

If you have any doubt about the Administration's overall plan, this is an important article to read.

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Today, *Wired* reported that it had found four more Venmo accounts associated with the Trump administration officials who participated in the now-infamous Signal chat about a planned military attack on the Houthis in Yemen. A payment on one of them was identified only with an eggplant emoji, which is commonly used to suggest sexual activity.

The craziness going on around us in the first two months of the second Trump administration makes a lot more sense if you remember that the goal of those currently in power was never simply to change the policies or the personnel of the U.S. government. Their goal is to dismantle the central pillars of the United States of America—government, law, business, education, culture, and so on—because they believe the very shape of those institutions serves what they call “the Left.”

Their definition of “the Left” includes all Americans, Republicans and Independents as well as Democrats, who believe the government has a role to play in regulating business, providing a basic social safety net, promoting infrastructure, and protecting civil rights and who support the institutional structures Americans have built since World War II.

In place of those structures, today’s MAGA leaders intend to create their own new institutions, shaped by their own people, whose ideological purity trumps their abilities. As Vice President J.D. Vance explained in a 2021 interview, he and his ilk believe that American “conservatives...have lost every major powerful institution in the country, except for maybe churches and religious institutions, which of course are weaker now than they’ve ever been. We’ve lost big business. We’ve lost finance. We’ve lost the culture. We’ve lost the academy. And if we’re going to actually really effect real change in the country, it will require us completely replacing the existing ruling class with another ruling class.... I don’t think there’s sort of a compromise that we’re going to come with the people who currently actually control the country. Unless we overthrow them in some way, we’re going to keep losing.” “We really need to be really ruthless when it comes to the exercise of power,” he said.

This plan is central to Project 2025, the plan President Donald Trump insisted before the election he knew nothing about but which, now that he’s in office, has provided the blueprint for a large majority of the administration’s actions. Project 2025 author Russell Vought, who is now Trump’s director of the Office of Management and Budget, called for a “conservative President” to

“use...the vast powers of the executive branch” aggressively “to send power away from Washington and back to America’s families, faith communities, local governments, and states.”

Last month, journalist Gil Duran of *The Nerd Reich* noted that Curtis Yarvin, a thinker popular with the technological elite currently aligned with the religious extremists at Project 2025, laid out a plan in 2022 to gut the U.S. government and replace it with a dictatorship. This would be a “reboot” of the country, Yarvin wrote, and it would require a “full power start,” a reference to restarting a stalled starship by jumping to full power, which risks destroying the ship.

Yarvin called for “giving absolute sovereignty to a single organization,” headed by the equivalent of the rogue chief executive officer of a corporation who would destroy the public institutions of the democratic government. Trump—whom Yarvin dismissed as weak—would give power to that CEO, who would “run the executive branch without any interference from the Congress or courts.... Most existing important institutions, public and private, will be shut down and replaced with new and efficient systems.” Once loyalists have replaced civil servants in a new ideological “army,” the CEO “will throw it *directly* against the administrative state—not bothering with confirmed appointments, just using temporary appointments as needed. The job of this landing force is *not to govern*.” The new regime must take over the country and “perform the real functions of the old, and ideally perform them much better.” It must “seize all points of power, without respect for paper protections.”

Earlier this month, Yarvin cheered on the idea of hacking existing infrastructure “to operate in an unusual way that its designers, its previous operators, or both, did not expect,” and complimented DOGE for the way it has hacked into existing bureaucracies. The key performance indicator of DOGE, he wrote, “is its ability to *take power from the libs, then keep it*.”

Far from saving money for the United States, as Jacob Bogage at the *Washington Post* reported on March 22, billionaire Elon Musk’s “Department of Government Efficiency” has cost the government \$500 billion, 10% of what the Internal Revenue Service took in last year. Bogage reports that the administration has demolished the IRS, firing nearly 20,000 employees, especially in the divisions that focus on enforcement, and dropping investigations of corporations and the richest taxpayers. Officials project that these changes will result in more tax evasion, and they are expecting a sharp drop in tax revenue this spring.

If the administration is working not to save money but rather to destroy the government, the cuts that threaten the well-being of American citizens make more sense. Today, Emily Davies and Jeff Stein of the *Washington Post* reported that Trump officials are looking for cuts of between 8% and 50% of the employees in federal agencies. They obtained an internal White House document that calls for the Department of Housing and Urban Development to be cut in half, the Interior Department to lose nearly 25% of its workforce, and the Internal Revenue Service to lose about

one third of its people. The Justice Department is set to lose 8% of its workforce, the National Science Foundation 28%, the Commerce Department 30%, and the Small Business Administration 43%.

Cuts to the government have led to the Social Security Administration's website crashing four times in ten days this month, and there are not enough workers to answer phones. Yesterday, Sahil Kapur and Julie Tsirkin of NBC News reported that lawmakers, including Senate Finance subcommittee on Social Security chair Chuck Grassley (R-IA), have been kept in the dark as the men working for DOGE have cut SSA phone services and instituted new rules requiring that beneficiaries without access to the internet prove their identity with an in-person visit to an SSA office.

*Washington Post* reporters Lisa Rein and Hannah Natanson warn that "Social Security is breaking down." Senator Angus King (I-ME) told them: "What's going on is the destruction of the agency from the inside out, and it's accelerating.... What they're doing now is unconscionable."

In a televised Cabinet meeting on Monday, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said she planned to "eliminate FEMA," the Federal Emergency Management Agency that responds to national emergencies like hurricanes. This news comes on top of Trump's executive order last week calling for the Department of Education to be shuttered, along with cuts of about half of its workforce.

Yesterday, Apoorva Mandavilli, Margot Sanger-Katz, and Jan Hoffman reported in the *New York Times* that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has suddenly cancelled more than \$12 billion in federal grants to states. That money supported mental health services, addiction treatment, and programs to track infectious diseases. Today HHS announced it will be cutting 10,000 employees on top of the 10,000 who have already left and the more than 5,000 probationary workers who were fired last month. These cuts will include 3,500 full-time employees from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and 2,400 employees from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In addition to slashing and burning through government agencies, the administration is trying to undermine the rule of law. Trump has signed executive orders suspending security clearances for law firms that represent Democratic clients and barring the government from hiring employees from those firms.

Trump and his team have challenged the judges who have ruled against Trump, working to destroy faith in the courts. House speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) has suggested that Republicans in Congress could eliminate some federal courts, telling reporters: "We do have the authority over

the federal courts, as you know. We can eliminate an entire district court. We have power of funding over the courts and all these other things.”

Trump’s administration is also working to take over colleges and universities, beginning with a high-profile fight against Columbia University in which the administration withheld \$400 million in grants, allegedly over antisemitism at the school, until the university bent to the administration’s will. Columbia’s leaders did so, only to have the administration say the changes are only “early steps” and that Columbia “must continue to show they are serious in their resolve to end anti-Semitism...through permanent and structural reform. Other universities...should expect the same level of scrutiny and swiftness of action if they don’t act to protect their students and stop anti-Semitic behavior on campus,” a member of the administration said.

Chillingly, on Tuesday federal authorities in plain clothes took Tufts University international student Rumeysa Ozturk into custody on the street in Somerville, Massachusetts, saying she had “engaged in activities in support of Hamas,” apparently a reference to a pro-Palestinian op-ed she had written for the Tufts newspaper. On Wednesday the Department of Homeland Security said she was being held at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement center in Louisiana.

The administration is also working to reshape American culture according to their vision. The project of stripping words like “climate crisis,” “diversity,” “health disparity,” “peanut allergies,” “science-based,” “segregation,” “stereotypes,” and “understudied” from government communications are an explicit attempt to reshape the way Americans think. Today, in an executive order “restoring truth and sanity to American history,” Trump tried to change the ways in which Americans understand our history, too. He called for Vance, who as vice president serves on the Smithsonian Board of Regents, “to work to eliminate improper, divisive, or anti-American ideology from the Smithsonian and its museums, education and research centers, and the National Zoo.”

The problem for those who embrace this vision of America is that it is not popular. Before the election, only 4% of voters liked Project 2025, and it has not gained in popularity as the dramatic cuts to the government have hurt farmers by killing grain purchases for foreign aid, cut funding for cancer research, and thrown people out of work. Because Republican-dominated counties rely more heavily on government programs than Democratic-dominated counties do, cuts to government services are hitting Republican voters particularly hard.

On Tuesday, Democrat James Andrew Malone won a special election for a state senate seat in a Pennsylvania district that Trump won in November with 57% of the vote. Today, Trump was forced to withdraw New York Republican representative Elise Stefanik’s name from consideration for ambassador to the United Nations out of concern that a Democrat might win her vacant seat, although Trump won her district in 2024 by 21 points.

