

ATTENTION DEFICIT AND DEFIANCE DIVISION OF LABOR: THERE'S STUFF HAPPENING WHERE YOU'RE NOT LOOKING

Last week, I wrote a post about the five ways Trump is sabotaging America. Those included:

- The original Project 2025 plan, an Orbanist plot to turn the US into an elected authoritarian government
- DOGE [sic], which is often mistaken for Project 2025, but which is far more reckless and destructive and as such has created far more backlash than Project 2025 might otherwise have
- Trump's useful idiots, like the HHS Secretary who is barely responding to a Measles outbreak
- The personalization of DOJ, protecting not only Trump, but also his favored criminals
- Trump's capitulation to Russia

As I've been puzzling through the, in my opinion, catastrophic distraction of Democratic in-fighting over how to respond to the SOTU, I came to realize one source of the general frustration. A lot of people still don't understand there's a natural division of labor

in who should fight fascists how, one which is similar to those five areas of sabotage. As a result, there's a demand that the national Democratic Party (appear to) take the lead on everything, a demand that invites those complaining to outsource their own agency completely, as if they simply hire people to do their politics for them every two or four years.

The demand that Hakeem Jeffries take the lead on issues that really aren't central to his job breeds passivity and frustration and distracts from stuff being done by others better positioned to do so.

The national Dems are not the best suited for some of this, partly because civil society has more freedom and standing to sue, partly because within the Democratic party, local parties (and future candidates) should take the lead, and partly because polarization is going to be a big barrier to effective mobilization elsewhere. If a Black or Jewish Democrat from New York pushes an issue, those we need to mobilize will be far less likely to respond because their very identities have become defined in opposition to urban America (and all the euphemisms that entails). Moreover, the Democratic Party's job is to shepherd legislation and win elections, and the fight against fascism is both broader than and more urgent than elections 20 months away.

I want to use this post to lay out what I mean by that, and also as a way to catalog some of what has been done, but also some areas where more needs to be done by precisely the kind of people who spent a week screaming at Democrats.

DOGE [sic]

I make a distinction here between combatting DOGE and other policy considerations. That's true because – as has been true from the very start, civil society and Democratic Attorneys General and people who've been fired are better situated to fight DOGE in the courts, because

they can get standing. On the legal front, there has been mixed success, with Special Counsel Hampton Dellinger giving up his termination challenge (but not before helping to save thousands of jobs and creating a precedent that reinforced other legal decisions) after an adverse ruling in the DC Circuit, but with others – most importantly two lawsuits representing USAID providers – surviving the first review from SCOTUS.

Tracking these lawsuits is as overwhelming for people as tracking the actual legal investigations into Trump was, with the result (I suspect) that people don't see them. The good, the bad, and the promising – it's all a blur. Plus, legal challenges are slow.

But we're learning more and more from these lawsuits already, which is having a snowball effect, just a bit of which appears in this post (on this page, I'm tracking lawsuit declarations I find particularly interesting).

The most interesting developments this week may be several different lawsuits challenging DOGE on an Appointments Clause theory, basically that Elon is exercising the kind of authority that would require Senate confirmation.

New Mexico

Does 1-26

Japanese American Citizens

Because DOGE has been so disorganized, DOJ's lawyers are being fed garbage to, in turn, feed courts in good faith. And then, over and over, Trump ends up saying things that debunk what the lawyers have been fed to say. Judges are beginning to get fed up, and are granting plaintiffs more discovery. Anna Bower has been tracking this Calvinball relentlessly.

The other civil society success – perhaps the biggest ones so far – are the calls, town halls, and protests that outside groups like Indivisible and Tesla Takedown have organized.

These have significantly increased the discomfort of Republicans. While, thus far, that has led only to some pathetic meetings where they ask Elon to stop fucking everything up, the recent focus on the VA and Social Security may raise their discomfort further.

One thing that could be better organized, locally, would be to magnify the stories of those affected by DOGE cuts. As I said last week, rather than turning government workers into villains, DOGE had made the importance of government visible. And the people being arbitrarily and cruelly fired are the daughters and sons of communities that have a distorted understanding of government. This story-telling, done by word of mouth and local press, likely is better served if it has no overt tie to the Democratic party, because otherwise polarization may undercut the lessons of the firings. But it is the kind of thing that can be done in letters to the editor in local newspapers.

Journalists continue to track DOGE's bullshit claims of savings (I'm attempting to track such debunkings here). Where we need to get better – and this is something people should do on calls to their members of Congress – is to emphasize the way Republicans have ceded the Federal government to Elon's DOGE boys even though their claims of savings are fraudulent (to say nothing of the kind of past associations, such as ties to sketchy Russian NGOs, that would disqualify them in any half-serious background check). Think about ways to mock Republicans for being so stupid they keep falling for Elon's bullshit claims, even as he confesses he keeps misplacing Ebola prevention and similar things.

Entitlements and Funding Government

DC Democrats have to do several things in the days – and it is just days – ahead. First, they have to optimize the outcome of a continuing resolution, either by withholding votes *and*

making Republicans own a shutdown or by joining in a continuing resolution that limits Trump's ability to ignore Congress' appropriations (or better yet, adds weight to the legal challenges) going forward.

Republicans are attempting to get a year-long continuing resolution on their own. If they do, it'll be a first, but could well be the source of contention going forward.

The other thing Democrats need to do is either save Medicaid (and Social Security) or make Republicans own any cuts too, as well as the tax cuts for people like Elon Musk. This provides the opportunity to sow dissension within the Republican party. Charles Gaba has calculations of how many people rely on Medicaid, by district, which can be useful when calling Members.

House Republicans only managed to pass a budget through a gimmick: by ordering House Energy and Commerce to come up with \$880 billion in cuts, but without mentioning what those cuts will obviously be: Medicaid. But the Congressional Budget Office this week called that out, holding that the only way they can fulfill the terms of that budget is with the cuts they've tried to hide.

The math is impossible. And because it is impossible, Republicans will have a very hard time not taking each other out (or creating useful defections). Meanwhile, they'll be doing that while justifying tax cuts for the richest man in the world.

Thus far, Trump's threats have kept Republicans unified. But that may well break down in days ahead (and if it doesn't, Democrats have to be prepared to make Republicans own the consequences).

DOJ

From the start, I've thought two things might lead the corrupt incompetence at DOJ to blow up

on itself (on top of the aforementioned good faith lawyers being stuck telling fictions to courts). First, unless key lawyers were willing to tell really outrageous lies in court, reality would debunk many of the conspiracy theories that have been fueling right wing fever dreams for years. And second, their own conflicts would begin to blow up in their faces.

This week, Kash Patel had to quietly debunk a conspiracy theory that George Papadopoulos has been spinning for years, that a female Special Agent who was part of an effort to learn of his ties to Russia was a (sexual) honey pot.



FBI Director Kash Patel ✓
@FBI DirectorKash



The American people will get an FBI that is transparent, accountable, and committed to justice. Just like when I exposed grotesque violations and fraud leading the House Intelligence Committee's investigation into Crossfire Hurricane calling out corrupt actors; I will equally defend those attacked falsely, especially as your new FBI Director. A female agent was falsely referenced in the media this week as part of an alleged whistleblower disclosure- she was NOT a honeypot. I have reviewed the matter, again, and she did the limited job assigned to her. These actions were also reviewed by Special Counsel John Durham and he found no evidence of any wrongdoing by her. This agent has dedicated her life to public service, and I will have her back for it. I will always be the first to push for accountability from within, my track record has established that, but we do not establish guilt by association in this FBI. Stay the course and abide by our high standards, and I will always have your back. Deviate in anyway, and you will not be a part of this FBI. She is here to stay.

Kash, now the boss of the Agent, had to defend her for simply doing her job.

More spectacularly, Pam Bondi bolloxed an effort to politicize the Jeffrey Epstein files, in part because she stupidly thought the White House wouldn't worry about such releases, in part because she (unknowingly, apparently) released stuff that was already public, and in part because she created dissension among the propagandist ranks.

When more than a dozen MAGA-aligned activists and social media influencers gathered at the White House last week, they had no idea they were about to be handed binders titled "Epstein Files: Phase 1"— and neither did senior White House officials who organized the event,

according to multiple sources familiar with the event.

Attorney General Pam Bondi and her team did not inform White House officials in advance that she planned to distribute the binders, which contained almost no new information regarding convicted sex offender and financier Jeffrey Epstein – and now the move has ruffled feathers among those closest to President Donald Trump, including his senior White House staff, sources tell ABC News.

The move faced widespread criticism, not only from Democrats but also from some of the president's most loyal supporters.

White House staff moved quickly to try and contain the fallout, privately reaching out to influencers who were critical of Bondi and the move online, according to sources.

Update, March 9: More on the way MAGAts are turning on Bondi.

There are a hundred ways reality – as documented in files to which Kash and Bondi now have unfettered access – conflicts with the conspiracy beliefs of these people. Unless they get better at managing expectations of the mob, we should expect similar embarrassing concessions in days ahead, concessions that piss off the most committed MAGAts *and make them distrust their own*.

More interesting are developments in the corruption of Emil Bove and Ed Martin.

Three entities asked for scrutiny of Bove for the way he coerced lawyers to dismiss the Eric Adams case when serving as Acting Deputy Attorney General (now that Todd Blanche has been confirmed on a party line vote, Bove becomes PADAG, basically the guy running DOJ day to day). A group of ethics experts have asked

Judge Dale Ho to consider Bove's actions as he decides how to resolve that case. Jamie Raskin and Jasmine Crockett wrote Pam Bondi with a series of questions, including whether Bove destroyed evidence (the notes of a January 31 meeting). And Senate Judiciary Dems asked the NY Bar to conduct a misconduct inquiry into Bove. (At least one NGO already filed a bar complaint.)

Then, later in the week, Senate Judiciary Dems filed a bar complaint against Acting DC US Attorney Ed Martin for representing January 6 defendants at the same time as approving the dismissal of their cases. That, too, follows a previous bar complaint (filed in Missouri) for Martin's conflicts. But (in addition to some of Martin's other wildly partisan actions) it adds a bit: that Martin allegedly had private conversations with *pro se* January 6 defendant William Pope, who is still trying to get files he's sure must exist; this is another conspiracy theory that may blow up in wildly interesting ways, now that Martin has access to all these files.

What I noticed the Court in ECF No. 391 was a completely true and factual statement regarding U.S. Attorney Ed Martin's telling me that the files I now have are no longer considered sensitive for me to possess. However, since a dubious representative of the government, AUSA Jennifer Leigh Blackwell, is now claiming the opposite of what I truthfully reported to the Court in ECF No. 391 (while she is signing under Mr. Martin's name), this is essentially a government attack on my integrity. Because AUSA Blackwell has attacked me and because the entirety of her filing (ECF No. 392) is so at odds with President Trump's directive and the current policy of Department of Justice, I suspect she filed her own rogue and unhinged ranting rather than consulting the official position of the government

and her boss, Ed Martin.

This is the kind of complaint that could be written on a near-daily basis about Martin. He recently wrote Georgetown Law imagining he could dictate what a private Catholic university teaches, which elicited a superb response. It's the kind of thing that lefty pundits should be focused on instead of screaming at each other. It is far more urgent to make Ed Martin's shenanigans an anvil around Pam Bondi's DOJ than it is to fight about the stupidest way to distract from Trump imploding.

Plus, that's not the only trouble Martin has caused.

In the early days of Trump's attack on DEI, Trump's flunkies adopted two claims from Elon: That the Biden Administration had misstepped when it appropriated \$20 billion in funds to green lenders. And that New York City had spent \$80 million on luxury hotels to house migrants.

I've already written about the former case: how Bove and Martin forced Denise Cheung out at DC USAO because she found a Project Veritas video insufficient evidence to obtain criminal process clawing back funds. Martin kept trying, in the kind of judge shopping that can really piss off judges. Meanwhile, Mark Zaid, who represents the guy in the PV video, says that his client had nothing to do with the disbursements that EPA has attempted to clawed back. Lee Zeldin is trying to get EPA's Acting Inspector General to find him an excuse for all this now, which seems rather late given that funds have already been frozen. (Senate Dems also sent Zeldin a letter debunking his claims last month.)

Meanwhile, even as Judge Jennifer Rearden this week denied New York City's bid to get the \$80 million back while the two sides fight about it [docket], one of the people Kristi Noem fired and accused of acting unlawfully, Mary Comans, has sued.

That same day Defendant DHS publicly issued a press release falsely stating that Ms. Comans had been fired “for circumventing leadership to unilaterally make egregious payments for luxury NYC hotels for migrants.” The release also noted that “[u]nder President Trump and Secretary Noem’s leadership, DHS will not sit idly and allow deep state activists to undermine the will and safety of the American people.” Because of the issuance of the press release and other steps undertaken by the Defendants, Ms. Comans’ actions were widely, publicly and falsely condemned as “illegal” and “criminal” by rightwing influencers, to include Elon Musk, on various social media platforms and news outlets, such as shown below:



In a declaration Comans submitted on February 26 in the Does 1-26 suit, Mary Comans debunked much of what DHS has publicly claimed about the clawback, which means Comans’ lawsuit is likely to surface these issues. I had noticed this myself, but in between her healthy obsession about the lies the Administration tells about Elon’s role on DOGE, Anna Bower wrote it up here. Comans is also represented by Mark Zaid; you can support his work helping fired government workers tell the truth about what happened here.

Yesterday, Marisa Kabas reported that the top lawyer at FEMA was forced out, possibly because he refused to sign a declaration retconning this

clawback.

Joshua Stanton had served as Acting Chief Counsel at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for less than one week when he was placed on administrative leave Wednesday and reportedly escorted out of the building. Why?

According to people at FEMA privy to the details of Stanton's dismissal—which was first reported by me via Bluesky Wednesday afternoon—Stanton was asked sometime this week to write a memo stating that the mid-February seizure of \$80 million from the city of New York meant for migrant shelters had legal justification; this was despite the fact that it almost certainly did not. The money that was taken back was lawfully obligated by FEMA pursuant to congressionally allocated funds. Stanton reportedly refused to write such a memo, The Handbasket has learned, and then he was put on leave. It's not clear at this point if the refusal to write the memo is the reason he was placed on leave.

In other words, between the public ousters and the problematic legal claims, Trump's flunkies may soon find themselves unable to defend past false claims they made in ways that could blow up in spectacular fashion (as I've suggested, the same is true for Pete Marocco, who just got enjoined in an awesome new lawsuit, but I'll come back to that).

Corruption

There's one area that has always been difficult to grab a hold of: Trump's corruption. There has always been so much that it's hard to focus on any one bit. That's been even more true now that Pam Bondi has made it clear she'll never

prosecute Trump for bribery. And it has been matched by Elon.

I'm going to catalog just some of the coverage from recent weeks.

First, Wired reported that in addition to all the known kickbacks Trump got before he became President (from tech executives and media outlets), he continues to engage in pay-to-play with a price tag of \$5 million for a face-to-face meeting.

Business leaders can secure a one-on-one meeting with the president at Mar-a-Lago for \$5 million, according to sources with direct knowledge of the meetings. At a so-called candlelight dinner held as recently as this past Saturday, prospective Mar-a-Lago guests were asked to spend \$1 million to reserve a seat, according to an invitation obtained by WIRED.

[snip]

It's unclear where the money is going and what it will be used for, but one source with direct knowledge of the dinners said "it's all going to the library," as in the presidential library that will ostensibly be built once Trump leaves office. MAGA Inc spent over \$450 million to elect Trump in 2024, though Trump is not legally permitted to run for a third presidential term in 2028.

Also this week, Public Citizen started tracking what it calls "corporate clemency" – all the corporations whose legal troubles have been dismissed in bulk or specifically.

Now, just over one month into Trump's second term, it's clear that the permissive approach to corporate crime and misconduct is returning with a vengeance.

Whole categories of enforcement have

come to a screeching halt, including:

- *All Consumer Financial Protection Bureau cases, seven of which the Trump administration has already moved to dismiss,*
- *Justice Department cases brought by the Civil Rights and Environment and Natural Resource divisions, Investigations and cases under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and*
- *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission cases defending transgender and gender non-conforming workers from workplace abuse and discrimination, six of which the administration has already moved to dismiss, and*
- *An increasing number of Securities and Exchange Commission cases against cryptocurrency corporations, two of which have been paused and four of which the administration has*

moved to dismiss.

Meanwhile Forbes' Zach Everson has been pulling at some strings on a Nasdaq-listed firm with suspect trading just before Don Jr and Eric Trump were named as advisors. He first laid out the trading pattern.

Between Feb. 12 and Dec. 29, 2024, trading in Dominari Holdings—a Nasdaq-listed firm that specializes in wealth management, investment banking, sales and trading, asset management and capital investment—averaged 11,500 shares a day, never exceeding 71,000 shares, with a price range of \$1.10 to \$3.20.

On Dec. 30, trading shot up to 358,000 shares, kicking off a surge that saw daily volume average 1.2 million shares a day through Feb. 10, 2025—when it skyrocketed to 23.7 million shares—as the stock price climbed from \$0.83 to \$6.50.

On Feb. 11, an hour before markets opened, Dominari Holdings announced that Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump had joined its advisory board and acquired an undisclosed amount of shares in the company, sending the stock to a 52-week high of \$11.33.

The price peaked at \$13.58 two days later but has since fallen, closing at \$6.74 on Tuesday.

Then Everson showed how little evidence there is that the board existed before Trump's sons joined it.

[B]etween June 10, 2021, when the company was named AIkido Pharma, and Feb. 12, 2025, the day after the Trumps' involvement was announced, Dominari Holdings did not submit a filing to the

SEC on that mentioned an advisory board or board of advisors, except for references in the chief operating officer's bio stating he had been a member for three months in 2022.

An online search failed to provide evidence of the advisory board's prior existence: it is not mentioned on any website—including Dominari Holdings' own—prior to Feb. 11, in a search on Google.

Dominari Holdings also did not file its advisory board agreement with the SEC until Feb. 12, a day after announcing the Trumps' membership.

This feels not dissimilar to some of the shenanigans relating to the funding of Truth Social (while several of his associates were criminally prosecuted, one is attempting to get an SEC action against him thrown out) or Trump's Meme Coin, below.

Then, even as Trump has rolled out a crypto strategic reserve (one that many crypto experts hate and one that failed to rally the market), there have been several developments that show how he intends to permit corruption (his own, and others') via cryptocurrency.

As I keep noting, the SEC, for example, has paused its suit against World Liberty Financial investor Justin Sun, anticipating a settlement. As Judd Legum describes, this follows the Chinese-linked businessman's multi-million "investment" in Trump's crypto currency.

In March 2023, the SEC charged Sun and three of his companies, accusing him of marketing unregistered securities and "fraudulently manipulating the secondary market" for a crypto token. The SEC accused Sun of wash trading, which involves buying and selling a token quickly to fraudulently manufacture artificial interest.

[snip]

Sun's purchase put millions in Trump's pocket. WLF was entitled to "\$30 million of initial net protocol revenue" in a reserve "to cover operating expenses, indemnities, and obligations." After the reserve was met, a company owned by Trump would receive "75% of the net protocol revenues." Sun's purchase covered the entire reserve. As of December 1, this amounted to \$18 million for Trump – 75% of the revenues of all other tokens sold at the time. Sun also joined WLF as an advisor. While the purchase benefited Trump, WLF tokens are essentially worthless for Sun, as they are non-transferable and locked indefinitely.

Nevertheless, Sun has since invested another \$45 million in WLF, bringing his total investment to \$75 million. This means Sun's purchases have sent more than \$50 million to Trump, Bloomberg reported. Sun has also continued to shower Trump with praise. On January 22, Sun posted on X, "if I have made any money in cryptocurrency, all credit goes to President Trump."

And, as Chris Murphy laid out, he used his Doge Coin to bilk his rubes, again.

Both of these are ways for foreigners to launder cash to Trump. Now that the bribery is happening in plain sight, we need to hammer home the implications of that: If you can't explain why Trump betrayed America and all her alliances, you cannot rule out old-fashioned bribery, not least given the impossibly lucrative deals Russia first dangled to get Trump's interest.

And then there's Musk, who happens to be included in Kirill Dmitriev's current dangles before Trump.

Dmitriev has called for the Trump administration and Russia to start “building a better future for humanity,” and to “focus on investment, economic growth, AI breakthroughs,” and long-term joint scientific projects like “Mars exploration,” even posting a highly produced computer graphic, on Elon Musk’s X social media platform, showing an imagined joint US-Russia-Saudi mission to Mars, on board what appears to be a Space X rocket.

With Musk, it’s a two-edged sword. There are the legal investigations that stand to be dismissed, as two of the items on Public Citizen’s tracker have been.

And Elon Musk, the CEO of Neuralink, SpaceX, Tesla, X (formerly Twitter), and xAI, which started the Trump administration collectively facing 17 federal investigations.

- *Neuralink faces a USDA investigation into alleged misconduct related to the treatment of test monkeys and an SEC investigation alleging unspecified misconduct.*
- *SpaceX has been in the process of negotiating a resolution with the EPA over repeated pollution discharges in Texas, an FAA lawsuit alleging multiple safety violations involving rocket launches in Florida,*

and an NLRB complaint alleging the company illegally fired workers who criticized Musk. The Trump administration dismissed a DOJ civil rights lawsuit against SpaceX alleging discrimination against asylees and refugees in hiring.

- Tesla faces a criminal fraud investigation by the DOJ over exaggerated claims about the “full self-driving” capability of vehicles’ “Autopilot” mode, a related SEC investigation into whether exaggerated claims about “full self-driving” vehicles misled investors, a joint investigation by the DOJ and SEC into Tesla’s plans to construct a private residence for Musk, an EEOC investigation into alleged racial discrimination and workplace retaliation at a Tesla factory in California, four NHTSA investigations into

vehicle problems, and seven open NLRB cases alleging unfair labor practices and covering up to 140,474 employees. **An OSHA investigation into a worker's death at a Tesla factory in Texas was closed in January, though no announcement as to whether a citation was issued has been disclosed.**

- X (formerly Twitter) faces an SEC lawsuit against Musk alleging misconduct related to the CEO's \$44 billion takeover of the company and an NLRB case alleging unfair labor practices.
- xAI faces an EPA investigation into air pollution concerns related to its "Colossus" supercomputer in Memphis, Tennessee. [my emphasis]

Musk's conflicts are something that NYT has also tracked well.

Congressman Greg Casar has been pushing to get details of the death of the Tesla worker, Victor Joe Gomez Sr., released, with a fair amount of

coverage in the Texas press.

But even as Casar is having to fight for details that should be readily available, and even as Musk's private businesses continue to experience spectacular failures, even as Elon cuts off Ukraine, Trump's government is sneaking deals to Starlink on the side, both in the form of FAA funds and rural broadband.

The degree to which Trump is selling out government, a story fundamental to the story of DOGE, is being covered, though (with the exception of Musk's conflicts) often by less mainstream outlets: Wired and Forbes and Bloomberg and Judd Legum and American Prospect (NPR got the exclusive on the Public Citizen report).

This is undoubtedly an area where Gerald Connolly needs to pick up the slack from where Jamie Raskin left off with his move to House Judiciary. Or perhaps Casar, newly elected Progressive Caucus Chair and a Member of DOGE on Oversight, can take the lead.

But this is an area where a story in plain sight needs to be tied back to the destruction of government by the same corrupt people.

Trump is destroying government. But he is getting paid handsomely at the same time. At one level or another, Trump is destroying America because he is getting paid to do so. The better we can convey that, the greater likelihood that some of the rubes who got ripped off on the Doge Coin will come to understand they've been betrayed.

Russia

Any pushback on Trump's capitulation to Russia has been distracted by everything else, starting with Trump's equivocating trade war with our closest trading partners.

Though ironically, the line from Elissa Slotkin,

hailing Ronald Reagan, to which many objected was a longer play on Trump's attempt to compare himself with Reagan, a comment on Trump's capitulation.

President Trump loves to promise "peace through strength." That's actually a line he stole from Ronald Reagan. But let me tell you, after the spectacle that just took place in the Oval Office last week, Reagan must be rolling over in his grave. We all want an end to the war in Ukraine, but Reagan understood that true strength required America to combine our military and economic might with moral clarity.

And that scene in the Oval Office wasn't just a bad episode of reality TV. It summed up Trump's whole approach to the world. He believes in cozying up to dictators like Vladimir Putin and kicking our friends, like Canada, in the teeth. He sees American leadership as merely a series of real estate transactions.

As a Cold War kid, I'm thankful it was Reagan and not Trump in office in the 1980s. Trump would have lost us the Cold War.

But while Americans are distracted by Trump's erratic trade wargaming and the Democrats' own infighting, the rest of the world is stepping up, most famously in this speech from center-right French politician Claude Malhuret.

There is dissension in Europe: While Giorgia Meloni is joining other European countries, she refuses to be led by France.

I've heard of non-public discussions among American national security types and members of Congress. And even Lindsey Graham, who shamelessly betrayed Volodymyr Zelenskyy after the ambush in the Oval Office, is pushing for

Trump to demand something from Russia, too.



Lindsey Graham
@LindseyGrahamSC



It is time to end the war between Russia and Ukraine justly and honorably, as President Trump is trying to do.

Pushing the Ukrainians toward peace and trying to secure a critical minerals agreement with them makes perfect sense to me. Talking to Russia about how to end the conflict makes perfect sense to me.

Ukraine has made major announcements in the last 48 hours about ceasefires, the minerals deal, and their willingness to engage in peace talks.

Putin has been defiant and resistant publicly to President Trump's overtures. If Putin refuses to seriously come to the peace table, I hope and expect that President Trump would unleash more economic sanctions on Russia's banking and energy sectors, and if necessary, apply massive tariffs. The impact on Russia's already weak economy will force them to the table.

Thus far, the response to Trump's capitulation to Russia has been muted. But it is also a topic that unites strange bedfellows, which showed up in the town halls last week.

Trump and his Russian handlers believed this would be easy. Thus far, it doesn't look it'll work out that way.

Attention

This post links almost 100 links (thanks, in part, to the linking ethics of Public Citizen and Everson). That's a testament to the flood of information out there, much of it promising, about efforts to fight back against fascism. That flood is a response to Trump's own flood. The two together have the means to overwhelm.

I won't defend everything Jeffries said (or was portrayed as saying, by outlets whose bread and butter lies in stoking dissension among Democrats) this week. But much of what he said and did appear to be guided by a view on attention that is, in my opinion, quite right: Trump always camouflages what he does, including some fundamental weaknesses, with a flood the zone strategy.

Congressman Jeffries said Trump's many

actions to date, including mass firings of federal workers, freezing federal funds approved by Congress, and steps to eliminate critical agencies, are part of a larger strategy to “flood the zone” and distract from actions that Jeffries and other Democrats consistently say will devastate millions of Americans.

“[It’s] designed to create the appearance of inevitability [and] the notion that Donald Trump is unstoppable—he ain’t unstoppable,” said Jeffries, who noted, “Not a single bill connected to Trump’s Project 2025 agenda has passed the House because it’s unified Democratic opposition.” He continued, “But we’re supposed to believe it’s all inevitable...He’s invincible...Show me the evidence.”

This is a war for attention. Trump’s success at that war is the primary reason he won the election – and he was helped then, as now, by the fact that the primary counter-flood Democrats cared to mount was to attack each other.

Similarly, no matter what you think about Slotkin’s response (which was in any case not beset by weaknesses of presentation virtually all of these are) she also said something important. Rather than doom scroll on Bluesky, pick an issue, and start building from the bottom up.

Three, organize. Pick just one issue you’re passionate about – and engage. And doom scrolling doesn’t count. Join a group that cares about your issue, and act. And if you can’t find one, start one.

Some of the most important movements in our history have come from the bottom up.

You don't have to, nor should you, wait for DC to lead the movement you want. Pick a corner of it and take action.

Leadership

I end with this: We're seeing that happen around the country, as evidenced by three stories from recent days.

There's the testimony of Meirav Solomon's in yesterday's sanctuary city hearing. Solomon challenged the notion that you shut down antisemitism by policing campuses. Indeed, she focused instead on Trump's cuts to Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. She pointed to the antisemitism of, "the President's close advisors [who] raise their arms in fascist salutes."

We must be honest about the most urgent threat to the Jewish community. It is not student protestors but the bloody legacy of Pittsburgh and Poway, Charlottesville and the Capitol Riot.

There's how a community responded when the school board of a predominantly white community north of Pittsburgh voted against a young adult book about the Tulsa riots, *Angel of Greenwood*. The community came together to bring its author, Randi Pink, to town to speak to both students and the community more generally.

After the school board voted against adding Pink's book to the Pine-Richland School District's ninth-grade curriculum, the community decided it was time to act.

Macmillan, the publisher of "*Angel of Greenwood*," sent Pine-Richland students 100 copies of the book to distribute to the community. Pink also traveled from her small town outside of Birmingham, Alabama, to come to Richland

to meet with the community that had so fiercely supported her work.

“The supporters in the community were relentless in making sure I got there. Some people put in \$5, \$10, even \$600. I waived my fee, but the community said, ‘Absolutely not. We’re going to pay you.’ I’m a single mother, so I had to bring my babies with me,” she said. “They said, ‘we’re going to pay for all your way.’

“They galvanized around me. I support them very much for that.”

[snip]

Students and parents raised nearly \$6,000 for Pink to come to Pennsylvania, where the author held **two talks** – one for students of the school district to ask questions and the other was open to all community members.


[snip]

“If more of us are brave enough to step into communities and say, ‘You know what? Let’s just talk. I think we will get a whole lot further like that in all aspects of society.”

There’s Zooey Zephyr, the Montana legislator whose speech in support of drag shows turned the tide against anti-trans votes, as told by Erin Reed.

Something remarkable happened in Montana today. As has become routine, anti-trans bills were up for debate—the state has spent more than half of its legislative days this session pushing such bills through committees and the House floor, with Republicans largely voting in lockstep. But something changed.

A week ago, transgender Representative



Zooey Zephyr delivered a powerful speech against a bill that would create a separate indecent exposure law for transgender people. Since then, momentum on the House floor slowed. Today, two of the most extreme bills targeting the transgender community came up for a vote. Transgender Representatives Zooey Zephyr and SJ Howell gave impassioned speeches—this time, they broke through. In a stunning turn, 29 Republicans defected, killing both bills. One Republican even took the floor to deliver a scathing rebuke of the bill's sponsor.

You reclaim America not in DC, but in talks on campuses, in Montana, and Pittsburgh.

That is happening. You just need to know where to look.