

Trump taps personal fixers to lead Justice Department and intelligence apparatus

Jacob Crosse
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This week President Donald Trump moved to elevate Todd Blanche to attorney general and install Bill Pulte as acting director of national intelligence, a further stage in the transformation of the state apparatus into a personal instrument of presidential dictatorship.

Neither appointment is based on competence, independence or adherence to the Constitution. Both men have been selected because they have demonstrated unconditional loyalty to Trump and a willingness to use state power against his political opponents.

On June 3, Trump announced at a Rose Garden dinner that he intended to nominate Blanche, his former personal defense lawyer and current acting attorney general, to the post permanently. The announcement was publicized in a social media video posted by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Dan Scavino.

Blanche's principal qualification is that he served as Trump's lawyer during the period when the former president was facing multiple criminal prosecutions. Beginning in 2023, Blanche represented Trump in the New York "hush money" case brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg. That case, which resulted in 34 felony convictions, was a political diversion by the Democrats, aimed at covering over Trump's far greater crimes against the working class, including the separation of immigrant children from their parents and his attempted coup of January 6, 2021.

Blanche also defended Trump in the classified documents case stemming from his retention of government records at Mar-a-Lago and in the federal election obstruction case, in which Trump was charged over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The latter case was refiled after the Supreme Court's July 2024 decision in *Trump v. United States*, which granted the president sweeping immunity for "official acts," but it was abandoned by Special Counsel Jack Smith following Trump's winning the November 2024 election.

After Trump's inauguration, Blanche was installed as deputy attorney general, second only to then-Attorney General Pam Bondi. At his Senate confirmation hearing, Blanche acknowledged that his attorney-client relationship with Trump had continued. He is Trump's personal fixer inside the federal law enforcement apparatus.

Since assuming control of the Justice Department, Blanche has carried out Trump's agenda of revenge and self-protection. He has overseen the cover-up of the Jeffrey Epstein files, the proposed creation of a \$1.776 billion "Anti-Weaponization Fund" to compensate Trump allies and January 6 defendants, and a settlement arrangement barring tax and financial investigations into Trump, his businesses and his family.

At a House Appropriations Committee hearing Tuesday, Representative Grace Meng pressed Blanche on the slush fund. Blanche claimed the fund was no longer moving forward, while insisting that "the reasons for the fund remain as important as they were before." When Meng asked whether he would issue a written memo formally rescinding the fund, as he had issued one announcing it, Blanche refused.

Under questioning from Representative Rosa DeLauro, Blanche confirmed that the addendum to the settlement shielding Trump, his children and his businesses from tax and financial investigation would remain in effect, placing Trump and his immediate circle above the law.

Blanche has also spearheaded Trump's campaign of political retaliation. After Bondi's departure in April, Blanche brought charges against former FBI Director James Comey over a social media post showing seashells arranged to read "86 47." The number "86" is commonly used in the restaurant industry to mean "cancel" or "remove," while "47" referred to Trump as the 47th president. The prosecution is a transparent attempt to criminalize even symbolic opposition to Trump.

Under Bondi and now Blanche, prosecutors and officials at the Justice Department who refuse to carry out Trump's dictates face removal. Lawyers and investigators who previously worked on cases involving Trump or his fascist allies have been pushed out. The DoJ has also sought voting records from dozens of states in the lead-up to the 2026 midterm elections, while Blanche has endorsed the idea of deploying Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents outside polling locations.

The parallel appointment of Bill Pulte as acting director of national intelligence follows the same pattern. Pulte, the director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, has no background in intelligence work. His actual record is as a loyal operative who has used a regulatory agency to target Trump's enemies.

As head of the FHFA, Pulte combed through federally filed mortgage documents in search of pretexts to accuse Trump's political opponents of fraud. Throughout 2025, with Pulte's assistance, the Justice Department launched or pursued mortgage fraud investigations targeting figures including Senator Adam Schiff, Representative Eric Swalwell, Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook and New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Pulte also assumed control over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and carried out purges of workers and directors deemed insufficiently loyal to the administration. In one official announcement, he boasted of firing more than 100 Fannie Mae employees, couching the purge in the language of "fraud" and "ethics" while consolidating political control over the government-backed mortgage giants.

As acting director of national intelligence, Pulte would gain access to vastly more sensitive information than mortgage files. He would oversee the US intelligence apparatus, including the CIA and NSA, for a period of up to six months, during which Trump said he would nominate a full-time replacement. Pulte's appointment gives Trump a loyalist positioned at the center of the state's surveillance and covert operations machinery during the lead-up to the midterm elections.

Trump's previous DNI, Tulsi Gabbard, had already used the office to advance his lies about the 2020 election, including through the FBI raid on the Fulton County, Georgia election office, which she attended, despite having no domestic law enforcement authority. During the raid, Gabbard called Trump and placed him on speakerphone with agents after ballots and voting equipment were seized.

Gabbard resigned last month citing her husband's

sudden diagnosis with a serious cancer. But she was already viewed in the White House as insufficiently committed to Trump's agenda, particularly in relation to the wars in the Middle East.

Pulte's installation continues the process of tightening Trump's personal control of the repressive and surveillance apparatus, placing the intelligence agencies under the control of a figure chosen for personal loyalty and political ruthlessness.

The response of the Democrats has been to frame their opposition almost entirely in terms of "national security" and the smooth functioning of the intelligence apparatus. Their central concern is not that Trump is erecting a dictatorship, but that his appointments could complicate the reauthorization of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the warrantless spying authority used by the US government to surveil foreign targets while sweeping up the communications of Americans.

Representative Jim Himes, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, complained that installing Pulte days before the expiration of Section 702 was "a stupider thing to do" than almost anything he could imagine. Representative Adam Schiff likewise warned that Pulte's appointment would make it more difficult to secure votes for the surveillance program.

These statements expose the Democrats' real priorities. They do not oppose the intelligence agencies, mass surveillance or the apparatus of repression. They fear that Trump's blatant personalist use of these institutions will undermine bipartisan support for the very police-state powers they have long defended.

The appointments of Blanche and Pulte demonstrate that Trump's second administration is not merely staffed by loyalists. It is being organized as a personal dictatorship, in which the Justice Department, financial regulators and intelligence agencies are subordinated to the president's vendettas and the interests of the fascist movement around him.



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