



CARNEGIE
ENDOWMENT FOR
INTERNATIONAL PEACE

JULY 2026

The Effects of U.S. Democratic Backsliding on U.S. Power

Thomas Carothers

The Future of American Power Series

The Effects of U.S. Democratic Backsliding on U.S. Power

Thomas Carothers

July 2026

About the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

In a complex, changing, and increasingly contested world, the Carnegie Endowment generates strategic ideas, supports diplomacy, and trains the next generation of international scholar-practitioners to help countries and institutions take on the most difficult global problems and advance peace. With a global network of more than 200 scholars across twenty countries, Carnegie is renowned for its independent analysis of major global problems and understanding of regional contexts.

© 2026 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
All rights reserved.

Carnegie does not take institutional positions on public policy issues; the views represented herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Carnegie, its staff, or its trustees.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Please direct inquiries to:

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Publications Department
1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036
P: + 1 202 483 7600
F: + 1 202 483 1840
CarnegieEndowment.org

This publication can be downloaded at no cost at
CarnegieEndowment.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
U.S. Democracy Under Pressure	2
Effects on U.S. Power	4
Looking Forward	8
Notes	10



About the Author

Thomas Carothers is director of Carnegie's Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program.

The Future of American Power Series

What is the future of American power? The United States commands extraordinary resources across every dimension of national power, yet in recent years it has struggled to achieve many important foreign policy aims. This paradox raises a key question for Americans and the world: What can the United States actually do with the power it has? Our project examines not just the quantity but the qualities of American power, assesses the degree to which it is eroding, and asks how the United States might use the power it has to better effect.

The Future of American Power series is edited by Christopher S. Chivvis, director of the American Statecraft Program.

American Statecraft Program

The American Statecraft Program develops and advances ideas for a more disciplined U.S. foreign policy aligned with American values and cognizant of the limits of American power in a more competitive world.

Introduction

The relationship between the type of political system a country has and the quality and quantity of its power is not a settled science. Adherents of democracy generally believe that democracy brings some significant advantages for a nation's power.¹ Open policy debates, for example, can ensure that policies are well thought through and supported by a strong public consensus. Democracy can also generate bonds among politically like-minded countries, as well as soft power and prestige for the leading democratic nation. But the view that autocracies may have some natural strengths in the realm of international power is also common.² Freed of the need for public deliberation and consensus, the thinking goes, autocrats may project power more nimbly and decisively than democrats. And not needing to worry about winning the next elections, autocrats may find it easier to impose near-term costs on the public for the sake of longer-term foreign policy goals.

Until recently, U.S. scholars debated these issues comparatively, focusing on varied country cases around the world. However, as the health of U.S. democracy has become a matter of serious concern, the question of democracy's relationship with national power arises in the United States itself. Specifically, how is the degradation of democracy at home affecting or likely to affect U.S. power abroad?

How is the degradation of democracy at home affecting or likely to affect U.S. power abroad?

Given the uncertain endpoint of America's current democratic decline, no definitive answer to this question is yet available. But a look at the main contours of the current U.S. democratic backsliding should raise concerns about how the erosion of the nation's democratic foundations may diminish its national power. Although President Donald Trump and his administration are a significant part of the story of America's current democratic woes, the analysis in this essay is not an account of how Trump's foreign policy is changing U.S. power. The analysis concentrates on those elements of U.S. democratic backsliding—some of which are directly tied to Trump and some of which are not—that appear to be affecting U.S. power.

U.S. Democracy Under Pressure

Rising political polarization in recent decades has been a major cause of the current erosion of U.S. democracy. Democratic systems naturally encompass diverse, sometimes sharply varying political views. But in the United States, polarization has hardened around two overarching narratives that do not share a consensus on basic political norms and values. This is where serious trouble arises. This is not the first time the United States has experienced deep polarization—consider the Civil War, for example. Today’s surge in polarization has its near-term roots in the two clashing views about core American national values that crystallized in the 1960s—a rapidly rising progressive vision of America and a conservative status quo response. This schism gained force in the 1970s and 1980s when the two main U.S. political parties transformed from ideologically diverse “big tents” with varied internal fractions representing quite different outlooks into relatively uniform embodiments of either the progressive or the conservative vision, with a resulting significant decline in shared beliefs and willingness to compromise. The intensifying polarization took on increasingly toxic qualities starting in the 1990s as lines hardened and ideological conflict intensified between hardline conservatives in the Republican Party and the liberal democratic majority in the Democratic Party.³

As polarization has ratcheted up from significant to severe in recent decades, it has become a harshly corrosive dynamic, fueling congressional blockage and dysfunction, eroding public faith in the neutrality of the courts, pervading the media space, spurring gerrymandering, and spreading throughout society to the point where large majorities of voters have reduced contact with fellow citizens with a different political outlook than their own and regard those on the other side as a fundamental threat to the country itself.

Various broader factors have contributed to this intensification of polarization, including rising socioeconomic inequality; the emergence of highly partisan private media sources like talk radio, cable television and, more recently, social media; and the dramatic increase in money flowing into U.S. elections from ideologically motivated high-net-worth individuals on the right and the left.⁴ Contingent factors have also been at play, such as the bitterly divisive fight over the Florida vote count in the 2000 Al Gore vs. George W. Bush presidential election.

Donald Trump’s return to the presidency in 2025 marked a new, even harsher phase of this polarization. Trump returned to power on the foundation of his divisive denial of his electoral loss in 2020 and in a full embrace of governing by polarizing—a strategy that seeks to constantly inflame and energize his core partisan base, reflexively label opposition as lunatic or extremist, and eschew any effort to speak on behalf of and represent all Americans.

This polarizing mindset has led Trump to pursue a sweeping political project that directly challenges basic democratic structures and norms: the centralization and personalization of domestic political power, or what analysts who study the ongoing global wave of backsliding by elected leaders call “executive aggrandizement.”⁵ While this process gains motivation and energy from the underlying context of polarization in which it is occurring, it is in fact different and deeper, aimed at reshaping America’s basic political structures and methods of governance.

The ongoing executive aggrandizement has three core, interlocking components, all of which entail overriding long-standing U.S. democratic institutions and practices:

- The assertion of presidential dominance over, and the injection of political partisanship into, all other parts of the executive branch, including traditionally nonpartisan executive branch institutions such as independent agencies, the military, and the civil service.
- The assertion of presidential dominance over the other two branches of the federal government—aggressively seeking to sideline Congress from its traditional legislative and oversight roles, and attacking courts and other legal institutions that seek to check executive power. Complementing these efforts has been a systematic campaign to magnify federal power over state power by punishing states that challenge federal authority and seeking to usurp their authority over key functions, like election administration.
- A steady stream of efforts to tame, constrain, and punish nongovernmental institutions or individuals that question or criticize the president or his administration, such as media organizations, law firms, civic groups, universities, cultural organizations, former government officials, and public figures.⁶

Trump and his team continuously wrap all three of these elements of executive aggrandizement in narratives and images of personalized presidential power. They are putting the president’s name and face on many initiatives and institutions, sending out hagiographic AI-generated images that depict the president as a larger-than-life figure in different guises, and releasing constant messaging by government officials that contains extreme claims about the president’s putatively unique skills, capacities, and accomplishments.⁷ By eroding the distinction between Trump as a person and the power of the position, they convey the idea that criticisms of Trump are attacks on the presidency itself.

The self-reinforcing combination of the intensification of political polarization and the strident new push toward executive aggrandizement has created political dysfunction and a weakening of democratic norms at a level of severity unprecedented in more than one hundred years.

Effects on U.S. Power

The ongoing degradation of U.S. democracy shows signs of weakening U.S. power along four dimensions: attractiveness, reliability, effectiveness, and focus.

Attractiveness

An overarching element of U.S. power has long been the attractiveness of the United States as an enduring and relatively well-functioning democracy—especially among other democracies. This status as a democratic exemplar is one of the core components of U.S. soft power.

America's status as a successful democracy, combined with its dominant military and economic power, created a natural leadership position for the country among other democracies, but that leadership position is now eroding. America's democratic nature facilitated the building of alliances—with European democracies, East Asian democracies, and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—that have proven deeper and more stable than the ties the United States cultivated with nondemocratic powers. The ongoing damage to U.S. democracy (combined with Trump's strong wariness of alliance relationships in general) has put all these relationships in doubt. Alliances that were once built and preserved on the bedrock of common political values are weakening, a process the administration fuels by openly disparaging the idea that political values can be a strong basis for U.S. ties with some countries. For example, allies took note when Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said, during a trip to Asia in May 2026, that “the bedrock of a durable partnership is not based on idealistic values.”⁸

The success of U.S. democracy was also the foundation of its support for democracy globally. Although U.S. efforts to advance democracy were often inconsistent and sometimes misconceived—the Iraq War, for example—on balance, the United States made significant contributions to strengthening and spreading democracy in the world, more than any other country. Over the past eighty years, all of America's major adversaries have been autocracies, and no democracy has presented a serious security threat. By helping create a world with fewer autocracies and more democracies, the United States thus helped solidify U.S. power and security in fundamental ways.⁹

Now, the United States' own democratic travails have hollowed out any credibility it might claim as an effective supporter of democracy in other countries, even though Trump officials still sometimes say they aspire to that role.¹⁰ Trump's frequent efforts to sway the outcomes of elections in other countries, by endorsing candidates he prefers and applying economic carrots or sticks to try to shape how their citizens will vote, position his administration as one that seeks to undercut rather than fortify electoral integrity abroad—such as when he publicly endorsed the far-right candidate in the 2025 Honduran presidential election or when he offered \$20 billion to Argentina in 2025 conditional on the right-wing party's

victory in legislative elections.¹¹ The United States pulling back from its role as a supporter of democracy abroad has only further tilted the playing field. Together with Trump's routine embraces of, praises for, and efforts to bolster autocratic leaders, and his frequent hectoring and insulting of democratic ones, the United States is sliding from democracy promotion to autocracy promotion transnationally. By contributing to a more autocratic, less democratic world, the administration is working against the global political landscape that would be most favorable to U.S. security.

One narrower but still important dimension of the linkage between decreased attractiveness caused by democratic erosion and decreased national power concerns the rule of law. The administration's pointed disregard or lack of respect for the rule of law in many domains—a classic element of democratic backsliding—reduces the attractiveness of the United States for both capital and talent from abroad.¹² When Trump imposes personal preferences over legal norms and well-established practices in the business domain, he hurts the investment climate in the country. The administration's chaotic and at times arbitrary application of the rule of law with respect to immigrants makes the country less attractive to talented foreigners who, in the past few decades, have been a major source of energy and skill in the tech sector and other key productive domains.

Reliability

High levels of political polarization damage not only a country's democracy but also its power. When polarization becomes intense, as it has in the United States, it expands beyond the realm of domestic politics into foreign policy (and other domains, like economic life and cultural life). Bipartisan approaches to foreign policy shrink, and the country becomes more prone to lurching on major international issues—creating policy fluctuations well beyond the usual changes that are a routine element of the alternation of power in democracies.

As Rachel Myrick and other scholars have documented, such lurching causes a country to be seen as less reliable by allies and friends, which harms a country's relationships with them.¹³ Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and other key U.S. allies have reacted to recent lurches in U.S. strategy by de-emphasizing ties with the United States in both the security and economic domains with a bitter sense of an historic betrayal of trust on the part of Washington.

Lurching also makes a country more likely to be seen by adversaries as an untrustworthy negotiating partner, which makes it more difficult to resolve conflicts with them through negotiated agreements. This can be either because the adversary hopes a successor administration will offer a much better deal, or because they believe a successor administration will tear up any deal they sign. This was likely the case with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2024–2025, who seemed to hope that Trump would entirely reverse the Joe Biden administration's relatively strong support for Ukraine.¹⁴ The back-and-forth on U.S. policy toward Iran—the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) under president

Barack Obama, followed by the shredding of that agreement by Trump in his first term, the effort to restart talks toward an agreement under Biden, the switch to open military conflict under Trump's second administration, and then the return to a quest for a negotiated agreement—put other countries on notice that going through lengthy negotiations and making concessions to the United States to arrive at a negotiated agreement might result in that agreement simply being discarded by an immediate successor.

Effectiveness

A country's power resides not just in the intrinsic weight of its capacities to influence others but also in how effectively it employs those capacities. The centralization and personalization of policymaking that are characteristic of democratic erosion under populist leadership work against effective policymaking. In the United States, the hollowing out of core foreign policy bureaucratic capacities—reducing the National Security Council staff by approximately 80 percent, thinning the State Department (including leaving over one hundred ambassadorial positions vacant more than a year into the administration), and eliminating the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—has substantially reduced the amount of expertise available to the senior foreign policy makers.¹⁵

The injection of intense partisanship into what have traditionally been nonpartisan components of the policymaking bureaucracy, such as through political loyalty tests and the punishment of career officials for having played significant policy roles during previous administrations, creates a chilling effect that diminishes the willingness of career officials to offer candid views on important policy decisions, for fear of punishment. Some of these effects are evident in the administration's conduct of the military actions it initiated against Iran in February 2026. The decision to strike appears to have been poorly informed, proceeding without prior in-depth analyses by the White House of how Iran might respond—for example, by closing the Strait of Hormuz—and of how the United States could counter that response. It also appears that the attempted negotiations with Iran after the onset of the fighting were not well prepared or informed by experts with experience in the matters in question.¹⁶

Another major element of the centralization of presidential power that is a symptom of democratic erosion—the sidelining of Congress—also contributes to a poorly conceived and executed foreign policy. The administration's lack of serious engagement with Congress about the administration's strategic planning in the lead up to its 2026 strikes on Iran likely contributed to the administration's failure to anticipate and plan effectively for some parts of Iran's response.

The abrupt, hasty closure of USAID—undertaken with no consultation with Congress despite Congress's deep and long-standing oversight of the agency—was carried out with no serious review of how it might damage the United States' reputation in other countries and U.S. relations with governments and other institutions and actors in multiple regions.

If Congress had been a full partner in the restructuring of U.S. foreign aid, rather than a shocked, excluded bystander, it could have helped reduce the arbitrary, rushed nature of the process and the extensive damage that resulted—and could have helped produce a reform that many observers agreed was badly needed.

Similarly, the administration's resistance to judicial oversight of its actions, including those relating to foreign policy, constricts yet another channel of useful input into policymaking. This resistance is embodied in the inclination of Trump and his senior team to criticize and insult judges who go against their wishes and to defy or circumvent judicial orders. After the Supreme Court ruled in April 2026 against the president's use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act as a basis for many of its tariffs, for example, Trump directed invective against the justices who voted against him and then immediately set about finding ways to work around the ruling.¹⁷ But in the view of the many mainstream economists who saw Trump's tariffs as a net negative for the U.S. economy, the judicial input on this critical economic issue likely pointed in the direction of policy (respecting constraints on the president's powers regarding tariffs) that would have been beneficial to U.S. power.

Focus

In cases of democratic backsliding, power is often squandered on the pursuit of private gain by the leadership rather than the public interest. Sadly, we see this pattern repeating in America today, where, as a Brennan Center for Justice report notes, “Trump is merging the powers of his presidency with his businesses and personal finances to an extent never before seen”—pardoning donors and other financial supporters, dropping federal investigations into benefactors, using the presidential office to promote his family's cryptocurrency and real estate holdings, and providing political perks to donor companies, among other actions.¹⁸ This obvious corruption is leading Trump to distort U.S. relations with certain other governments, in part at least seemingly to serve his and his family's own financial interests rather than the U.S. national interest. The practice allows foreign powers to manipulate the White House to advance their own interests, in ways that cut against U.S. power. The ties of Trump and his family with some of the Gulf countries—which include real estate projects and crypto deals—are a telling example in this vein. These deals are a two-way street—not just financially remunerative for the Trump family but also an apparent pathway for Gulf countries to curry political favor with the White House to advance their own private interests, not U.S. strategic interests, in the region.¹⁹

In cases of democratic backsliding, power is often squandered on the pursuit of private gain by the leadership rather than the public interest.

Looking Forward

Donald Trump's theatrical exercise of American power around the world lends a facade of power to his administration, but the reality is that a less democratic America is a less powerful America. The ongoing degradation of U.S. democracy under Donald Trump is reducing the attractiveness of the United States as an ally, weakening its ability to pull in talent from abroad, undercutting its capacity to shape the global ideological landscape in America's favor, lessening its ability to reach negotiated agreements with adversarial countries, reducing the effectiveness of the exercise of its power, and diluting the employment of its national capacity by directing it to ends other than the national interest. These effects are happening in real time, week by week, month by month. How severe they become will depend on how far the U.S. democratic slide goes.

As noted in the introduction, autocracy may boost a country's power, for example by facilitating decisive actions or through the ability of an autocratic government to withstand short-term public pain for the sake of pursuing a valuable long-term goal. Although this may be the case in some countries at certain times, there is no indication that the ongoing centralization and personalization of the U.S. political system are conveying such benefits. Trump did act with apparent decisiveness and tolerance for risk when he ordered the capture of Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro. But the United States has taken significant foreign policy risks in previous, more democratic times, from Franklin D. Roosevelt's decision in favor of D-Day to Obama's Abbottabad raid that killed Osama Bin Laden.

The United States is unusual in the extent to which significant elements of its power since World War II were integrally built around its status as a successful democracy and so-called leader of the free world.

The fact that democratic backsliding in the United States appears to be diminishing U.S. power is not a general finding about the relationship between the kind of political system a country has and its power. The United States is unusual in the extent to which significant elements of its power since World War II were integrally built around its status as a successful democracy and so-called leader of the free world. A country for which this was not the case might find that democratic degradation has less effect on its power. And some autocratic powers, such as China, might well find that their power would actually diminish during a democratic transition—for example, due to political and regional fragmentation or reduced ability to impose economic sacrifices on the public for the sake of the military and security services.

Is the damage to U.S. power reversible? Some of the damage will be quick to break, slow to fix. Renewing the attractiveness of U.S. democracy as a political exemplar is likely to be very slow, even if favorable democratic developments occur down the road. The same is true of rebuilding the bureaucratic capacity needed to ensure that policies are informed by deep expertise. Moreover, even if the centralization and personalization of power occurring now are substantially reversed in the years ahead—a tall order—it seems probable that the severe polarization afflicting the U.S. political system and society will continue, given that its roots are much deeper than the current administration. As a result, the problems that it causes for U.S. power—like the lurching between discordant policies and the attendant effects on the U.S. reputation as a reliable, trustworthy partner—are likely to continue for an extended time.

Notes

- 1 Matthew Kroenig, “The Democratic Advantage in Theory,” in *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China* (Oxford University Press, 2020); and Markus Jaeger, “Why Democracies Stick Together: The Theory and Empirics Behind Alliance Formation,” Atlantic Council, March 24, 2025, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Why-democracies-stick-together.pdf>.
- 2 Matthew Kroenig, “The Autocratic Advantage?,” in *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China* (Oxford University Press, 2020); and Reza Hasmath, “The Authoritarian Apologia Industry: How Democratic Fatigue Fuels Dangerous Revisionism,” *Oxford Political Review*, April 17, 2026, <https://oxfordpoliticalreview.com/2026/04/17/the-authoritarian-apologia-industry-how-democratic-fatigue-fuels-dangerous-revisionism>.
- 3 Thomas Carothers, “The Long Path of Polarization in the United States,” in *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization*, eds. Thomas Carothers and Andrew O’Donohue (Brookings Institution Press, 2019).
- 4 Nolan McCarty, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (The MIT Press, 2008); Rachel Kleinfeld, “Polarization, Democracy, and Political Violence in the United States: What the Research Says,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 5, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/research/2023/09/polarization-democracy-and-political-violence-in-the-united-states-what-the-research-says>; and Raymond J. La Raja and Brian F. Schaffner, *Campaign Finance and Political Polarization: When Purists Prevail* (University of Michigan Press, 2015).
- 5 Nancy Bermeo, “On Democratic Backsliding,” *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (January 2016): 5–19, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/on-democratic-backsliding>; and Rachel Beatty Riedl et al., “Pathways of Democratic Backsliding, Resistance, and (Partial) Recoveries,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 712, no. 1 (March 2025): 9–31, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/00027162251319909>.
- 6 McKenzie Carrier and Thomas Carothers, “U.S. Democratic Backsliding in Comparative Perspective,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 25, 2025, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/08/us-democratic-backsliding-in-comparative-perspective>.
- 7 Ashley Cai, “Trump Is the Only Person Who Can Save America, According to His Cabinet,” *New York Times*, May 27, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/us/politics/trump-cabinet-meetings.html>.
- 8 Joseph Rachman, “Why Asia’s Not Buying What Hegseth’s Selling,” *Foreign Policy*, June 3, 2026, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2026/06/03/hegseth-shangri-la-asia-defense-spending>.
- 9 Michael Doyle, “Why They Don’t Fight: The Surprising Endurance of the Democratic Peace,” *Foreign Affairs* 103, no. 4 (July/August 2024), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/why-they-dont-fight-doyle>.
- 10 Thomas Carothers and McKenzie Carrier, “The Trump Administration’s Tangled Talk About Democracy Abroad,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 24, 2026, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/02/trump-rubio-global-democracy-united-states>.
- 11 Thomas Carothers and Oliver Stuenkel, “U.S. Political Interventionism Under Trump,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 24, 2025, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/09/us-political-interventionism-under-trump>; Annie Correal and Jeff Ernst, “Honduras Declares Trump-Backed Candidate Winner of Presidential Election,” *New York Times*, December 24, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/24/world/americas/honduras-election-results-asfura.html>; and Ione Wells, “Trump Says US Will Not ‘Waste Our Time’ Helping Argentina if Milei Loses,” BBC, October 14, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg7n82gd7pvo>.
- 12 Maria Aspan, “How Trump’s ‘Crony Capitalism’ has Shaken Up U.S. Business,” NPR, December 2, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/12/22/nx-s1-5639916/trump-crony-capitalism-free-market>; and Alton Wang, “Explainer: Trump Administration Defies Court Order on Halting Deportations,” Common Cause, March 28, 2025, <https://www.commoncause.org/resources/explainer-trump-administration-defies-court-order-on-halting-deportations>.
- 13 Rachel Myrick, *Polarization and International Politics: How Extreme Partisanship Threatens Global Stability* (Princeton University Press, 2025).
- 14 Humeyra Pamuk and Simon Lewis, “Putin Won’t Make Peace in Ukraine Before 2024 US Election—US Official,” Reuters, November 28, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-wont-make-peace-ukraine-before-2024-us-election-us-official-2023-11-28>.

- 15 David E. Lewis, "State Capacity and American Power," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 18, 2026, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/06/state-capacity-and-american-power>.
- 16 Sudarsan Raghavan, "The Art of the Ceasefire," *New Yorker*, May 12, 2026, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/the-art-of-the-ceasefire>.
- 17 Daniel Bush, "Trump Lashes Out at Supreme Court Justices over Tariffs Ruling," BBC, February 21, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd9g0e7zd8wo>.
- 18 Lisa J. Danetz and Eric Petry, "What Is Political Corruption and What Can We Do About It?," Brennan Center for Justice, August 11, 2025, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/what-political-corruption-and-what-can-we-do-about-it>.
- 19 Will Weissert, "Trump's Middle East Visit Comes as His Family Deepens Its Business, Crypto Ties in the Region," AP News, May 14, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-business-interests-family-middle-east-cryptocurrency-cbb7d2354304ce0308800819944cf3f8>.



CARNEGIE
ENDOWMENT FOR
INTERNATIONAL PEACE

1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036

[CarnegieEndowment.org](https://www.CarnegieEndowment.org)