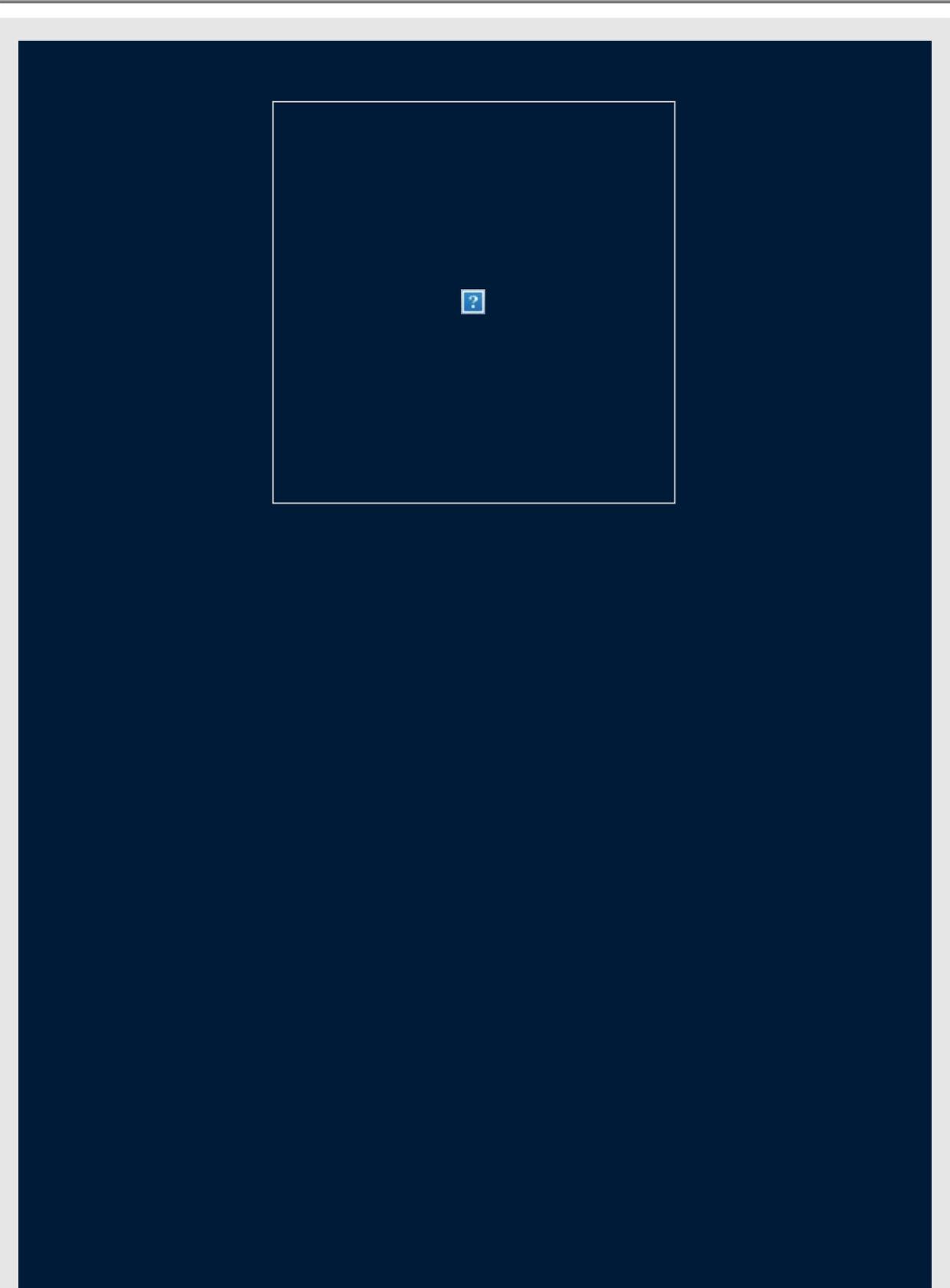


From: [The Roosevelt Group](#)
To: [Ireland, Michelle](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief
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Executive Insight Brief

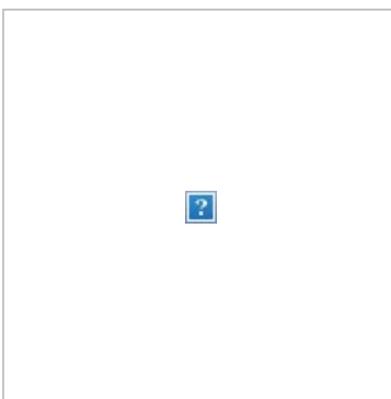
January 24, 2025

Notable Headlines



- [Chip Roy and Donald Trump are on a collision course](#)
- [Collins and Murkowski reemerge as Trump foils](#)
- [Newsom plans to crash Trump's LA wildfire visit](#)
- [China commissions new-generation frigate as competition rises with US](#)
- [VA declares 300,000 health care jobs exempt from ordered freeze on federal hiring](#)

View From The Hill



Congress played host, once again, to the peaceful transition of power this week, with the Inauguration of President Donald Trump taking place inside the Capitol Rotunda due to frigid temperatures in Washington. This is the first time [since](#) 1985 that the swearing-in ceremony and inaugural address have taken place inside. With significantly limited seating under the Capitol dome, lawmakers' families, governors, and other dignitaries were forced to view a live feed of the ceremony from an [overflow](#) room inside the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, though Trump did venture down to address that audience after the official ceremony concluded. The traditional post-address luncheon was then held [inside](#) Statuary Hall.

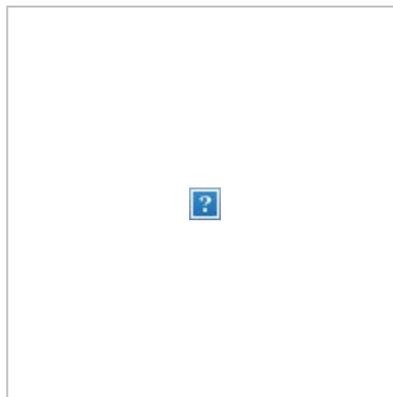
Congressional focus quickly turned to the Senate, where the administration's nominees [continued](#) facing [tough](#) questioning from democrats. And while [several](#) of Trump's nominees [remained](#) in jeopardy amidst controversy and some shaky GOP support, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) was unanimously [confirmed](#) by his colleagues on both

sides of the aisle to become Secretary of State, making him the first confirmed official of Trump's second term. Several other nominees advanced with bipartisan support, including nominees to lead the Departments of [Interior](#), [Energy](#), and [Veterans Affairs](#). The Senate confirmed former Director of National Intelligence and House Member John Ratcliffe to lead the Central Intelligence Agency, and was [expected](#) to attempt to confirm Defense Secretary nominee Pete Hegseth and Homeland Security Secretary nominee Gov. Kristi Noem (R-SD) on Friday.

Even though most of the news was squarely focused on the breathless pace of executive orders coming from the White House in the early hours of the new administration, the governing realities of Washington also demanded attention, leading President Trump to [summon](#) the entire GOP congressional leadership to the White House on his second day in office to map out a legislative strategy for his agenda. While the strategy and potential legislative vehicle(s) to enact said agenda remain a heated topic of debate between House and Senate republicans, the GOP plans to move on [extending](#) the 2017 Trump tax law, cracking down on border and immigration policy, and implementing reforms to energy policy. Additionally, Congress will need to move soon on lifting the debt ceiling, funding the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year, and providing disaster relief to the ongoing wildfire devastation in California.

Both the Senate and House [moved](#) on final passage of what will be the first law Trump will sign in his second term, the *Laken Riley Act*, which requires the detention of undocumented migrants who have committed crimes like theft and burglary. The enactment of this legislation represents a massive shift in the politics of immigration for congressional democrats, many of whom voted with republicans to pass the law.

Pentagon News



On the day of President Trump's inauguration, a wave of new Department of Defense officials [were sworn in](#). This included key positions, including new chiefs of staff, deputy assistant secretaries, and special assistants. Across the federal government, a new president is responsible for filling more than 4,000 appointments, with more than 1,200 requiring Senate confirmation. Congressional staffers are often tapped by administrations

to fill some of these vacancies as many have worked issues for years and have subject matter expertise. This certainly goes for the Department of Defense with 10 of the new officials sworn in coming from Capitol Hill. Whether they hail from personal offices or committees, these individuals have worked issues with national security implications and are able to hit the ground running.

The individuals who are now swapping their Hill badges for Pentagon ones have extensive experience working on key national security issues. Many have served on the Senate [Armed Services Committee](#), [House Select Committee on China](#), [Senate Foreign Relations Committee](#), and personal offices as National Security Advisors or Chiefs of Staff. Two notable staffers who are headed for the Pentagon are Jules “Jay” Hurst and Bryn Woollacott MacDonnell. Jay Hurst will serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Readiness and was most recently Legislative Director and Defense Advisor to Speaker of the House Mike Johnson. Bryn Woollacott MacDonnell will serve as a Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense and was most recently National Security Advisor for Rep. Ken Calvert. Calvert serves as Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. Other offices sending staff to the DoD include those of Rep. August Pfluger, Sen. Josh Hawley, Sen. Ted Cruz, and Sen. Mike Lee. These transitions highlight the strong continuity between Capitol Hill and the DoD, and the importance of blending legislative insight and military expertise while the new administration’s defense priorities unfold.

Following the legislative priorities outlined earlier, the administration's first executive orders signal a significant shift in the Pentagon’s approach to domestic border security. The Department of Defense [announced](#) the deployment of approximately fifteen hundred active-duty troops to the southern border composed of 1,000 Army soldiers and 500 marines. Notably, these units were on standby to provide assistance with the Los Angeles County wildfires, which had begun two weeks earlier. This deployment constitutes the initial step in fulfilling President Trump’s directive to curtail the flow of unlawful migration into the United States. In a statement, Acting Secretary of Defense [Robert Salesses](#) emphasized that active-duty forces would provide critical support in transporting detained migrants, while also substantially increasing detection and monitoring efforts. This announcement follows the flurry of the Trump administration's [recent executive actions](#), which initiated a sweeping military border mission along with the designation of Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations. However, active-duty forces will not participate in law enforcement activities unless the Insurrection Act is invoked—an option President Trump is considering within the next 90 days.

A Department of Defense official, Jeff Waksman, highlighted concerns this week regarding the United States’ current energy infrastructure in light of Stargate, a new joint venture between OpenAI, Oracle, MGX, and SoftBank. With a projected [\\$500 billion](#) investment in AI and computing infrastructure over the next four years, Stargate is expected to demand an estimated five gigawatts of energy to operate its data centers, along with significant

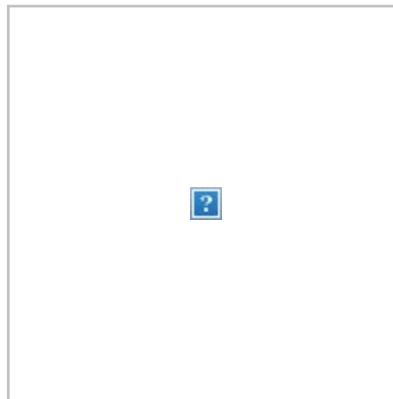
resources for cooling these systems.

While the immediate outlook for meeting these energy demands is limited, there is growing optimism for the role nuclear technologies could play in addressing this challenge.

Waksman, of the Strategic Capabilities Office, noted that Congress has already allocated several billion dollars toward rebuilding uranium enrichment facilities and developing new reactors. Additionally, private-sector companies are increasingly investing in nuclear energy, signaling a potential pathway to meet the energy needs of high-tech initiatives like Stargate while bolstering national infrastructure in the process.

In a strategic move to bolster domestic resource capabilities, the Department of Defense has awarded a \$5.1 million award through the Defense Production Act to a rare earth element recycling company. This funding will support the development of a demonstration facility and the launch of a commercial-scale operation, capable of producing up to 50 tons of critical rare minerals annually. This company's proprietary technology focuses on the extraction of four key elements essential to neodymium iron boron (NdFeB) magnets, which are integral to U.S. defense systems, including electric motors, missiles, and submarines. The initiative aims to establish a "mine-to-magnet" supply chain, reducing America's dependence on foreign sources of these vital materials. By recovering over 98% of the necessary rare minerals, the project represents a significant step toward securing the supply chain for advanced defense technologies and reinforcing the nation's long-term military readiness.

Next Week's Hearings



Armed Services Committee:

House: NONE

Senate:

- 1/28, 9:30 AM - To receive testimony on defense innovation and acquisition reform

Appropriations Committee:

House: NONE

Senate: NONE

Homeland Security Committee:

House: NONE
Senate: NONE

Other Nominations:

- 1/29, 9:00 AM - Business Meeting to consider the nomination of Pam Bondi to be Attorney General (Judiciary Committee)
- 1/29, 10:00 AM - Nomination Hearing for Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to be Secretary of Health and Human Services (Finance Committee)
- 1/29, 10:00 AM - Nomination Hearing for Howard Lutnick to be Secretary of Commerce (Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee)
- 1/29, 2:30 PM - Nomination Hearing for Kelly Loeffler to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration
- 1/30, 9:00 AM - Nomination Hearing for Kash Patel to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Judiciary Committee)
- 1/30, 10:00 AM - Nomination Hearing for Tulsi Gabbard to be Director of National Intelligence (Intelligence Committee)
- 1/30, 10:00 AM - Nomination Hearing for Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to be Secretary of Health and Human Services (Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee)
- 1/30, 10:25 AM - Business Meeting to consider the nomination of Elise Stefanik to be UN Ambassador (Foreign Relations Committee)



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