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Donald Trump Allegedly Asked Aides Whether Elon Musk's DOGE Promises Were 'All Bulls---'

Musk once claimed that he could save the government \$2 trillion, but his four-month stint as the leader of DOGE only produced a fraction of the savings

By [Meredith Kile](#) | Published on June 2, 2025 04:35PM EDT

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President Donald Trump; Elon Musk. Credit : Brandon Bell/Getty

NEED TO KNOW

- New reporting from *The Wall Street Journal* alleges that there was tension between Elon Musk and the Trump administration prior to his departure from the Department of Government Efficiency on May 30.
- According to *WSJ*, Donald Trump has privately questioned whether Elon Musk's cost-cutting promises were "bulls---," after DOGE produced much smaller results than anticipated.
- Musk, who spent the past four months at the helm of the DOGE, claims that the agency can still save the government \$1 trillion over the next few years.

Though [Donald Trump](#) and [Elon Musk](#) put forth a united front during their [final joint press conference](#) on Friday, May 30, some are suggesting that tensions behind the scenes finally reached a breaking point ahead of the tech billionaire's departure.

In a report from [The Wall Street Journal](#) released on Musk's final day as a government employee, Trump administration officials quoted the president as recently asking his advisers, "Was it all bulls---?" in regard to Musk's promise to dramatically slash costs via the [Department of Government Efficiency](#).

While Musk at one time claimed that he could save the government [\\$2 trillion](#), DOGE's most recent estimate is that it's saved \$175 billion — and even that figure has been [framed as an overestimate](#) by multiple news outlets that [tracked down the receipts](#). Plus, the Trump administration has learned that the high cost of legal fees associated with Musk's actions — plus the dip in revenue as a result of DOGE's cuts — largely negates those savings.

Speaking with the press on Friday, Musk said he was "confident" that DOGE's spending cuts could still save the government at least \$1 trillion over the next few years, despite the fact that he was stepping down as its de facto leader. The Tesla CEO was limited to a 130-day contract as a special government employee, which ended on May 30.

"This is not the end of DOGE. This is only the beginning," Musk, 53, told reporters. "I look forward to continuing to be a friend and adviser to the president, and I look forward to continuing to support the DOGE team."

While he praised Musk's work and even presented him with the "Key to the White House," *WSJ*'s reporting claims that Trump insiders saw "flashes of skepticism and frustration" in the president's reaction to the polarizing billionaire.



Elon Musk holds a key gifted by U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House on May 30, 2025.

Credit: Kevin Dietsch/Getty

According to the *WSJ*, Musk would keep DOGE's work so secretive that top administration officials would learn what was happening from the news. He raised eyebrows by [insulting trade adviser Peter Navarro](#), interrupting Cabinet meetings to gripe about how his government work was [affecting his businesses](#), and privately lobbying against Trump's ["Liberation Day" tariffs](#), saying they would be "terrible for the global economy," the report claims.

Two of Musk's biggest blowups with the Trump White House had to do with crucial foreign relations, the *WSJ* alleges. The president was reportedly "irritated" to learn that the tech billionaire wanted to receive [top-secret briefings on China](#) from the Pentagon, calling it a "conflict of interest."

Then in May, Musk was reportedly so "incensed" by business rival Sam Altman being brought in on a deal during Trump's trip to Saudi Arabia that he complained to multiple White House officials. In order to appease Musk, the report alleges, Trump pushed back the announcement of the deal and cut Altman out of the public event.

The outlet also alleges that at one point, the White House staff's tension with Musk got bad enough that Trump himself asked White House chief of staff Susie Wiles to more closely monitor the DOGE leader.



President Donald Trump and Elon Musk look at Tesla vehicles on the South Lawn of the White House on March 11, 2025.

Credit: Andrew Harnik/Getty

Just before announcing his official departure from the White House, Musk publicly [expressed his "disappointment"](#) with Trump's "Big, Beautiful Bill."

"I was disappointed to see the massive spending bill, frankly, which increases the budget deficit, not just decreases it, and undermines the work that the DOGE team is doing," he told [CBS Sunday Morning](#) in an interview that aired in full on June 1.

The "Big, Beautiful Bill" is funding its tax cuts and military spending in part by cutting some federal health and energy programs. However, it is also poised to add an estimated \$3.8 trillion to the national deficit, according to the nonpartisan [Congressional Budget Office](#).

"I think a bill can be big or it can be beautiful, but I don't know if it can be both," Musk said.

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By Meredith Kile

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Still, when he and Trump addressed the media for Musk's farewell on Friday, the men put on friendly faces.

Musk also took a moment to laugh off his latest scandal — just hours prior to the press conference, *The New York Times* released [a bombshell report about Musk's alleged drug habits](#) while he was working his way into Trump's inner circle.

Citing sources close to the SpaceX CEO, the *Times* claimed that Musk admitted to people around him that he used ketamine frequently, sometimes daily. The publication also alleged that Musk used ecstasy and hallucinogenic mushrooms, and was known to travel with a pill box that contained Adderall, the ADHD treatment drug, which can be a stimulant for some.

The *Times*' sources pin Musk's drug abuse to 2024, as the SpaceX CEO was ramping up support for Trump's reelection campaign, donating nearly \$275 million. It's unclear whether or not the alleged drug use followed him into the White House, however, public displays of erratic behavior — such as proudly displaying a [Nazi-like salute](#) and [wielding a chainsaw onstage](#) at a political conference — continued after the inauguration.





Elon Musk wields a chainsaw at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on Feb. 20, 2025. Credit: Andrew Harnik/Getty

When asked about the *Times* article by reporters on Friday, Musk immediately interrupted the question to fire back at the outlet.

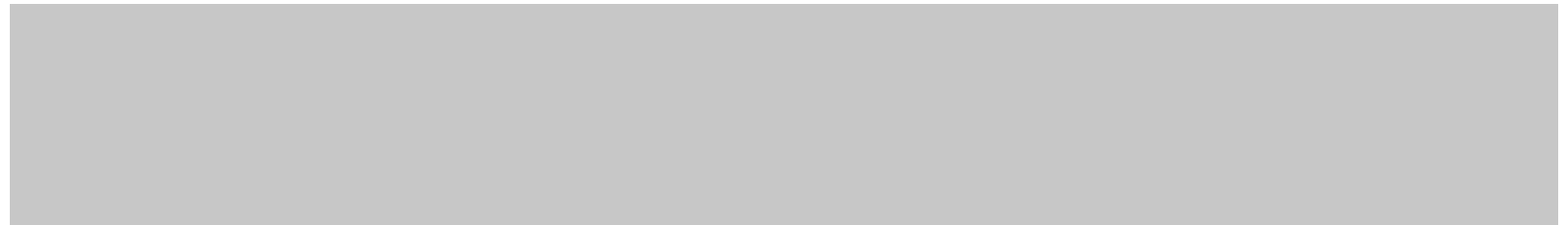
“*New York Times*, is that the same publication that got a Pulitzer Prize for false reporting on Russiagate? Is it the same organization? I think it is!” he said. “I think the judge just ruled against the New York Times for their lies about the Russiagate hoax, and that they might have to give back that Pulitzer Prize.”

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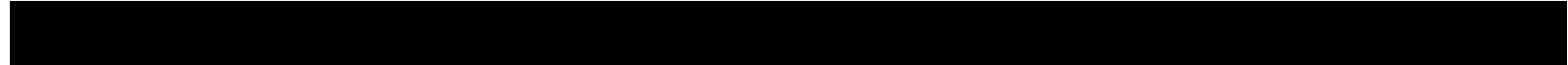


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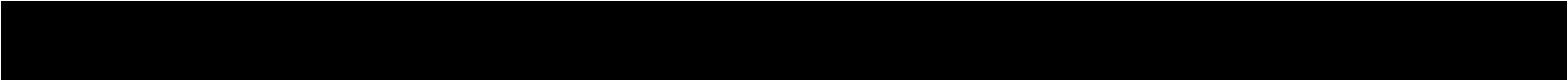
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