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USA

Cracks in Trump's MAGA Movement

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A few months ago, President Donald Trump's Make America Great Again or MAGA movement seemed to be a solid monolith from Republican Party legislators at the top to rank-and-file activists at its base. Today MAGA is riven with fissures caused by personal rivalries, and the increasingly visible incompetence of cabinet members, and while MAGA is not yet splitting or crumbling, it is clearly cracking.

Most famously, billionaire Elon Musk who seemed a few months ago to be practically a co-president, broke with Trump, then criticized his "big beautiful" budget bill, calling it a "disgusting abomination" because of its failure to make deeper cuts. Musk then went on to launch a new political party. According to a Quantus poll, Musk's America Party would win the support of 40% of U.S. voters and 57% of Republican voters, especially men. If the new party is up and running by November 2026, it could split the Republicans and threaten Trump's control of both the Senate and the House.

Then there's the case of Jeffrey Epstein, the banker and stock broker who claimed to be "Trump's best friend for ten years," who was convicted in Florida of procuring a child for prostitution and sex trafficking and later of sex trafficking minors in Florida and New York. Epstein's associate Ghislaine Maxwell was sentenced to 20 years in prison for helping him to sexually abuse children. Epstein reportedly committed suicide while in jail on August 20, 2019, though some believe he was murdered.

Rightwing conspiracy theorists have claimed for years that Epstein, members of the economic elite, the "deep state," and the Democratic Party leadership were engaged in a pedophilia cult. They demanded that the Justice Department's Epstein files be released, together with the Epstein client list. Trump's Attorney General Pam Bondi at first said she had the list, but now says there is no list in the files. The MAGA base is furious with Trump and Bondi for failing to release the Epstein file, some saying Trump is now part of the "deep state."

Cabinet failures are also threatening to undermine MAGA and Republican unity.

In addition to Pam Bondi, who has caused such a storm, Secretary of Health Robert Kennedy, a vaccine skeptic, is failing to prevent the spread of measles and has lost support. Most recently, Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem's handling of the Central Texas flood has also been a failure and a human tragedy that weakens Trump.

The flooding of the Guadalupe River that began on July 4, sent a 26-foot-high wall of water that arose in 45 minutes and left 129 dead and 170 missing, including a score of girls at summer camp. Noem, who is responsible for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that spends billions on disaster relief for wildfires, hurricanes, and floods, created a new policy that required her personal approval of any funding over \$100,000, virtually paralyzing FEMA. She also delayed the deployment of FEMA search and rescue teams to the flood for three days. Trump praised Noem for being on television right away, and stood by her despite her failure to respond to the flood in a timely way.

Finally, Trump's immigration policies are losing favor. For several months now Americans have watched as agents arrested workers and separated families. Last week there were military style round ups in Los Angeles' McArthur Park and on local farms, with armored vehicles and officers on horseback, officers armed with military weapons, and using flash-bang grenades and tear gas. There was mass protest by the community and the public support for the policies is declining. The latest Gallup poll shows that a record-high 79% of Americans consider immigration good for the country while support for the border wall and mass deportation is declining.

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The job of progressives and the left is to keep the resistance growing, to keep the pressure on, and to deepen the cracks. We have to bring about Trump's fall.

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