

Trump's cabinet: A blueprint for authoritarian rule and social counterrevolution

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24 November 2024

Only three weeks after his narrow but decisive victory in the 2024 presidential election, President-elect Donald Trump has rapidly selected virtually every nominee for the top positions in his incoming government, including all his cabinet secretaries, all his top White House staff and many top sub-cabinet positions.

Trump's choices confirm the fundamental character of the incoming government as one of, by and for the financial oligarchy. This is not just a phrase, but a literal description of a government whose leaders consist of aides and acolytes of the billionaire Trump, employees of the billionaire media mogul Rupert Murdoch, proprietor of Fox News, and a half dozen other billionaires allied with Trump and Murdoch, including the richest man in the world, Elon Musk.

Perhaps the most important feature of the new administration is its extreme personalism. Personal loyalty to Trump, the *Führer* principle in all but name, has been one of the main criteria for selection, especially to positions in the White House and the Department of Justice, which Trump aims to wield as a weapon against his political opponents.

The nominees for the top four posts at the Department of Justice are all former or current legal representatives for Trump. Former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, who was a Trump attorney during his first impeachment trial in 2020, is tapped for US attorney general, replacing Matt Gaetz, Trump's initial pick.

Bondi's top two deputies would be Todd Blanche and Emil Bove, who represented Trump in the federal case arising from the January 6, 2021 attempted coup. The solicitor general would be John Bauer, who argued Trump's side before the Supreme Court last summer, resulting in the notorious decision in *Trump v. United States* that an American president has absolute immunity from prosecution for any official actions, no matter how violent, illegal or unconstitutional. Trump will be covered by that blanket immunity as soon as he takes the oath of office on January 20.

The White House staff is headed by Susie Wiles, manager of Trump's presidential campaign, with anti-immigrant fascist Stephen Miller as deputy chief of staff. Will Scharf, another Trump lawyer, will be White House secretary, handling the flow of paper, while Sergio Gor, a partner of Donald Trump Jr. in publishing books glorifying Trump, will be White House personnel chief, in charge of vetting nominations for lower-level positions.

Two more fascists will hold influential White House policy positions. Tom Homan, author of the family separation policy for arrested immigrants in the first Trump administration, will be "border czar." Sebastian Gorka, a member of the Hungarian fascist Order of the Vitez, was booted out of the first Trump White House in 2017 because he was considered too extreme. He will be "terrorism adviser" in the second Trump White House.

Four other cabinet nominees were members of the House of Representatives who served on Trump's defense team against impeachment in the 2020 Senate trial. Elise Stefanik of New York will be UN ambassador, John Ratcliffe of Texas will be CIA director, Lee Zeldin of New York will be EPA administrator, and Doug Collins of Georgia will head the Department of Veterans Affairs.

An entire group of cabinet and sub-cabinet officials are being imported from the America First Policy Institute, which was co-chaired by pro wrestling's Linda McMahon, chosen as secretary of education, and run by Brooke Rollins, a former Trump White House domestic policy adviser, picked as secretary of agriculture.

The Fox News employees and pundits are equally numerous, while also overlapping with the Trump loyalists. These include longtime talkshow "hosts" like Pete Hegseth, nominated to head the Pentagon; Tulsi Gabbard, the former Democratic congresswoman-turned-Trump advocate, nominated as director of National Intelligence; former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, chosen as ambassador to Israel; former Trump White House aide Scott Turner, picked for the Department of Housing and Urban Development; former congressman and reality TV "star" Sean Duffy to head the Department of Transportation; and Dr. Janette Nesheiwat for surgeon general.

Trump picked former Democrat and anti-vaccine conspiracy theorist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to head the Department of Health and Human Services, rewarding him for abandoning his independent presidential campaign to endorse the Republican. The other top positions in healthcare are being doled out to equally extreme enemies of public health: celebrity TV doctor and defeated Republican Senate candidate Mehmet Oz to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; COVID lockdown and masking opponent Dr. Martin Makary to run the Food and Drug Administration; anti-abortion doctor and former Republican Congressman Dave Weldon to head the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention.

Multiple media sources reported Sunday that Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, a leading advocate of the “let it rip” COVID-19 policy and co-author of the anti-public-health Great Barrington Declaration, would be picked to run the National Institutes of Health.

While these figures are ideologically committed to the destruction of public health, there are profound social reasons for this wrecking operation, rooted in the profit interests of the super-rich. For the top one-hundredth of one percent who rule American society, all federal spending on Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education, food stamps and other services to working people, their children and their retired parents represent a deduction from the wealth that could be funneled into their own pockets.

This social layer is directly represented in Trump’s cabinet, in the person of half a dozen billionaires, led by the richest individual, Elon Musk, with a current estimated fortune topping \$300 billion (many billions of which depend on government contracts or subsidies). Musk and gen-tech billionaire Vivek Ramaswamy have volunteered to form Trump’s “Department of Government Efficiency,” whose stated goal is to slash \$2 trillion in federal spending—more than a quarter of the budget—and eliminate hundreds of thousands of federal jobs.

A billionaire will hold the key position of Secretary of Treasury: hedge fund boss and former Democrat Scott Bessent, chosen after wrangling between Musk and even more powerful Wall Street interests. They opposed—as voiced by the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*—“economic-policy disruption for its own sake. ... Steady and knowledgeable economic policy hands are needed if Mr. Trump wants to succeed.”

In particular, the *Journal* was concerned that the incoming Trump administration should ensure the extension of his 2017 tax cuts for the rich, which are set to expire early in 2025. There were also concerns that rival billionaire Howard Lutnick, Musk’s proposed Treasury chief, was too committed to promoting crypto currency investment through his Cantor Fitzgerald brokerage firm. Lutnick was given the Department of Commerce as a consolation prize.

Other billionaires in the cabinet include fracking mogul Chris Wright for the Department of Energy (“There is no climate crisis,” he declared last year); North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, an IT billionaire, for the Department of Interior; and Linda McMahon for the Department of Education.

There is no precedent in American history—nor likely in the modern history of any country in the world—for a government so completely in the grips of great and utterly parasitic wealth. As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained in its initial analysis of Trump’s election victory, “the coming to power of a second Trump administration represents the violent realignment of the American political superstructure to correspond with the real social relations that exist in the United States.”

That this is a class question, and not merely the product of Trump, is demonstrated in the response of the Democratic Party, the nominal opposition within the framework of the capitalist two-party system. While President Joe Biden combines senility and

servility in promising the “smoothest” transition to the second Trump administration, congressional Democrats are spreading complacency.

Democratic New York Representative Tom Suozzi, speaking to CNN Saturday, said Americans should “calm down” about the incoming administration. “If everybody’s going to explode and freak out over every single thing, then you’re never going to be able to focus on the things that really matter,” he said. “We’ve got to pick our battles.”

Outgoing Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg told a Democratic Party meeting Thursday, “We cannot be mesmerized by the worst things that we see happening.” He added, “We will be inclined to react with shock by some things which are done precisely with the intent of shocking us. We need to move very quickly through the shock.”

What this counsel means is that the Democratic Party leaders intend to ignore the millions of immigrants being targeted for mass round-ups, imprisonment and deportation. They intend to stand by and “pick our battles” while Trump proceeds to erect a dictatorial regime in America. Or as Senator Amy Klobuchar put it, appearing on ABC’s “This Week” on Sunday, “They have the votes. ... In the end, it’s going to be the Republicans in the US Senate, their decision about whether they want to put these people in place.”

The sole concern of the Democratic Party is preserving its war policy, in particular, the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine. In its final weeks, the Biden administration has focused on a major escalation of the conflict, which threatens nuclear war, with the authorization of Ukraine’s use of long-range missiles provided by the US to target cities deep inside Russia.

As for the corporate media, it is already assuming its place as the propaganda voice and apologist for the new administration. The word “fascist” has dropped out of the vocabulary of the pro-Democratic Party wing, despite its prominence during the final stages of the election campaign. This is all the more remarkable as Trump names one fascist after another to top positions in the new regime.

The opposition to the policies and actions of the next Trump administration will not come from within the structure of corporate politics but rather from below, from the working class. Explosive class battles are on the agenda, because tens of millions of working people will not accept the destruction of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights which the American ruling class is hell-bent on imposing.



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