

Trump Transition Tracker

Updates as of 1PM EST Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Transition Updates

Nominations kept rolling out over Thanksgiving. President-elect Donald Trump made a flurry of picks, including his head of the National Economic Council (NEC) and FBI Director, as well as a few key diplomatic appointments. Loyalty continues to be the theme behind these appointments. For example, Trump's FBI pick Kash Patel, who served in the first administration, promises to "root out corruption" and "deep-state opposition" to Trump's agenda through major staff changes at the Bureau. Opponents are concerned that Patel could use the agency to pursue Trump's political enemies, both in government and in the media. Like DoD nominee Pete Hegseth, DNI nominee Tulsi Gabbard, and HHS nominee Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Patel's confirmation faces an uphill battle in the Senate.

Trudeau and Trump talk tariffs. Following some initial pushback to Trump's proposed 25% tariff on all products from Canada and Mexico, on Friday Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [flew](#) down to Mar-a-Lago and had [dinner](#) with Trump, Secretary of the Interior Nominee North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum (R), Commerce Secretary nominee Howard Lutnick, and future National Security Advisor Mike Waltz (R-FL). Trump called the talks "productive" but signaled no retreat from his tariff pledge. Trump even allegedly suggested to Trudeau that if his tariff would kill Canada's economy, maybe it should "become the 51st state." Other topics discussed included fentanyl, energy, trade, and the Arctic.

DOGE continues to gain traction. Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, the leaders of the newly formed non-governmental advisory commission the "Department of Government Efficiency," will meet Thursday with House and Senate Republicans in separate meetings on Capitol Hill, another sign that the GOP is taking the initiative seriously. The House meeting comes at the behest of Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA), [who posted on X](#) that the discussion will focus on "ideas to achieve regulatory rescission, administrative reductions and cost saving." Musk and Ramaswamy will be at the first meeting of the [newly formed Senate DOGE Caucus](#), which includes hardline conservatives Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) and Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL). A DOGE Caucus also has been [created in the House](#). Assuming the FY 25 appropriation bills are kicked into next year, watch for them to become a vehicle for "cost savings" sooner rather than later since the GOP will re-write these must-pass spending bills once they control Congress and the White House come January.

Trump issues stark warning on Israeli hostages in Gaza: Trump has already inserted himself into U.S. foreign policy, [posting](#) on his social media platform Truth Social that there would be "all hell to pay" if the estimated 100 surviving Israeli and U.S. hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza are not released before his inauguration on January 20. Notably, Trump did not name Hamas in his post, which could suggest that he also intended to pressure the Israeli government to hasten its efforts to reach a deal to release the hostages. Already, Trump has told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he wants the war in Gaza to conclude by his inauguration. Remember, Trump has long cast himself as a peacemaker in the Middle East, often touting his success in brokering the 2018 Abraham Accords.

Cabinet Spotlight: Secretary of State nominee Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL). Rubio will likely be the first member of Trump's cabinet confirmed by the Senate. As the top Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and former presidential candidate, Rubio is a seasoned U.S. foreign policy player. He is well respected by his colleagues and would be the first Latino Secretary of State. Expect Rubio to continue to be an outspoken critic of authoritarian regimes such as China, Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba. Also, watch for him to prioritize Indo-Pacific alliances and work to enhance cooperation with regional allies like Japan, South Korea and Australia. Rubio, an avowed institutionalist, has shown [flexibility](#) in his stance towards Ukraine, softening his position in the past few years to be more in line with the Trump wing of the GOP and voting against aid packages while in the Senate. Human rights in U.S. adversary countries will be a priority for Rubio and will be part

of conversations with foreign leaders, particularly regarding China. That has not always been the case for past Secretaries of State.

Cabinet Spotlight: Secretary of Energy nominee Chris Wright. Wright is a strong supporter of oil and gas development. Like many of Trump's picks, he has regularly appeared on Fox News. Wright, who is the founder of one of North America's largest fracking companies, Liberty Energy, [said](#) "climate change is a global challenge but is far from the world's greatest threat to human life." Oil industry executives have praised his selection; climate activists have been openly critical. Wright will be central to any GOP efforts to repeal parts of the Inflation Reduction Act. Expect him to lead the charge to end the year-long pause on liquefied natural gas export approvals by the Biden administration last January. Also look for Wright to prioritize the rollback of environmental regulations that hinder energy production and economic growth and support technological innovations in the energy sector, including advancements in fracking and nuclear energy. It's worth noting that Wright sits on the boards of modular nuclear reactor company Oklo Inc. and global mining company EMX Royalty Corp. Wright's confirmation hearings will be testy, but he will get through, most likely on a party-line vote.

Trade, Tariffs & Investments

USTR Pick Is a Protégé of Pro-Tariff Trump | Trade Negotiator: Trump's pick for U.S. Trade Representative, Jamieson Greer, is the [protégé](#) of Trump's USTR in his first administration, Robert Lighthizer, who negotiated the Phase I trade deal with China to end the trade war. Then, Greer was Lighthizer's chief of staff. Recently, he has advocated for a "strategic decoupling" from China, which would involve revoking China's PNTR status (immediately raising tariffs substantially for most goods), higher tariffs on goods made in third countries with substantial Chinese components, compensation for American firms harmed by retaliatory tariffs, export controls on new industries such as aircraft and transportation equipment, and outbound investment restrictions on a wide range of sectors. Notably, Greer is supportive of expanding CHIPS Act and IRA funding in some cases. Greer is likely to be confirmed.

Nippon Steel Still in Crosshairs: For the first time since being re-elected, Trump [said](#) he would block Nippon Steel's purchase of U.S. Steel, citing his concern over foreign ownership. He said tax incentives and tariffs would help revive the company's fortunes without foreign ownership. Trump's position marks partial continuity from President Biden, who also said he was inclined to block the deal on national security grounds. During his first term, Trump [touted](#) foreign investment projects from allied nations, though some notable projects ultimately fell through.

Trump Disavows BRICS Currency: In another example of Trump inserting himself in foreign policy before his second term starts, Trump has [said](#) he would impose 100% tariffs on BRICS member states (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates) if the bloc tried to create an alternative reserve currency to the dollar. The move came after Trump threatened to impose tariffs on several major trading partners such as Mexico and Canada. However, several Trump allies have signaled that these threats may represent opening bargaining positions for future trade negotiations rather than declarations of true intent.

Regulation & Deregulation

FCC Chair Nominee Vows to "Smash the Censorship Cartel": Trump's pick to chair the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Brendan Carr, has promised that he would change the way that the commission enforces Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to promote a higher degree of viewpoint diversity on social media platforms. Carr has said that while he favors the protection from liability that Section 230 offers to platforms hosting speech, he disagrees with past judicial interpretations of Section 230 that have protected platforms from liability with respect to content moderation decisions.

Latest Trump Appointments

Ambassador to the UK

Warren Stephens

US Trade Representative

Jamieson Greer

Senior Advisor to the President on Middle Eastern Affairs

Massad Boulos

Head of Drug Enforcement Administration

Chad Chronister

Ambassador to France

Charles Kushner

Head of the National Economic Council

Kevin Hassett

FBI Director

Kash Patel

Special Envoy for the War in Ukraine

Keith Kellogg

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