

# **The Dismantlement of American Institutional Resistance**

A U.S. Sovereignty Threat Assessment

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## Introduction

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This report documents a pattern of actions taken by the Trump administration between January 2025 and April 2026 that, taken together, constitute a direct and ongoing threat to American sovereignty—the principle that governmental authority derives from and remains accountable to the people, and that no individual or faction may seize permanent control of the state.

The United States is currently engaged in an active war with Iran, is experiencing accelerating economic contraction driven by self-inflicted trade policy, and has seen the following occur in rapid succession: the FBI and DOJ placed under loyalist leadership with no tradition of institutional independence; the Joint Chiefs of Staff gutted and replaced—during wartime—with officers chosen for personal loyalty rather than military judgment; the federal election security apparatus defunded before the 2026 midterms; the National Archives decapitated and stripped of the capacity to preserve presidential records; civilian access to weapons and weapon modifications dramatically expanded; and the participants of the January 6th insurrection pardoned, eliminating deterrence against a repeat attempt.

Each of these actions has an individually plausible explanation. Together, and mapped against a timeline ending at the January 2028 presidential transfer of power, they describe the deliberate removal of every institutional check that stands between the current administration and the permanent, unaccountable control of the United States government—the definition of a sovereignty threat.

This report assembles that pattern for readers unfamiliar with it. All factual claims are cited to primary news sources. The interpretive conclusions are the author's own.

## The Economic Context: Setting the Conditions

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### Trade War and Global Realignment

Before the Iran war, the US economy was already under significant self-inflicted stress. The Trump administration's aggressive tariff policy, rather than producing leverage, has accelerated a global realignment *away* from US economic dependency.

The EU-Mercosur trade deal—25 years in negotiation, finally signed in 2024—is a direct product of this realignment. The deal creates preferential trade terms between the European Union and South America's Mercosur bloc (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay), bypassing the United States in markets where American agricultural and industrial exporters directly compete. US soy, beef, ethanol, and manufactured goods all face structural disadvantage in EU markets as a result.

The broader signal is unmistakable: major trade blocs are building *around* the United States rather than *through* it. Trade infrastructure built around alternatives does not simply reverse when political winds shift—the economic damage is structural and lasting.

### **The Tech Industry Collapse Behind the AI Narrative**

America’s information systems industry—a genuine strategic asset and source of global competitive advantage—has entered sharp decline. Rather than acknowledge recessionary contraction, major technology companies have pursued mass layoffs while marketing these cuts as “AI investment” to prevent shareholder flight.

The deception operates on several levels simultaneously: it reframes defensive balance-sheet cuts as offensive transformation; it provides a growth narrative that forestalls investor withdrawal during market instability; and it obscures that AI productivity gains, while real, are nowhere near sufficient to replace the headcount being eliminated at a 1:1 ratio.

The human capital consequence is severe and non-reversible on short timescales. Meanwhile, competitor nations are not adopting equivalent “replace engineers with AI” narratives—they are building headcount. The gap this creates has direct national security implications given the dependence of critical infrastructure on software talent.

### **The Israel Lobby and the Corruption of US Strategic Interests**

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American foreign policy in the Middle East has for decades diverged from demonstrable US strategic and economic interests. The Iran war, the Hormuz crisis, the erosion of Arab partnerships, the diplomatic isolation of the United States on the world stage—these are not accidents of history. They are in significant part the product of a sustained, well-funded, and largely unregistered foreign influence operation that has shaped congressional behavior to serve Israeli strategic priorities at direct cost to American ones.

#### **AIPAC: Scale of Congressional Capture**

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee and its affiliated super PAC, the United Democracy Project (UDP), spent \$126.9 million on the 2023–2024 federal election cycle alone—more than double its 2022 spending, and the largest single-cycle outlay in the organization’s history [42, 43].

Of the 535 members of Congress, AIPAC supported 361 candidates across 389 congressional races—68% of all congressional seats—with more than \$53 million in direct candidate support and \$45.2 million going specifically to members of the incoming 119th Congress [42, 44]. This is not lobbying. This is the systematic acquisition of a legislative majority.

The mechanism is enforcement as much as support. AIPAC does not merely fund allies—it actively targets and defeats members of Congress who diverge from Israeli policy preferences:

- **Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY):** AIPAC spent \$14.5 million against Bowman in a single House primary—the most expensive House primary in American history—after he voted against military aid to Israel. Bowman lost by 17 points [45, 46].
- **Rep. Cori Bush (D-MO):** AIPAC’s UDP spent approximately \$9 million in negative advertising to defeat Bush, a vocal critic of Israeli military operations in Gaza. Bush was unseated in her primary [47, 48].

The signal sent to every other member of Congress is precise: dissent from Israeli policy preferences is an electoral death sentence, regardless of how that dissent aligns with American strategic or economic interests.

### **The FARA Exemption: An Inexplicable Legal Fiction**

AIPAC operates in open, functional violation of the spirit—and arguably the letter—of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. FARA requires any entity acting “at the order, request, or under the direction or control” of a foreign government to influence US policy or public opinion to register as a foreign agent. AIPAC’s entire organizational purpose is to influence US policy in alignment with Israeli government preferences. Yet it has never registered.

The legal fiction sustaining this exemption is that AIPAC receives its funding from American donors rather than directly from the Israeli government. By this reasoning, any foreign government can achieve unregistered influence over the US Congress provided it operates through a domestic intermediary funded by sympathetic American citizens—a loophole large enough to drive a foreign policy through.

This is not a theoretical reading. It is a documented practice:

- AIPAC’s predecessor organization, the American Zionist Council, was ordered to register under FARA in 1962 after the Department of Justice found it was funneling millions of dollars from Israel’s Jewish Agency to lobby Congress. The DOJ later *withdrew* its registration demand under political pressure—establishing the precedent of selective non-enforcement that AIPAC has relied on ever since [49, 50]
- Leaked documents from Israel’s Ministry of Justice revealed that in 2018 the ministry was actively concerned that FARA compliance would “damage the reputation of Israeli-directed American groups” and that political donors would be reluctant to fund organizations registered under the law [51]. The Israeli government was, in other words, strategically managing its avoidance of US transparency law
- Legal experts at Public Citizen have stated that the FARA exemptions invoked by

pro-Israel groups “are overridden if a person or group seeks to influence American public policy and public opinion at the suggestion or behest of the foreign government”—a description that applies precisely to STOIC, the Israeli Ministry-funded influence operation targeting US Congress members [52]

No comparable foreign influence operation of this scale operates without FARA registration. Chinese, Russian, Saudi, and Qatari lobbying entities are required to register and disclose. The Israeli lobby’s exemption is not a principled legal distinction. It is a political one, sustained by the same congressional majority that the lobby’s funding helped elect.

### **Hasbara: Government-Funded Information Operations on US Soil**

Beyond AIPAC’s domestic political spending, the Israeli government funds a parallel influence architecture targeting American media, public opinion, and congressional staff directly—also without FARA registration.

- The Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs paid the firm STOIC \$2 million to run a covert online campaign specifically targeting Democratic members of Congress to maintain support for Israeli military operations in Gaza [52, 53]
- By 2025, Israel allocated \$150 million—twenty times its pre-Gaza war budget—to global perception management operations, a significant portion targeting the United States [54]
- A leaked email trove documented a shadow lobbying effort shaping American media coverage on behalf of the Israeli government, with none of the identified groups registered under FARA as legally required [55, 56]
- Historical Hasbara methods documented since at least 2001 include paid congressional trips to Israel, targeted campaign contributions, and seminars designed to shape the political priors of future congressional staff and candidates [57]

### **Epstein, Maxwell, and the Kompromat Architecture**

No analysis of Israeli intelligence influence on American political behavior is complete without examining the Epstein network—not as tabloid history, but as a documented intelligence operation with direct implications for the current administration.

**Robert Maxwell.** Ghislaine Maxwell’s father, British media tycoon Robert Maxwell, was buried on Jerusalem’s Mount of Olives in 1991. His funeral was attended by six serving and former heads of Israeli intelligence and then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who eulogized him as having “done more for Israel than can today be told.” He was posthumously documented in the book *Robert Maxwell, Israel’s Superspy* as a high-ranking Mossad asset

who had helped distribute Israeli-backdoored PROMIS spyware to foreign governments in the 1980s [29, 30]. These are not fringe allegations—the Israeli state’s attendance at his funeral and the Israeli PM’s eulogy constitute near-official acknowledgment.

**Jeffrey Epstein.** An FBI field office memo produced in October 2020 reported that a bureau source believed Epstein “was a co-opted Mossad agent” who had been “trained as a spy.” Former senior Israeli military intelligence executive Ari Ben-Menashe stated under oath that he had met Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell together in Robert Maxwell’s office in the 1980s, and that both were already working with Israeli intelligence at that time. Epstein maintained a close relationship with former Israeli Prime Minister and military intelligence commander Ehud Barak throughout the period of his alleged operations [31, 32, 33].

The released Epstein files—over three million pages disclosed by the DOJ in early 2026 following bipartisan congressional action—document a network whose structural characteristics are consistent with a kompromat operation: meticulous record-keeping, video surveillance infrastructure, powerful guests, a private island, and a pattern of cultivating individuals whose future political influence could be leveraged [34, 35].

**Trump’s proximity.** The documented record is extensive. Trump stated in 2002: “I’ve known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy. He’s a lot of fun to be with.” Trump’s name appears seven times in Epstein’s flight logs. Trump, Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell, and Melania Knauss posed together at Mar-a-Lago in 2000. Their social relationship spanned the late 1980s through the early 2000s [36, 37, 38].

### **The Pattern: Sexual Allegations as Political Instrument**

A recurring and documented pattern consistent with Israeli intelligence operations is the deployment of sexual misconduct allegations against political figures who pose a threat to Israeli interests—a practice consistent with classical kompromat tradecraft.

The most precisely documented recent example is the case of ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan. Khan was the driving force behind the ICC’s application for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gallant for war crimes. According to documented reporting, Khan was informed of sexual misconduct allegations against him *two and a half weeks before* he announced the arrest warrants. Israel subsequently filed motions to remove Khan from the Israel-related cases on the basis of the allegations. Khan took voluntary leave. He was later cleared by an independent judicial panel in March 2026, which found no evidence of misconduct [39, 40, 41].

The sequence is precise: credible threat to Israeli leadership → sexual allegations emerge against the threat → target is sidelined → target is later cleared, by which point the immediate threat has passed. Whether or not Israeli intelligence was the origin of the allegations in the

Khan case, the operational outcome was identical to what such an operation would have been designed to achieve.

### **Trump, Kompromat, and the Strategic Alignment of Interests**

The convergence of these threads produces an analytical framework that explains otherwise puzzling aspects of Trump's relationship with Israel—specifically, why an administration ostensibly pursuing American nationalist interests has so consistently subordinated those interests to Israeli strategic preferences, including prosecuting a war whose primary economic victim is the American consumer.

A president with documented proximity to a likely Mossad kompromat operation has structural incentives to maintain Israeli goodwill that operate independently of any explicit agreement. His administration has also pardoned Epstein-adjacent figures and appointed officials who have worked to limit Epstein-related disclosures. The alignment of behaviors is consistent with an implicit understanding rather than coincidence.

This pattern has a precedent in Trump's own political history. During his first term, Trump was persistently targeted by what he believed to be Russian intelligence operations. The subsequent investigation established that the primary source was the Clinton campaign's Steele dossier operation—a domestic political weaponization of foreign intelligence tradecraft. Trump's response to that experience was not to develop skepticism of foreign intelligence influence on American politics. It was to identify preferred foreign intelligence relationships. The Russian oligarch alignment of his first term has been substantially replaced, in his second term, by a pattern of behaviors more consistent with Israeli intelligence alignment.

**The sovereignty implication of this alignment is the most serious aspect of this entire analysis.** An actor intending to compromise American sovereignty and execute a seizure of power faces a specific structural problem: the institutional resistance described throughout this report—military, intelligence, judicial, archival—represents a formidable obstacle even in degraded form. The only external entity with the established domestic infrastructure, the congressional reach, the intelligence tradecraft, the media influence, and the demonstrated willingness to operate outside American legal frameworks that could make such a seizure viable is the Israeli foreign lobby and intelligence apparatus described in this section.

This is not to assert that Israeli intelligence is directing or planning an American coup. It is to observe that if an American actor were deliberately soliciting a foreign intelligence alignment to facilitate the dismantlement of American sovereignty, the Israeli apparatus—with its unregistered congressional funding network, its domestic media influence operations, its documented kompromat capabilities, and its exemption from the transparency laws that govern every other foreign actor—is the only entity in a structural position to provide that

support. The observed behaviors of the current administration are consistent with exactly that solicitation.

### **Suppressing Domestic Dissent: Anti-BDS Laws, the Antisemitism Awareness Act, and ICC Sanctions**

The influence apparatus does not only operate through congressional funding and covert information operations. It has produced legislation that directly suppresses the speech and legal rights of American citizens who dissent from Israeli policy, while simultaneously deploying American state power to shield Israeli officials from international criminal accountability.

**Anti-BDS legislation.** As of 2025, 38 US states have passed laws or executive orders penalizing participation in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement—a nonviolent form of political and economic protest [1]. These laws require state contractors to certify they are not boycotting Israel as a condition of doing business with the state. The ACLU and civil liberties organizations across the ideological spectrum have challenged them as unconstitutional compelled speech. No comparable legislation restricts boycotts of any other nation on Earth. At the federal level, the House passed a bill in September 2025 further expanding criminal penalties for BDS participation [2].

**The Antisemitism Awareness Act.** Passed by the House in May 2024 by a vote of 320–91, this act mandates federal use of the IHRA definition of antisemitism—a definition that explicitly classifies criticism of Israeli government policy as a potential form of antisemitism—in Title VI civil rights enforcement [3, 4]. Universities and institutions receiving federal funding face potential defunding if students or faculty engage in speech critical of Israeli military operations. Remarkably, the original author of the IHRA definition opposed its codification into law on precisely these grounds. The bill unites opposition from across the ideological spectrum but passed regardless—a product of the same congressional funding dynamics documented above.

**Sanctions on ICC judges and prosecutors.** The Trump administration’s response to the ICC arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant has been to sanction the international judges and prosecutors involved. Executive Order 14203, signed February 6, 2025, imposed visa restrictions and financial penalties on ICC personnel investigating US allies. Sanctions have been imposed in successive rounds through December 2025, targeting judges specifically “for being directly engaged in efforts by the ICC to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute Israeli nationals” [6, 7, 8, 9].

The practical effect extends beyond travel restrictions. ICC judges and prosecutors have been cut off by banks, credit card companies, and technology platforms as a result of their sanctioned status—making routine financial transactions impossible. The United States is using its financial infrastructure as a weapon against the international judicial personnel

charged with enforcing war crimes law. No comparable sanctions have ever been imposed on ICC personnel investigating any other nation.

### **The International Consensus the US Stands Alone Against**

While the Iran war dominates American headlines and the Hormuz crisis consumes the domestic political conversation, a parallel catastrophe is unfolding in Lebanon and Syria—one being systematically obscured by the Iran story’s higher sensation profile. The international community’s response to Israeli actions across all these theaters has reached a historically unprecedented degree of consensus. The United States stands effectively alone in blocking accountability at every level.

**Gaza.** The International Court of Justice issued provisional measures in January 2024 ordering Israel to prevent acts falling within the scope of the Genocide Convention and ensure humanitarian access. Israel was subsequently found by Amnesty International and multiple UN bodies to be in defiance of those orders. South Africa’s genocide case, joined by Brazil in 2025, remains active [10, 11, 12].

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants on November 21, 2024 for **Benjamin Netanyahu**—Israel’s Prime Minister, who stated publicly in 2025 that he was on a “historic and spiritual mission” to realize the vision of Greater Israel encompassing Palestinian territories and potentially parts of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon—and **Yoav Gallant**, Israel’s former Minister of Defense who oversaw the operational conduct of those campaigns. The charges include the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare and crimes against humanity. All 125 ICC member states are legally obligated to arrest both men on entry to their territory [13, 14, 15, 16].

**US Security Council vetoes.** The United States has vetoed at least seven UN Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza between 2023 and September 2025 [17, 18]. In the General Assembly, the isolation of the American position is total:

- Palestine membership upgrade: **143 in favour, 9 against**—the US voted with Israel and seven Pacific microstates
- Peaceful settlement of Palestine: **157 in favour, 8 against**
- Two-state solution declaration (2025): **142 in favour, 10 against**
- Palestinian virtual participation: **145 in favour, 5 against**— the US voted with Israel, Nauru, Palau, and Paraguay [19, 20]

In the words of one UN representative: “today’s vote shows how the United States is isolated in its unconditional support of the Israeli regime.”

**Lebanon.** Since March 2, 2026, Israel’s campaign has killed more than 2,196 people including 172 children and 93 medical workers, displacing over one million—one-sixth of Lebanon’s entire population [21, 22, 23]. The April 8 strikes, launched within hours of Hezbollah’s ceasefire compliance, killed at least 357 people in a single day. UN experts stated explicitly that Israel’s pattern of evacuation orders combined with systematic housing destruction “is consistent with the pattern of domicide.” These operations are proceeding while American media attention is consumed by the Iran headline.

**Syria.** Israel has seized 366 square kilometers of Syrian territory, constructed nine military bases inside and beyond the buffer zone, and conducted nearly 200 ground incursions per month by late 2025 [24, 25, 26]. In July 2025, the Knesset passed a motion declaring the entire West Bank “an inseparable part of the Land of Israel” and calling for its annexation. The Israeli Defence Minister announced Israeli forces would remain indefinitely in parts of Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee stated it would be “fine” if Israel took over the entire Middle East [27, 28].

**The terminal logic of the arrangement.** The conventional framing of US-Israel relations assumes that American support serves American interests in the region. The evidence assembled in this report suggests the opposite is now true—and that this arrangement is strategically advantageous for Israel regardless of what happens to the United States.

Israel has already received the money, the arms, the diplomatic cover, the suppression of international accountability, and the destruction of the institutional resistance that might have constrained its territorial expansion. The Greater Israel project—already materially underway in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria—does not require continued American strength to succeed. It requires only that no major power be positioned or willing to stop it.

A weakened, internally destabilized United States is precisely that: one less major power capable of reversing the territorial facts being established on the ground. A US in constitutional crisis, with degraded institutions, a fractured economy, and a population in political upheaval, is a US that cannot project the coherent foreign policy that would be required to constrain Israeli expansion in any of these theaters.

Furthermore, the influence operations described throughout this section—the congressional funding network, the Hasbara apparatus, the kompromat infrastructure—represent relationships between Israeli intelligence and specific American political operatives, not between Israel and American institutions. Those operatives, in the event of a successful seizure of power, would be personally indebted to the apparatus that facilitated their position. The Israeli intelligence relationship would be with the individuals holding power, not the institutions through which power is nominally exercised.

This is the endpoint logic of the entire arrangement: an Israel that has extracted what

it needs from American institutions, whose expansion is protected by American paralysis, and whose influence runs directly to the individuals holding whatever remains of American executive authority—independent of any democratic accountability to the American people whose sovereignty has been spent to purchase it.

### **The Strategic Cost to the United States**

The cumulative cost of congressional behavior shaped by these influence channels is not abstract. Since Israel’s founding, the United States has provided \$352 billion in total aid—\$263 billion military, \$89 billion economic—making Israel the single largest cumulative recipient of American foreign assistance in history [58, 59]. Since October 7, 2023, the US has provided at least \$16.3 billion in direct military aid, with the Trump administration notifying Congress of an additional \$10.1 billion in new arms sales since January 2025.

The strategic return on this investment, measured against American interests:

- The Iran war—initiated in coordination with Israel, sustained in part by US unwillingness to restrain Israeli ceasefire violations—has activated the Hormuz chokepoint and produced an energy shock now damaging the American economy
- Unconditional US support for Israeli operations has destroyed the pathway to Saudi normalization with Israel, a strategic objective worth far more to American regional interests than the military operations that foreclosed it [60, 61]
- US diplomatic isolation on Gaza-related UN votes has eroded American credibility as a neutral broker across the entire Global South—the same nations now building trade and security architectures that bypass the United States
- *Foreign Affairs* has documented what it terms “the end of the Israel exception”—the recognition among foreign policy analysts that the relationship “too often incentivizes dangerous Israeli behavior and depletes Washington’s global influence” [62]

The pattern is consistent and compounding: congressional behavior shaped by AIPAC funding and Hasbara influence operations has repeatedly prioritized Israeli strategic preferences over American ones. The Iran war and the Hormuz crisis are the most expensive expression of that pattern to date—paid for by American consumers at the gas pump, American workers in a contracting economy, and American strategic interests across every theater where the United States has ceded credibility and leverage.

### **The World Building Around the United States**

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A recurring feature of Trump’s foreign and economic policy has been the use of economic coercion—tariffs, sanctions, currency threats—as leverage against both adversaries and

allies. This approach carries a structural risk that has now materialized: when the cost of compliance with American demands exceeds the cost of building alternatives, counterparties stop complying and start building alternatives. That process is now well underway across multiple axes simultaneously.

### **BRICS Expansion and the Multipolar Shift**

The BRICS bloc—originally Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—has expanded dramatically. As of 2025–2026, full members include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE, and Indonesia, with partner countries including Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. BRICS nations now represent approximately 45% of the global population and nearly 40% of global GDP by purchasing power parity [67, 68].

Trump’s response has been to threaten tariffs—first 10%, then 100%—on any BRICS nation that moves to undermine the US dollar [69, 70]. The threat has not reversed the expansion. It has accelerated it. Countries that might have remained neutral are being forced to choose, and the tariff threats make alignment with BRICS a rational hedge against American economic aggression.

### **De-Dollarization: From Aspiration to Infrastructure**

The erosion of dollar dominance in international trade is no longer theoretical. Concrete infrastructure for bypassing the dollar is operational and growing:

- 97% of trade among Shanghai Cooperation Organisation nations—including India, Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian states—was settled in local currencies in 2025, not dollars [71]
- China’s Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) processed the equivalent of \$245 trillion in yuan transactions in 2025, with 65%+ year-over-year growth
- The US dollar’s share of international SWIFT payments dropped from 47.5% in December 2025 to 43.8% by March 2026; Middle Eastern non-dollar cross-border transactions rose from 18% to 31% in the same period [72]
- In March 2026, Indian refiners settled approximately 60 million barrels of Russian crude in yuan and UAE dirhams—the largest single-month non-dollar oil settlement on record
- Saudi Arabia has signaled openness to non-dollar oil pricing, threatening the petrodollar arrangement that has underpinned dollar reserve status since 1974

## **The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**

The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance whose expansion has accelerated in direct proportion to US pressure on its members. Full members as of 2025 include China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—collectively representing over half the world’s population. The 2025 summit in Tianjin expanded the SCO family to 27 countries including dialogue partners such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Turkey, Egypt, and Sri Lanka [63, 64].

The SCO’s significance extends beyond trade. It functions as a security coordination framework—a non-NATO security architecture covering the Eurasian landmass—and increasingly as a forum for aligning member states against Western-led institutional pressure. Its growth directly erodes the conditions under which US sanctions and diplomatic coercion are effective.

## **China’s Belt and Road Initiative**

China’s Belt and Road Initiative—a infrastructure and investment framework spanning over 140 countries—reached record engagement levels in 2025: \$128.4 billion in construction contracts (up 81% from 2024) and \$85.2 billion in investment (up 62%), totaling \$213.5 billion across approximately 350 deals [65, 66]. Cumulative BRI engagement since 2013 has reached \$1.4 trillion.

Critically, BRI has evolved from simple infrastructure financing into a strategic instrument for three specific goals: dominating frontier sectors including clean technology, securing critical mineral supply chains, and expanding Chinese export markets as an alternative to US-dependent trade. Western tariff pressure has accelerated this evolution—Foreign Policy reported in April 2026 that US tariffs are directly spurring BRI reinvention and deepening the economic integration of the Global South around Chinese rather than American-led frameworks [66].

## **China-Russia Strategic Convergence**

Roughly 90% of China-Russia bilateral trade is now settled in local currencies. Russia remains China’s largest energy supplier. US tariff threats targeting countries that purchase Russian oil—aimed at India and China—have pushed both nations further toward non-dollar settlement infrastructure rather than away from Russian energy [73].

The McKinsey Global Institute’s 2026 update on the geometry of global trade documents a broad pattern of emerging economies expanding trade across multiple partners simultaneously, explicitly as a hedge against US tariff unpredictability [74].

## What This Means for the Sovereignty Threat

The economic leverage the United States historically wielded—dollar reserve status, SWIFT access, market access threats—was the foundation of American foreign policy power for 80 years. That leverage is eroding structurally, not cyclically. Infrastructure built to bypass it does not dismantle when a new administration arrives.

A United States whose dollar is declining as the reserve currency, whose trade partners are building alternative payment systems, and whose alliances are fragmenting is a United States with less capacity to project the economic stability that has historically insulated its domestic politics from external pressure. The Hormuz crisis and its fuel price shock is an early demonstration of what that reduced leverage looks like in practice.

## The Iran War and the Hormuz Chokepoint

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### How the War Started

On February 28, 2026—approximately 49 days before this report’s compilation—the United States and Israel launched coordinated airstrikes on Iran. The strikes targeted military and government sites and resulted in the assassination of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and other senior Iranian officials, as well as significant civilian casualties [75, 76].

### The Ceasefire, Its Violations, and Who Bears Responsibility

On April 7–8, 2026, Pakistan brokered a two-week ceasefire between the United States, Israel, and Iran [77]. The ceasefire collapsed almost immediately—but the framing of *how* it collapsed matters enormously and has been obscured by much Western media coverage.

The sequence of events:

1. Hezbollah stood down in compliance with ceasefire terms
2. Israel launched its heaviest strikes on Lebanon since the war began—within hours of Hezbollah’s compliance
3. The United States maintained and then expanded its naval blockade on Iranian ports, which was to be lifted as part of the ceasefire terms
4. Iran, observing that both parties had already violated the agreement, declared the ceasefire void and reasserted control over the Strait of Hormuz [79, 78]

Western media coverage has frequently characterized this as “both sides violating the ceasefire.” This framing is misleading. Iran’s action was a *response* to prior violations by Israel and

the United States—the normal legal and diplomatic consequence of counterparties failing to uphold their commitments.

It is worth noting that Israel has a documented, repeated pattern of agreeing to ceasefires under international pressure and then continuing or escalating operations shortly thereafter—in Gaza, Lebanon in 2006, and Lebanon in 2024. This pattern was not unknown to the Trump administration when it brokered the April ceasefire. The administration’s failure to restrain Israel either reflects an inability to do so, indifference, or tacit endorsement.

### **The Hormuz Chokepoint and Economic Consequences**

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world’s most critical oil transit chokepoints. As of April 18, 2026, Iran has re-closed the Strait in response to the US refusing to lift its naval blockade [81, 80]. The economic consequences are severe and compounding:

- Major disruption to global oil supply and shipping
- Fuel shortages rippling through Asia
- Oil price spikes layering on top of tariff-driven inflation already impacting US consumers
- Global market instability accelerated by the combination of trade war and energy shock

The strategic irony is significant: Iran’s most effective weapon was never its nuclear program. It was always Hormuz. The US-Israeli military campaign activated that weapon. Iran is now in a position where economic pain flows *toward* the United States and its allies while Iran absorbs military strikes—a trade it can sustain longer than markets can absorb the energy disruption.

### **Gun Deregulation: Arming the Population During Economic Collapse**

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Since returning to office, the Trump administration has systematically dismantled federal gun safety infrastructure while dramatically expanding access to weapons and weapon modifications [82, 83, 85].

#### **Legislative and Regulatory Actions**

- Signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, ending the \$200 tax stamp requirement for silencers, short-barreled rifles/shotguns, and covert guns—effective January 1, 2026
- Repealed Biden’s “zero tolerance” policy for gun dealers who violate the law

- Permitted the sale of forced reset triggers—devices enabling semi-automatic rifles to fire at rates comparable to automatic weapons
- Dropped the government’s appeal against challenges to pistol stabilizing brace restrictions
- Loosened background check requirements, accepting more state permits as alternatives to federal NICS checks
- Made it easier for veterans in mental health crises to obtain firearms—in the context of a veteran suicide rate three times higher than the civilian population

### **Institutional Destruction**

- Proposed cutting ATF budget by \$468 million—a 40% reduction in enforcement capacity [84]
- Plans to eliminate approximately 550 Industry Operations Investigators
- Cancelled \$820 million in DOJ grants, including \$170 million for gun violence prevention
- Created a DOJ gun rights unit within the Civil Rights Division, tasked specifically with *challenging* gun control laws nationwide

The combination of economic stress, a radicalized and grievance-primed population, and dramatically expanded access to weapons—including near-automatic fire capabilities—is a volatile and deliberate combination.

### **January 6th as Proof of Concept**

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The January 6, 2021 assault on the US Capitol is frequently discussed as a failed insurrection. This framing misses its significance as a *proof of concept*.

An improvised, poorly armed, disorganized mob nearly succeeded in preventing the certification of a presidential election. The limiting factors were:

- Lack of coordination and planning
- Lack of weapons
- Institutional resistance from Vice President Pence, the courts, and military leadership
- An FBI and DOJ that, while not aggressively responsive, were not actively facilitating

The consequences for participants were minimal. Key figures were pardoned. No serious structural reforms were enacted. No one with meaningful authority faced deterrent-level criminal liability.

What a serious actor learns from January 6th is not “that failed.” It is: “**here is what needs to be different next time.**”

The subsequent four years of institutional restructuring, viewed through this lens, reads as a lessons-learned implementation. Every limiting factor that prevented success in 2021 has since been systematically addressed.

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## The Systematic Dismantlement of Institutional Resistance

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### The Department of Justice and FBI

Kash Patel, appointed FBI Director, has no meaningful independent law enforcement background. His public record is one of loyalty to Trump and hostility to institutional independence. An FBI under Patel’s leadership would not be expected to investigate planning, warn Congress, coordinate defensive responses, or prosecute participants in an extra-constitutional action by the administration it serves.

The DOJ has been similarly realigned. The creation of a gun rights unit in the Civil Rights Division—an institution historically focused on protecting minority voting rights and civil liberties—signals the ideological capture of the department’s mission.

### The Intelligence Community

Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence places the coordinating layer of the entire US intelligence apparatus under someone whose primary qualification is political loyalty. The DNI role was created after 9/11 specifically to provide independent oversight. Under Gabbard, that independence is eliminated.

Simultaneously, the Trump administration is pushing to extend Section 702 of FISA—warrantless surveillance authority—while consolidating its oversight under executive control [86, 87]. This is not anti-surveillance. It is redirection of the surveillance apparatus toward domestic political monitoring under executive rather than independent judicial oversight.

### The Joint Chiefs: Purged During Wartime

Pete Hegseth has removed or forced out more than 13 senior military officers [88, 89, 90, 91], including:

- **Gen. C.Q. Brown**—Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- **Adm. Lisa Franchetti**—Chief of Naval Operations
- **Gen. Randy George**—Army Chief of Staff, fired April 2, 2026 *during an active war*

- **Gen. James Slife**—Air Force Vice Chief of Staff
- **Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Kruse**—Head of the Defense Intelligence Agency
- Multiple additional flag and general officers

Gen. George's replacement is Gen. Christopher LaNeve—formerly Hegseth's personal military aide. Replacing a wartime Army Chief of Staff with your personal aide has no operational justification. It is a control action.

Firing generals during wartime is nearly without historical precedent in American military history. Officials quoted at the time used the word “insane.” The significance cannot be overstated: the Joint Chiefs represented the last credible institutional brake on unconstitutional orders. The generation of military leadership that had explicitly thought through their obligations if ordered to take illegal action has been replaced with people whose primary demonstrated qualification is personal loyalty.

### **CISA: Gutting Election Security Before the Midterms**

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is the federal body responsible for protecting US election infrastructure. The Trump administration's proposed FY27 budget cuts CISA by \$707 million and explicitly proposes eliminating CISA's election security program entirely [92, 93, 94].

The administration's stated justification—that CISA was “more focused on censorship than protecting critical systems”—refers to CISA's 2020-era work flagging election misinformation. In other words: the agency is being gutted specifically because it performed its election integrity function in ways that were politically inconvenient.

A ProPublica examination found that “federal guardrails and people that held the line in 2020 would largely be missing today” following Trump's overhaul of federal election security agencies.

The November 2026 midterm elections will occur without the federal election security infrastructure that existed in the last election cycle.

### **The National Archives: Destroying the Record**

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the institution responsible for preserving presidential records and enforcing the Presidential Records Act—the same law Trump previously violated by retaining classified documents at Mar-a-Lago.

Actions taken [95, 96, 97, 98]:

- Archivist Colleen Shogan fired, no cause given

- Deputy Archivist William Bosanko (30-year career) forced out
- NARA’s inspector general removed
- Interim leadership: the CEO of the **Nixon Foundation**—an appointment whose symbolism is either oblivious or deliberate
- Approximately 90 staff lost
- Budget cut \$93 million from 2024 levels
- As of April 14, 2026, NARA refused to commit to preserving presidential records during an active lawsuit brought by historians

This is not administrative restructuring. This is the systematic elimination of the institutional capacity to create and preserve the documentary record that future accountability depends on. You cannot hold someone accountable for decisions there is no record of.

## The Pattern as a Whole

Examined individually, each action described in this report can be explained away. Examined as a pattern against a timeline, they describe a system being prepared for something.

Institution	Action	Function Eliminated
<b>DOJ</b>	Ideological capture	Independent prosecution
<b>FBI</b>	Patel appointment	Independent investigation
<b>Joint Chiefs</b>	13+ officers purged during wartime	Military refusal of illegal orders
<b>DNI</b>	Gabbard appointment	Independent intelligence oversight
<b>ATF</b>	40% budget cut	Firearms enforcement
<b>CISA</b>	\$707M cut; election security eliminated	Election integrity verification
<b>NARA</b>	Leadership fired; budget cut \$93M	Presidential records preservation
<b>Inspectors General</b>	Multiple removed across agencies	Internal accountability documentation
<b>Jan 6 participants</b>	Pardoned	Deterrence against future action

Every institution whose function was to document wrongdoing, resist illegal orders, enforce

laws, or protect election integrity has been either captured, gutted, or eliminated—over approximately 15 months, coinciding with an active war, an economic crisis, and dramatically expanded civilian weapons access.

## **The Timeline: November 2026 as the Decision Point**

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The next US midterm elections are scheduled for **November 3, 2026**. These elections represent the last functional democratic checkpoint before the January 2028 presidential transfer of power.

**If Republicans hold or expand Congress:** The 2028 path for Trump’s movement remains viable through democratic means. A loyal successor can be installed, maintaining effective control of the executive branch without the risks of extra-constitutional action.

**If Democrats retake one or both chambers:** Meaningful congressional oversight resurges. Subpoena power returns to opposition hands. The window for more drastic action—roughly 14 months between November 2026 and January 2028—becomes the operative consideration.

November 2026 is not merely a checkpoint. It is the decision point that determines which game is being played. And it will occur without the federal election security infrastructure that existed in the last election cycle.

## **What to Watch**

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Several items that would previously have appeared on a warning list are no longer warnings—they are current events. The court defiance is ongoing. Emergency powers framing around the Iran war is already deployed. The election security apparatus is already being dismantled. The section below distinguishes between developments already in motion that require active monitoring, and threshold events whose occurrence would indicate the endgame timeline has begun.

### **Already In Motion: Active Monitoring Required**

- **CISA and election security:** The defunding of CISA’s election security program is proposed but not yet fully enacted. Track whether the remaining personnel and functions survive the FY27 budget process, and whether any state-level or civil society infrastructure is being built to compensate.
- **Court defiance:** The administration is already testing contempt of federal court orders. Monitor whether courts begin to lack enforcement mechanisms — whether orders are simply ignored without consequence or legal response.

- **Epstein file suppression:** Track whether the DOJ moves to re-seal, classify, or otherwise restrict access to Epstein-related documents under national security or ongoing investigation pretexts.
- **ICC sanctions escalation:** Further rounds of sanctions against ICC judges and prosecutors, or expansion to ICJ personnel, would indicate the administration is systematically eliminating international legal exposure rather than responding to specific cases.
- **Career intelligence officer purges:** The political appointee layer of CIA, NSA, and DIA has been replaced. Purges reaching the career SES layer beneath — the officers with institutional memory and independent judgment — would remove the last internal brake on intelligence capture.
- **Further NARA degradation:** Any moves to classify, restrict access to, or transfer custody of presidential records outside NARA's jurisdiction should be treated as evidence destruction in progress.
- **Anti-BDS and speech suppression expansion:** Federal codification of anti-BDS penalties or expansion of the Antisemitism Awareness Act's enforcement scope to non-academic institutions would indicate the speech suppression infrastructure is being hardened ahead of anticipated domestic opposition.

### Threshold Events: The Endgame Has Begun

The following would indicate that the window for democratic correction has effectively closed and that extra-constitutional action is no longer being prepared — it is underway:

- **National Guard federalization:** Any executive action moving to subordinate state National Guards to federal command, or removing governors' independent deployment authority, solves the domestic troop problem that constrained January 6th.
- **Declared national emergency suspending normal legislative function:** The Iran war and economic crisis both provide plausible pretexts. An emergency declaration that purports to suspend congressional oversight, delay elections, or expand executive decree authority beyond statutory limits is the trigger event.
- **Interference with the November 2026 certification process:** Any federal action to challenge, delay, or override state-level certification of midterm results — or deployment of federal resources to contest outcomes — is the equivalent of what was attempted on January 6th, executed with institutional rather than mob force.
- **Arrest or prosecution of political opposition:** Use of the DOJ or FBI to arrest, indict, or materially interfere with the political operations of opposition candidates,

election officials, or journalists covering these issues would signal that the coercive apparatus is being turned outward.

- **Military deployment against domestic civilian populations:** Invocation of the Insurrection Act against domestic protest movements, particularly those responding to any of the above, would indicate that the replaced Joint Chiefs are being operationalized for domestic use.

## Conclusion

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This report has documented the following, with citations to primary sources throughout:

The President of the United States has spent 15 months systematically dismantling every institutional mechanism designed to prevent or document an unconstitutional seizure of power: the FBI, the DOJ, the Joint Chiefs, the Director of National Intelligence, the inspectors general, the election security apparatus, and the National Archives. He has done this while prosecuting a war whose primary economic victim is the American consumer, pardoning the participants of a prior insurrection attempt, dramatically expanding civilian access to weapons, and eliminating the deterrents that previously discouraged a repeat.

The President of the United States is compromised by foreign interests. He spent years in documented social proximity to a probable Mossad kompromat operation. The Israeli foreign lobby—operating through AIPAC’s unregistered funding of 68% of Congress, through government-funded Hasbara influence operations that violate FARA, and through intelligence tradecraft including the deployment of sexual allegations against political opponents—has effectively captured the legislative branch and is the only external entity structurally positioned to provide the domestic political infrastructure that a seizure of power would require. The behaviors of this administration are consistent with an actor who has solicited that relationship.

The President of the United States may be planning a coup. The November 2026 midterm elections are the last democratic checkpoint before January 2028. The federal election security apparatus that protected those elections in 2020 has been defunded and dismantled in advance of them. The military leadership that would have refused illegal orders has been replaced with personal loyalists during an active war. The archive that would preserve the evidence has been gutted. The judges enforcing international law have been sanctioned into financial paralysis. The citizens who would protest have had their speech rights legislated against.

These are not the actions of an administration governing. They are the actions of an administration preparing.

**What can be done.** The November 3, 2026 midterm elections must be treated as the critical

threshold they are. Voter registration, turnout, and—critically—independent monitoring of results and certification processes at the state level are the remaining mechanisms through which the democratic transfer of power in January 2028 can be secured. The degradation of federal election security infrastructure makes state-level and civil society monitoring more important, not less. Foreign intelligence services of allied nations are likely watching these developments closely; diplomatic and intelligence pressure from allies who understand what is at stake represents an underutilized resource.

The institutions that remain—some federal judiciary, career intelligence officers, state-level law enforcement in states with independent governors, allied military relationships outside the purged Joint Chiefs—are fragile and finite. They will not hold indefinitely against sustained executive pressure. The window in which they can serve as the foundation for accountability is the same window identified throughout this report: between now and November 2026, and between November 2026 and January 2028.

The American people are not helpless. But they are running out of time in which the normal mechanisms of democratic self-correction remain available to them. This report exists because the first obligation of anyone who can see what is being assembled is to say so clearly, while it can still make a difference.

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