

Trump's Address To Congress Highlights The Absence Of Opposition



John P. Ruehl -

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03-12-2025 ~ The relentless resistance that defined Trump's first term has faded into an unsettling quiet. A perfect storm of factors has granted him relatively unchecked power to push drastic domestic and international changes.

During his address to Congress on March 4, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump faced [brief heckling](#) from Democratic Representative AI Green and scattered jeers from his colleagues. But the overwhelming response was silence, reflective of the reality that opposition to Trump has sharply weakened, even as his administration pushes sweeping domestic and international policy upheaval.

The opening weeks of his first term in January 2017 were met with fierce resistance, and not just from combative Democrats. People came together to protest against Trump's [immigration policies](#) and [his proposed](#) travel ban on several Muslim-majority countries. Republican politicians [openly defied him](#) amid constant media scrutiny. Clashes with the so-called "[deep state](#)" due to intelligence leaks escalated when the FBI [publicly confirmed](#) an investigation into the Trump-Russia collusion in the 2016 election. These combined tensions defined his first term, culminating in [him being temporarily banned from most major social media platforms](#) and leading to widespread condemnation and isolation

after the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

Now, at the start of his second term, opposition is notably subdued. The [Women's March](#) that drew millions in 2017, becoming “the largest single-day public demonstration in U.S. history,” [according](#) to the New York Times, seems to have “[lost its luster](#)” during his second term. The [February 5](#) protest against Trump and Elon Musk's policies drew a low turnout, mostly confined to liberal enclaves, and the 2025 Oscars—once a stage for political grandstanding—[avoided directly critiquing](#) the president. Even Green's disruption [caused dissent](#) within his own party, with 10 Democrats censuring him the next day.

Political and institutional fatigue, shifting cultural dynamics, and strategic alignment by [corporations, billionaires](#), politicians, and other [public figures](#) have blunted resistance, leaving the Trump administration with fewer obstacles as it pushes forward with its agenda.

One major factor is the weakness and division within the Democratic Party, preventing grassroots progressives from working with top-level establishment Democrats. After years of Biden attempting to balance the party's [competing factions](#), tensions [rose significantly](#) following his response to the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas. Trump's victory a year later—securing both the electoral college and popular vote—has only deepened these fractures, [fueling a blame game](#) that contrasts with the unity following Trump's narrower 2016 election victory.

The party's electoral failures are compounded by the absence of a unifying figure. Nancy Pelosi is no longer speaker, and while Chuck Schumer is the Senate minority leader, both of them are old and [unpopular](#). Bernie Sanders, who is in his 80s, represents [a sidelined progressive movement](#) that has struggled to elevate new, dynamic leaders due to years of suppression by establishment Democrats. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries [has failed to offer new solutions](#), only deepening apathy and fatigue.

Without organizational cohesion and the ability to inspire its base, the Democratic Party has been unable to marshal its diverse coalition against Trump's agenda. The issue that has [mobilized progressives](#) in large numbers in recent years is Palestine, which establishment Democrats are reluctant to support, including the [recent arrest and threatened deportation](#) of pro-Palestinian student Mahmoud

Khalil. [Losing young male voters](#) has further weakened the party's ability to generate active dissent.

Its [association with progressive identity politics](#) has meanwhile alienated broader segments of the electorate, with Biden having failed to address glaring economic issues and matters like [crime](#) and [immigration](#) during his presidency.

On the Republican side, dissenting voices like Mitt Romney and the late John McCain are gone, and those who still might challenge Trump within the party [fear backlash](#) and isolation. "[Never Trump](#)" conservative groups have struggled to pull voters away, while Trump's systemic dismantling of government bureaucracy ([historically staffed with left-leaning officials](#)) and the appointment of loyalists to key positions have cemented his control over the government and prevented institutional attempts to undermine him.

With Republican control over all three branches of government, a conservative-majority Supreme Court, and Trump loyalists installed across federal agencies, his power—though often overstated—far surpasses that of his first term. Executive orders, constrained by previous presidents, are now being deployed at an [unprecedented rate](#). His administration's ambitious federal restructuring efforts, tied to the Project 2025 framework, go beyond the government overhauls of Ronald Reagan's [Grace Commission](#) or Bill Clinton's bipartisan [National Performance Review](#). Yet, Democratic disarray has left these efforts largely unchecked.

Trump's progress also hinges on the support of the ultrawealthy. The Democratic Party is [experiencing a funding shortfall](#), not just from grassroots donors but from major oligarchs as well. Meanwhile, Trump has secured broader public backing from America's corporate elite. Years of frustration with Democrats and the political left over issues like diversity, equity, and inclusion ([DEI](#)) initiatives, [taxation](#), and [regulations](#) have pushed many business leaders toward his camp.

This repositioning was on full display at Trump's inauguration, where Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, and many more wealthy individuals were [given front-row seats](#). Google's decision to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the "[Gulf of America](#)," a Trump executive order, signals the larger realignment across corporate America.

No billionaire has played a more consequential role than Elon Musk. Though his relationship with Trump was rocky [just a few years ago](#), Musk's endorsement of Trump [in July 2024](#) cemented a powerful alliance between them. Musk's control of X (formerly Twitter) not only [reintroduced](#) Trump to the media platform but also helped normalize his return to [other social media networks](#). Meanwhile, Democrats have struggled to maintain their online presence [amid declining engagement and financial strain](#).

This realignment has extended into the corporate media landscape. The aggressive anti-Trump narratives that dominated his first term have softened, driven by audience backlash against media institutions and [wider progressive messaging](#). With traditional media outlets [facing declining viewership](#), and the growing influence of [oligarchic forces](#) now backing Trump, the media's pivot is as much about survival as it is about political recalibration.

Signs of this emerged even before the election. Jeff Bezos, who has owned the Washington Post since 2013, [withdrew the paper's endorsement](#) of Kamala Harris, as did billionaire Patrick Soon-Shiong, owner of the Los Angeles Times. CNN, under new leadership [since 2023](#), has steadily adopted a more centrist tone, shedding high-profile [anti-Trump figures like Don Lemon](#). MSNBC is undergoing an [even more dramatic transformation](#), with outspoken Trump critics like Joy Reid and Alex Wagner [losing their primetime slots](#) in February 2025, while there has been scaling back of influence of others [like Rachel Maddow](#) in favor of less combative voices.

Emboldened by a changing media environment, Trump is increasingly punishing outlets. The Associated Press was [banned from presidential events](#) in February after declining to adopt the "Gulf of America" name. CBS remains embroiled in a [\\$20 billion lawsuit](#) filed by Trump over an edited interview with Kamala Harris, with Musk declaring that CBS reporters "[deserve a long prison sentence](#)."

Meanwhile, Disney-ABC settled a defamation lawsuit with Trump for [\\$15 million](#) and recently replaced a transgender character from a new series [with a Christian one](#). Meta, too, [in January 2025, settled for \\$25 million](#) for banning Trump from Facebook and Instagram after January 6. While these are small fines for corporate giants, they symbolize an increasing subservience to Trump, with both payments directed toward funding Trump's presidential library.

It's hardly surprising that Trump appears so powerful at this moment. Political opposition is fractured, leaving no effective barriers to Trump's agenda. Many oligarchs have given him their quiet or public approval, as seen during his inauguration. The media's softened stance has shaped a perception of reduced conflict. The absence of strong opposition has created new momentum as political, corporate, and media institutions adapt to this shifting power balance instead of fighting it, reducing the public's appetite for resistance as well. For now, Trump is riding high after his election victory.

But cracks are beginning to show. Public resistance to Musk's influence [is growing](#), and the [economic turbulence](#) triggered by Trump's policies is stirring unease. Without a strong and combative adversary, Trump and his most ardent supporters may find themselves without a rallying cause. International stability could further test his power, and the reality of governance may prove far more challenging than dismantling what came before.

Is this already the peak of Trump's power, or can it be sustained? Opposition to Trump [fluctuated during his first term](#), yet today, the political, business, and [cultural](#) landscapes have adjusted in his favor. His greatest advantage, however, may be the quiet acquiescence of elites from various backgrounds. While some may oppose him openly, many are content to let events play out due to self-interest or inertia.

By John P. Ruehl

Author Bio: John P. Ruehl is an Australian-American journalist living in Washington, D.C., and a world affairs correspondent for the [Independent Media Institute](#). He is a contributor to several foreign affairs publications, and his book, [Budget Superpower: How Russia Challenges the West With an Economy Smaller Than Texas](#), was published in December 2022.

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