn't materialize in a vacuum. It's the result of a series of conscious decisions made by politicians all over the continent, and others across the world, over the span of a decade.

#### **Instrumentalizes immigration figures**

According to Destatis, the German statistics office, close to 14 million German residents are foreigners. This corresponds to 15% of Germany's 84.5 million total inhabitants. Vance therefore slightly overestimates this figure, but it's true that it's an all-time record. According to the US Census Bureau, this proportion is similar in the US, where one in seven people are foreign nationals, the highest level since 1910.

The vice president correctly cited EU immigration figures for the period from 2021 to 2022. Yet he failed to specify the context: In 2022, EU member states welcomed over 1.8 million Ukrainian nationals after the Russian invasion (compared with 100,000 the previous year), which accounts for around two-thirds of this increase.

We saw the horrors wrought by these decisions yesterday in this very city. And, of course, I can't bring it up again without thinking about the terrible victims who had a beautiful winter day in Munich ruined. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and will remain with them. But why did this happen in the first place? It's a terrible story, but it's one we've heard way too many times in Europe and, unfortunately, too many times in the United States as well: an asylum-seeker, often a young man in his mid-20s, already known to police, rams a car into a crowd and shatters a community. How many times must we suffer these appalling setbacks before we change course and take our shared civilization in a new direction?

No voter on this continent went to the ballot box to open the floodgates to millions of unvetted immigrants. But you know what they did vote for? In England, they voted for Brexit. And agree or disagree, they voted for it. And more and more, all over Europe, they're voting for political leaders who promise to put an end to out-of-control migration.

#### **Highlights the popular vote for Brexit**

It's true that the 51.9% of British people voted in favor of Brexit on June 23, 2016. However, weaker-than-expected economic outcomes, disappointment at the broken promises regarding leaving the EU and the country's isolation within Europe have since made them change their minds. According to an average of the last six polls on the subject, 57% of them regret their choice, and would now be in favor of EU membership.

Vance alludes to the fact that, in the 2016 referendum, hostility toward immigration was one of the motivations expressed by British voters who voted for Brexit. He glosses over the fact that, since Brexit went into effect, the UK has experienced record-high immigration (from Africa and Asia, rather than from Europe).

Now, I happen to agree with a lot of these concerns, but you don't have to agree with me. I just think that people care about their homes. They care about their dreams. They care about their safety and their capacity to provide for themselves and their children.

And they're smart. I think this is one of the most important things I've learned in my brief time in politics. Contrary to what you might hear a couple mountains over in Davos, the citizens of all of our nations don't generally think of themselves as educated animals or as interchangeable cogs of a global economy, and it's hardly surprising that they

don't want to be shuffled about or relentlessly ignored by their leaders. And it is the business of democracy to adjudicate these big questions at the ballot box.

I believe that dismissing people, dismissing their concerns, or, worse yet, shutting down media, shutting down elections, or shutting people out of the political process protects nothing. In fact, it is the most surefire way to destroy democracy.

And trust me, I say this with all humor, if American democracy can survive 10 years of Greta Thunberg's scolding, you guys can survive a few months of Elon Musk. But what German democracy—what no democracy, American, German, or European—will survive is telling millions of voters that their thoughts and concerns, their aspirations, their pleas for relief are invalid or unworthy of even being considered.

Democracy rests on the sacred principle that the voice of the people matters. There is no room for firewalls. You either uphold the principle or you don't. Europeans, the people have a voice. European leaders have a choice. And my strong belief is that we do not need to be afraid of the future.

#### **Expresses outrage at the exclusion of the far right in Germany**

With this statement, Vance challenges the "firewall" (*Brandmauer*) doctrine that has prevailed in Germany since the end of the Second World War, which consists of keeping the far right out of power. He thereby boosted the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, whose leader, Alice Weidel, he met with in Munich, on February 14, nine days ahead of the country's early parliamentary elections, held on February 23. Meanwhile, he had refused to meet with Chancellor Olaf Scholz. This direct interference in German politics caused strong reactions throughout the country.

You can embrace what your people tell you, even when it's surprising, even when you don't agree. And if you do so, you can face the future with certainty and with confidence, knowing that the nation stands behind each of you. And that, to me, is the great magic of democracy. It's not in these stone buildings or beautiful hotels. It's not even in the great institutions that we have built together as a shared society.

To believe in democracy is to understand that each of our citizens has wisdom and has a voice. And if we refuse to listen to that voice, even our most successful fights will secure very little.

As Pope John Paul II—in my view, one of the most extraordinary champions of democracy on this continent or any other—once said, "Do not be afraid." We shouldn't be afraid of our people, even when they express views that disagree with their leadership. Thank you all. Good luck to all of you. God bless you. *[Applause.]*

#### **Twists Pope John Paul II's words**

"Do not be afraid" was a phrase Pope John Paul II repeated in his homily at the ceremony marking his inauguration on October 22, 1978. This biblical injunction has been interpreted as the conservative pope's challenge to the Soviet regime, and he used his influence over the 26 years of his pontificate to accelerate the downfall of communism. "Open the boundaries of States, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development," he had continued. Vance, for his part, has turned this famous Christian phrase into a populist slogan.

# The Economy – Tariffs and trade wars

## What are tariffs and why is Trump using them? BBC News

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn93e12rypgo>

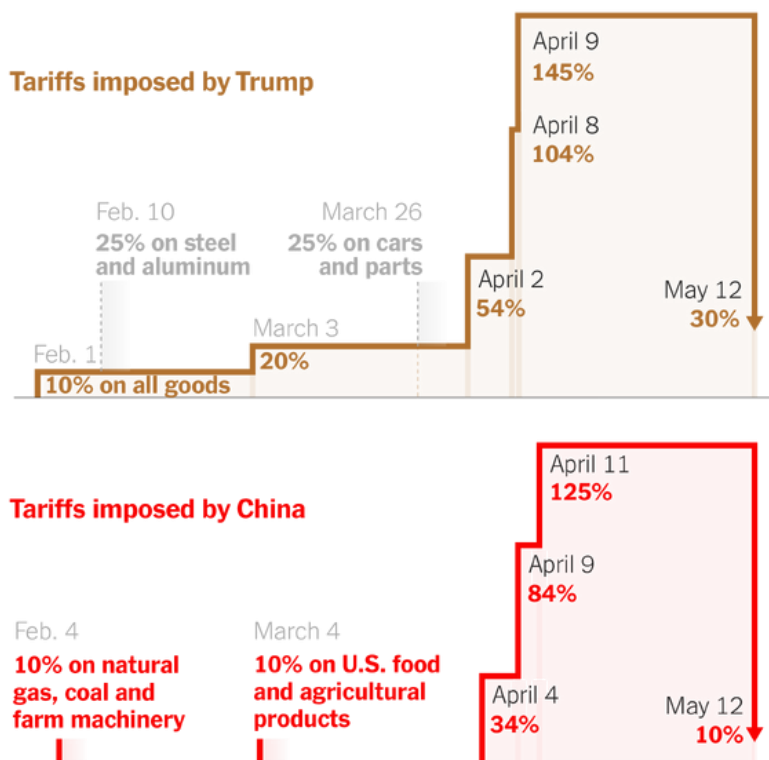
### Tariff Flip-Flop

Despite President Trump's claims, America seems to need other countries' trade as much as they need ours  
By German Lopez The Morning (The New York Times) May 13, 2025

President Trump made big promises with his China tariffs: China needs us more than we need it. America can outlast China in a trade war. Those advantages will let the administration get big concessions and rebalance global commerce. Trump's actions, however, suggest the talk was bluster. Yesterday, his administration cut its China tariffs from 145 percent to 30 percent for at least a few months. China will reciprocate by lowering its retaliatory levies from 125 percent to 10 percent. Both sides will keep talking.

### Temporarily Reduced Tariffs

Weeks of tit-for-tat moves between the U.S. and China.



Credit...Sources: White House; China's Ministry of Finance | By The New York Times

But China made no concessions. By now, most of us are familiar with this pattern: Trump makes big claims about what his tariffs can get, only for him to later back down without the other country giving up anything meaningful. It happened with Mexico, Canada and most of Trump's "Liberation Day" levies. Despite his claims, America seems to need other countries' trade as much as they need ours, diminishing Trump's negotiating position. Today's newsletter explains.

### Price hikes and shortages

Here's the problem: Trade is mutually beneficial. The buyer gets a good, and the seller makes a profit. The United States runs a trade deficit with China — it buys more than it sells — because Americans have the cash and want what China is selling.



Trump's tariffs on China were so high that they were effectively an embargo that threatened to end all of those mutually beneficial transactions. That would cover a lot of goods — more than 70 percent of smartphones, laptops and toys — as well as manufacturing materials, particularly rare earth metals used in modern electronics. Retailers warned that prices would rise and shelves would go empty. Markets tumbled.

The hits to the economy weakened Trump's negotiating position, and China knew it. Americans spent the last few years fuming about inflation and supply mishaps, and they would be furious if those problems continued. And unlike previous bouts of inflation that leaders could pin on the pandemic or the Ukraine war, this time it would clearly be Trump's fault. So China took a patient approach. Let prices rise and markets fall, and eventually Trump would have to give in. That strategy worked, at least for now.

#### **What remains**

Trump still has time to get some concessions out of China, which does not want to lose its biggest global customer. The concessions could be small. In the past, countries have given Trump minor compromises in response to tariffs — enough for him to save face, essentially — as when Canada vaguely promised to step up border enforcement earlier this year. In the meantime, tariffs remain much higher than they were before Trump's second term. When Trump ran for president, many economists warned that his promise of 10 percent tariffs on every other country would hurt the economy. Even after all of Trump's backpedaling, a 10 percent universal tariff is still in place. Duties on specific goods, such as cars, are even higher. Prices on clothes, appliances, video game consoles and everything else made in other countries will likely rise as a result.

### **12 states sue Trump over his tariffs, calling president's use of emergency powers 'unlawful'**

A dozen states, led by the attorneys general of Oregon and Arizona, sued Donald Trump and his administration in the US court of international trade on Wednesday, calling his tariffs illegal because they were implemented under emergency powers in the absence of a true emergency.

The states challenge Trump's claim that he can arbitrarily impose tariffs based on the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The suit asks the court to declare the tariffs to be illegal, and to block government agencies and its officers from enforcing them.

The first lines of the lawsuit argue that the US constitution grants Congress, and not the president, the power to impose and collect taxes.

"Yet over the last three months, the President has imposed, modified, escalated, and suspended tariffs by executive order, memoranda, social media post, and agency decree," the lawsuit states. "These edicts reflect a national trade policy that now hinges on the President's whims rather than the sound exercise of his lawful authority."

The 10 states that joined Oregon and Arizona are: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York and Vermont.

In a statement, Arizona's attorney general, Kris Mayes, said: "President Trump's insane tariff scheme is not only economically reckless — it is illegal."

#### **See also**

- **Trump's tariffs have launched global trade wars. Here's a timeline of how we got here**

Associated Press See [HERE](#)

- [https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2025/04/21/face-a-la-pression-commerciale-des-etats-unis-la-chine-a-les-moyens-de-riposter-cinq-graphiques-pour-comprendre\\_6598399\\_3234.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2025/04/21/face-a-la-pression-commerciale-des-etats-unis-la-chine-a-les-moyens-de-riposter-cinq-graphiques-pour-comprendre_6598399_3234.html)

- **A good analysis [HERE](#), it's for the geeks though: There's a Method to Trump's Tariff Madness**

Jennifer Burns, *The New York Times*, April 7, 2025

# The Media

## Donald Trump deploys new tactics to manage the media

*The Economist*, Mar 6th 2025

“Why don’t you wear a suit?...Do you own a suit?” The first question from the White House press pool to Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine’s president, during his visit to the Oval Office on February 28th, came from an outlet unfamiliar to many viewers. News outfits such as Reuters and the Associated Press (AP) had not made it into the meeting. Instead the challenge came from a reporter for Real America’s Voice, a right-wing streaming site.

Two days earlier the White House had announced that the travelling pool of reporters around the president would no longer be selected by the White House Correspondents’ Association, which had organised the rota for a century, but picked by the government. The shuffle in personnel—and the resulting change in tone of questioning—is the most visible move so far in Donald Trump’s approach to managing the news. More changes are likely.

The president is backing up his criticism of media outlets with a barrage of lawsuits. He recently extracted \$15m and an apology from ABC News (for saying he was found liable for rape, rather than sexual abuse) and is fighting consumer-fraud cases against CBS News (over edits to a “60 Minutes” interview with Kamala Harris, his opponent last year) and the *Des Moines Register* (for publishing a poll showing him trailing in Iowa, a state he later won).

Such cases seem designed mainly to suck up defendants’ time. But news organisations must take them more seriously than in the past. One reason is a more hostile public. At the start of Mr Trump’s first term, in 2016, 76% of adults said they had some trust in national news outlets. By last year the figure was 59%, and 40% among Republicans, according to the Pew Research Centre. Libel trials in America are heard by juries. If a plaintiff picks the right county they can expect a sympathetic audience—and judge.

Defendants must also weigh the possibility of retribution from government agencies. Meta, which paid \$25m in January to settle a complaint by Mr Trump for being suspended from Facebook, faces an antitrust

hearing soon at which far more is at stake. Paramount, CBS’s owner, needs permission from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a proposed merger with Skydance Media; some at the company fear problems if it fights the “60 Minutes” case. The FCC, a dowdy bureaucracy that manages broadcast licences, has become an unlikely attack-dog under Mr Trump, probing everything from media firms’ diversity policies to a California radio bulletin that may have revealed details of an undercover immigration operation.

Covering the White House, meanwhile, is becoming more difficult. The recent purge of the press pool is not the first time Mr Trump has sought to bar journalists: during his first term the White House withdrew the press pass of Jim Acosta, a CNN reporter (and a “rude, terrible person”), after a row during a press conference. The White House backed down after a judge intervened, but this time it is claiming that attending smaller gatherings in the Oval Office or onboard Air Force One is “a privilege....not a legal right”.

The AP, which has been banned from press events for using the name “Gulf of Mexico” alongside the president’s preferred “Gulf of America”, failed to persuade a judge immediately to restore its access; another hearing is due on March 20th. The next battleground over transparency may be in immigration courts, which do not have the same presumption of access as other federal courts, says Bruce Brown of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, a free-speech lobby.

Where is the next front? Reporters worry that it will become harder to speak to confidential sources. Joe Biden’s government reined in the use of subpoenas against journalists, which Barack Obama had used aggressively to pursue leakers. In 2022 the Department of Justice banned the use of subpoenas to seize reporters’ notes or demand their testimony. But there is nothing to stop Mr Trump undoing this. **5’01** Case law offers little comfort: in 2014 the Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal by James Risen, a *New York Times* reporter who was compelled to testify in a case against an alleged CIA leaker.■

## **'A cocktail for a misinformed world': why China and Russia are cheering Trump's attacks on media**

Michael Savage, Media Editor, The Guardian, May 3, 2025 (abridged)

As Donald Trump's executive order in March led to the shuttering of Voice of America (VOA) – the global broadcaster whose roots date back to the fight against Nazi propaganda – he quickly attracted support from figures not used to aligning themselves with any US administration.

Trump had ordered the US Agency for Global Media, the federal agency that funds VOA and other groups promoting independent journalism overseas, to be “eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law”. The decision suddenly halted programming in 49 languages to more than 425 million people.

In Moscow, Margarita Simonyan, the hardline editor-in-chief of the state broadcaster RT described it as an “awesome decision”. The Global Times, an English-language Chinese state media publication, crowed that the broadcasters had been discarded by the White House “like a dirty rag”, ending their “propaganda poison”. Azerbaijan's president, Ilham Aliyev, whose regime has been accused of repressing political opposition, described Trump's move as “very promising”.

Domestically, Trump has continued to target the media, whether by taking outlets including CBS News and ABC to court, attempting to block political access to the White House by the Associated Press, or defund National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service – institutions he has described as “radical left monsters”.

For many senior media figures around the world, there has been a tipping of the scales as authoritarian regimes are emboldened by a US administration not only attacking the media at home, but also withdrawing from the fight for free information overseas.

As the world marks Press Freedoms Day on May 3, observers are now warning that in countries where free media is weak, America's withdrawal from this geopolitical balancing act will have far-reaching effects.

As well as VOA, which was founded in 1942 at the height of the second world war and broadcasts in nearly 50 languages, Trump has withdrawn funding from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), which was founded during the cold war and broadcasts to countries including Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

The head of the US-funded Arabic-language news outlet Alhurra, Jeffrey Gedmin, has said the decision to cut its staff and services would “silence America's voice in the Middle East”.

At the same time, there are signs that media freedom elsewhere is eroding, with arrests and deportations of journalists in Turkey, including the BBC's correspondent Mark Lowen, and dire warnings over threats to press freedom in Serbia. [...]

While a federal judge has blocked the attempt to dismantle VOA, RFE/RL and other related organisations, the uncertainty continues and a government appeal is expected. Meanwhile, the EU has been unable to step in to replace the lost funding.

The exit of US-funded media has come at the same time as the BBC World Service, which has also played a powerful role in bringing independent media to audiences, faces its own financial squeeze from the erosion of the licence fee.

Jonathan Munro, global director of BBC News, says: “Three-quarters of countries around the world don't have free media, and that figure is getting worse, not better.

“It's not just the lack of free media. It's the proactive and aggressive march of disinformation and misinformation, which arrives on people's phones 24 hours a day. That's a cocktail for a very badly informed, or misinformed, global population.”[...]

Given Trump's early determination to push back against media at home and defund US-backed free media overseas, some of the damage being done could be irreversible, says Baron.

“It's highly destructive, with no good rationale whatsoever and it will be very hard to recover. 587 words

## **Trump Signs Executive Order Seeking to End Federal Funding for NPR and PBS**

The New York Times, May 2, 2025 (abridged)

President Trump on Thursday signed an executive order aiming to cut federal funding for NPR and PBS, accusing the news outlets of producing biased coverage and “left-wing propaganda.”

Mr. Trump instructed the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which funds public broadcasters in the United States, to end federal funding for NPR and PBS, to the extent allowed by law. The outlets receive only a small portion of their funding from Congress, with the rest coming from donors and sponsors.

The immediate impact of the order was unclear. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a taxpayer-backed, private entity created by an act of Congress, is funded two years in advance to protect it from political maneuvering.

“CPB is not a federal executive agency subject to the President’s authority,” Patricia Harrison, the president and chief executive of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, said in a statement on Friday. “Congress directly authorized and funded CPB to be a private nonprofit corporation wholly independent of the federal government.”

The executive order was the latest move by the Trump administration against what it described as biased public media. The White House released a document accompanying the order on its website, criticizing the two broadcasters’ coverage of, among other topics, the Covid-19 pandemic and Hunter Biden, the son of former President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Mr. Trump ordered the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and all federal agencies to also cut indirect funding by forbidding public radio and television broadcasters that receive federal funds from using that money for PBS or NPR programs.

The chief executives of NPR and PBS testified before Congress in March, a heated hearing in which Republicans assailed them for what they described as liberal bias.

The White House wants Congress to take back more than \$1 billion for two years that has been allocated for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting. Mr. Trump’s order on Thursday instructed the board of the corporation to “cancel existing direct funding to the maximum extent allowed by law” and “decline to provide future funding.”

Mr. Trump’s executive order is “blatantly unlawful,” Paula Kerger, the president and chief executive of PBS, said in a statement on Friday. “We are currently exploring all options to allow PBS to continue to serve our member stations and all Americans,” she added.

NPR said in a statement earlier on Friday that its editorial practices and decisions are independent and free from outside influences, including political parties. [...]

Nevertheless, in 2011 NPR assembled a 36-page document that detailed what would happen if the Treasury stopped cutting checks to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The document describes a precarious radio system that would bear the blow poorly, with consequences for listeners across the United States.

Independent member stations get most of the money dedicated to public radio. That makes them more vulnerable than NPR, which says it gets only 1 percent of its budget from Congress.

Public television in the United States would likely be in worse shape because PBS receives much more of its budget — about 15 percent of \$373 million — from the federal government.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting sued the Trump administration this week, accusing it of illegally trying to fire three members of its board. The administration had not offered any justification for the dismissals. 543 words

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