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USA

Trump's Cabinet of Dangerous Fanatics and Kooks

- IV Online magazine - 2024 - IV598 - November 2024 -

Publication date: Thursday 21 November 2024

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President-elect Donald Trump has rapidly chosen loyalists for cabinet positions and other high offices. The Senate must vote to confirm cabinet members and his choices are controversial even among Republicans. In some cases, Trump's capricious, unvetted picks are likely to lead to governmental chaos if they are confirmed. Comics and journalists have referred to the new cabinet as "Trump's clown car." The clowns, however are not funny; they're frightening.

Perhaps most outrageously, Trump has chosen Representative Matt Gaetz, for Attorney General. In 2020 Gaetz was accused of child sex trafficking and statutory rape for taking a 17-year-old high school student across state lines to have sex with her. Both the Justice Department and the House Ethics Committee investigated the matter but he was not charged.

Trump's choice for Secretary of Energy is Chris Wright, the CEO of Liberty Energy, a Denver-based fracking firm. He will be a supporter of the fossil fuel industry and an opponent of efforts to cut back on greenhouse gases. Last year Wright said, "There is no climate crisis, and we're not in the midst of an energy transition either."

Trump has picked Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., an anti-vaxxer to be Secretary of Health and Human Service, a department with a \$1.7 trillion budget and tremendous influence on health policies. His choice has been widely criticized by health scientists and physicians.

Trump ran on the immigration issue saying he would close the border and begin deportations on day one, and to deal with it he has chosen white nationalist Steven Miller as chief of policy for homeland security and a tough-talking cop named Thomas Homan to be Border Czar. Homan was responsible for Trump's family separation policy during Trump's first term. They will deal with immigrants brutally.

Turning to foreign policy, for Secretary of Defense Trump has picked Pete Hegseth, a veteran Iraq and Afghanistan, a major in the National Guard and a TV host for far-right Fox News in 2014. Hegseth, who never managed a large organization, will be in charge of the 3.4 million employees of the Department of Defense. His choice has outraged members of Congress and former military officers, in part because of his support for soldiers accused of war crimes. He says the military is too "woke" and opposes its diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, which he says have weakened military values. He opposes too putting women in combat positions. Hegeth was accused of sexual assault when at a Republican women's event, and though he was not charged, paid off the woman. Hegseth has a tattoo, Deus Vult (God's Will) and wears a Jerusalem cross, both symbols of the white nationalist movement.

Trump choice for Director of National Intelligence, former Representative Tulsi Gabbard, has been called a "Russian agent" and a "traitor" by a U.S. Representative because of her support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine She also met with Russian-backed dictator Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

As U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Trump picked Baptist Minister Mike Huckabee the former governor of Arkansas. Huckabee fully supports Israel's right to control the West Bank, a name he rejects preferring the Biblical Judea and Samaria. He says there is no West Bank, no occupation, and no such thing as a Palestinian.

Finally, we have Elon Musk, the tech mogul and world's wealthiest man, who gave a least \$132 million to Trump's campaign, has been chosen together with pharmaceutical entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy to head a new

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Department of Government Efficiency. Musk has something like a trillion dollars in government contracts.

Cabinet appointments have to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate, though Trump may attempt to avoid this by "recess appointment" made when the Senate is not in session. Senators do not seem to have the integrity and courage to stand up to him. Trump's clowns could blow up the government.

17 November 2024

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