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Trump is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement (again), reversing U.S. climate policy

JANUARY 21, 2025 · 5:00 AM ET

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By Nate Perez, Rachel Waldholz

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President Trump signed a slew of executive orders Monday after his inauguration, including an order to begin the process of withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement.

Sean Gallup/AP

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President Donald Trump is withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement — again.

Accept All



Under the international climate accord, first negotiated in 2015, countries around the world agreed to cut greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to limit global warming and forestall the worst impacts of climate change.

Trump has argued the agreement imposes unfair burdens on the American economy, and he withdrew the U.S. during his first term in office. The U.S. officially rejoined under President Joe Biden in 2021.

On Monday, Trump started the process over again, signing an order onstage before supporters at the Capital One Arena, just hours after taking office.

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"I'm immediately withdrawing from the unfair, one-sided Paris climate accord rip-off," he said during earlier remarks, to loud cheers from the audience. "The United States will not sabotage our own industries while China pollutes with impunity."

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POLITICS

Trump has declared a 'national energy emergency.' What does that mean?

China is currently the largest global emitter of greenhouse gases, though it also leads the world in the deployment of renewable energy. U.S. emissions have been decreasing since the mid-2000s, but it remains the largest historical contributor of total carbon dioxide emissions.

The move to exit the Paris Agreement wasn't a surprise, given that Trump's campaign signaled the departure months ago.

But it comes after the hottest year on record, as major wildfires are still burning in Los Angeles, and just months after devastating hurricanes hit communities from Florida to North Carolina. Climate change is increasing the risk from hurricanes, driving more extreme rainfall, and making more intense and destructive wildfires more likely.



CLIMATE

2024 was the hottest year on record. The reason remains a science mystery

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Even now, we're seeing these droughts, storms, heat waves, flooding, sea level rise accelerating," Cleetus said. "It is just stunning already the kinds of impacts that are unfolding."

Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and an architect of the Paris Agreement, said in a statement that the U.S. pulling out of the deal is unfortunate. But, she said, international climate action "has proven resilient and is stronger than any single country's politics and policies."

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"This moment should serve as a wake-up call to reform the system, ensuring that those most affected – communities and individuals on the front lines – are at the center of our collective governance," Tubiana said.

An ambitious global tool — that has so far fallen short

Under the Paris Agreement, nearly every country in the world agreed to a goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

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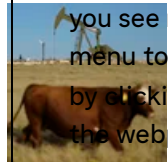
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As part of the Paris Agreement's terms, countries submit targets for emissions reductions and provide periodic updates on their progress. Before Biden left office, he announced a new U.S. goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50% from peak levels by 2035, a goal that would likely require a rapid transition away from fossil fuels. That target is now moot.

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In the order signed Monday, Trump directed his U.N. ambassador to submit formal notice of the U.S. exit (Trump's nominee for ambassador to the U.N., New York Republican Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, has not yet been confirmed by the Senate). While the order says U.S. withdrawal will be effective "immediately" once notice is given, the Paris Agreement itself stipulates that the process takes a full year.

Though Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement during his first term in office, it wasn't easy to leave. The administration was bound by restrictions on exiting the accord during its first few years. It ultimately took nearly four years before the U.S. was actually out of the agreement, said David Waskow, who leads international climate policy and politics at the World Resources Institute.



Greenhouse gases reach a new record as nations fall behind on climate pledges

But the world is not currently on track to meet these goals. Last year was the hottest in human history, with global average temperatures hovering around that 1.5 degree Celsius level of warming.

"That is very different this time," Waskow said.

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Leaving the accord could prove damaging, Waskow said, by potentially sidelining the U.S. from some clean energy and green tech markets and reducing leverage with other countries. That would impact some of Trump's broader economic goals for the U.S.

Trump has been hostile to many renewable energy initiatives and other climate measures, including efforts to promote electric vehicles. His nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, Lee Zeldin, acknowledged the reality of human-caused climate change in his confirmation hearing, but has indicated the Trump administration would seek to roll back many environmental regulations.

Revoking Biden-era climate efforts
Trump also issued a barrage of other orders Monday aimed at boosting fossil fuels and undoing Biden-era initiatives to limit greenhouse gas emissions. He declared a national energy emergency and revoked many of Biden's executive orders on climate change. New orders instruct agencies to roll back restrictions on offshore drilling and reconsider protections for Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Trump also issued a moratorium on new wind power projects on federal lands, pausing new leases and permits for both onshore and offshore wind farms. He revoked an executive order that compelled government regulators to assess the

risks of climate change to the financial system. And he instructed agencies to review any regulations that might "burden the development of domestic energy resources."

That could include major Biden administration climate policies, including EPA rules limiting emissions from coal- and gas-fired power plants and new fees on methane emissions from the oil and gas industry.

Julia Simon contributed reporting to this story.

climate change paris agreement trump's presidential transition

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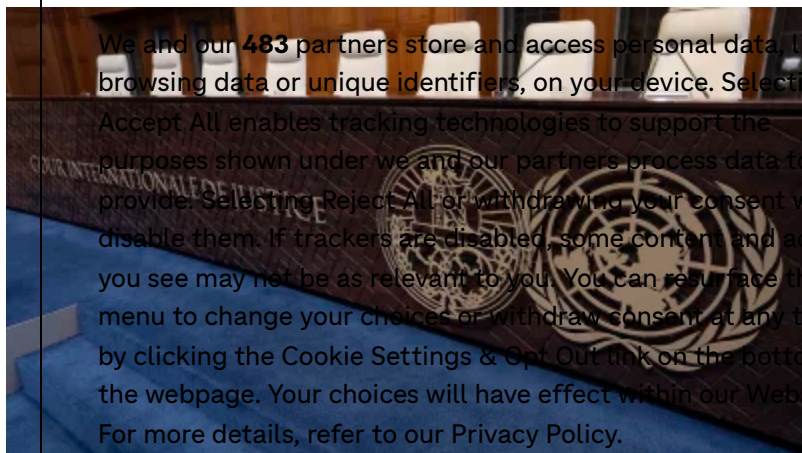
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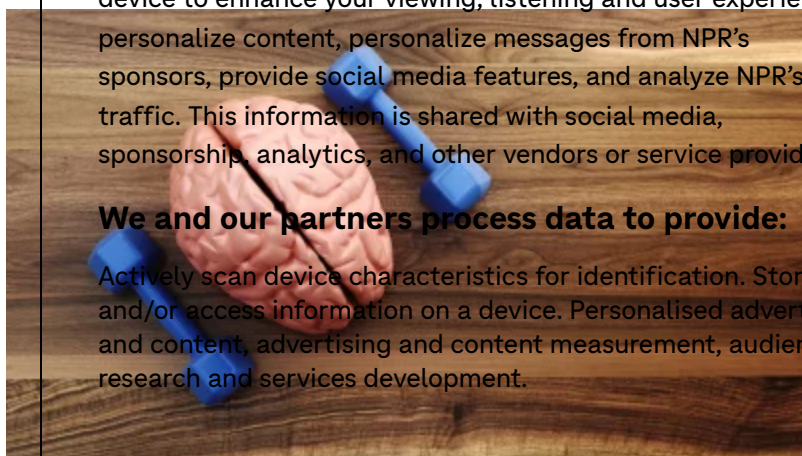
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U.S. and Iran agree to 2-week ceasefire, suspending Trump's threat to annihilate Iran

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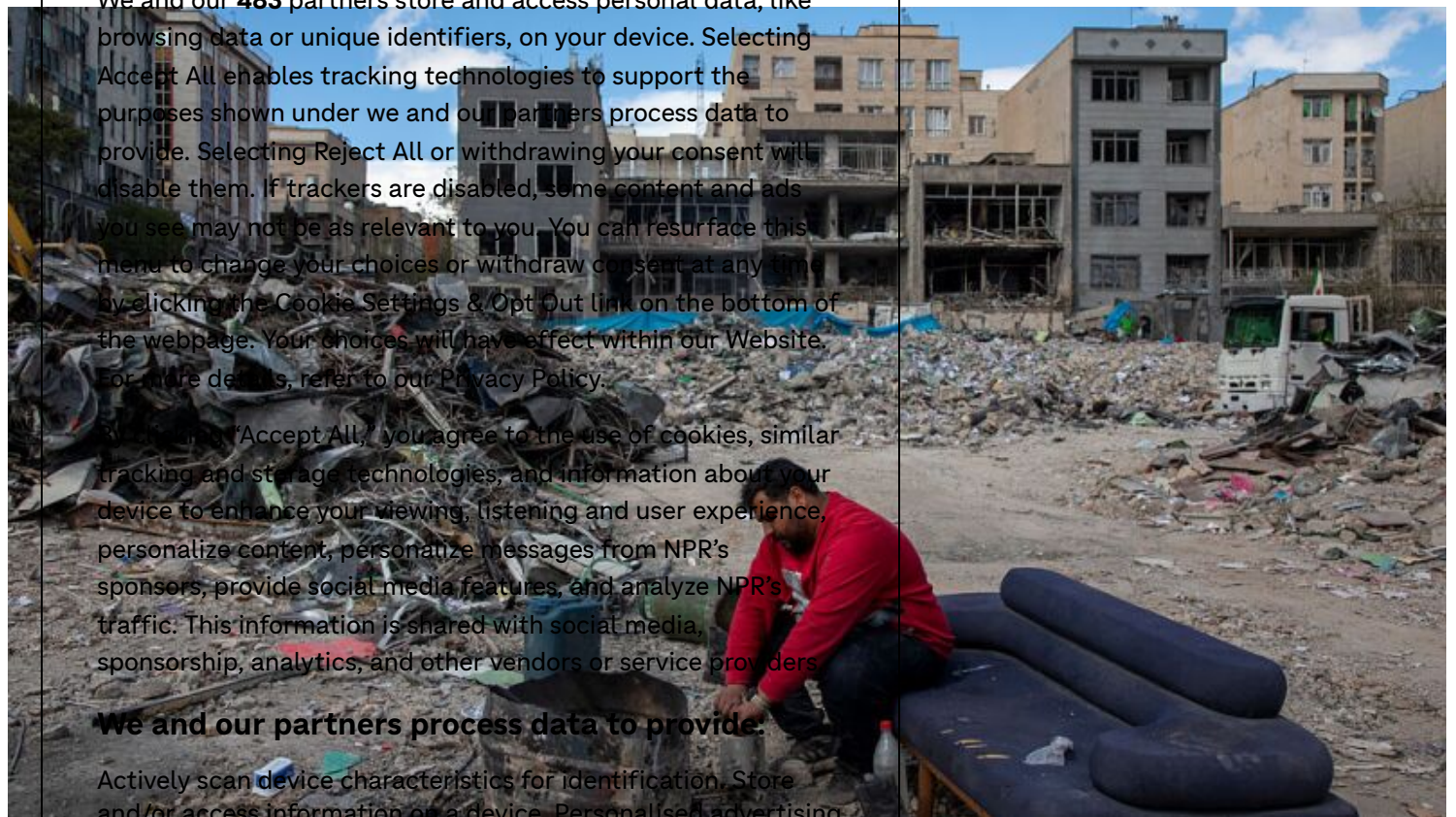
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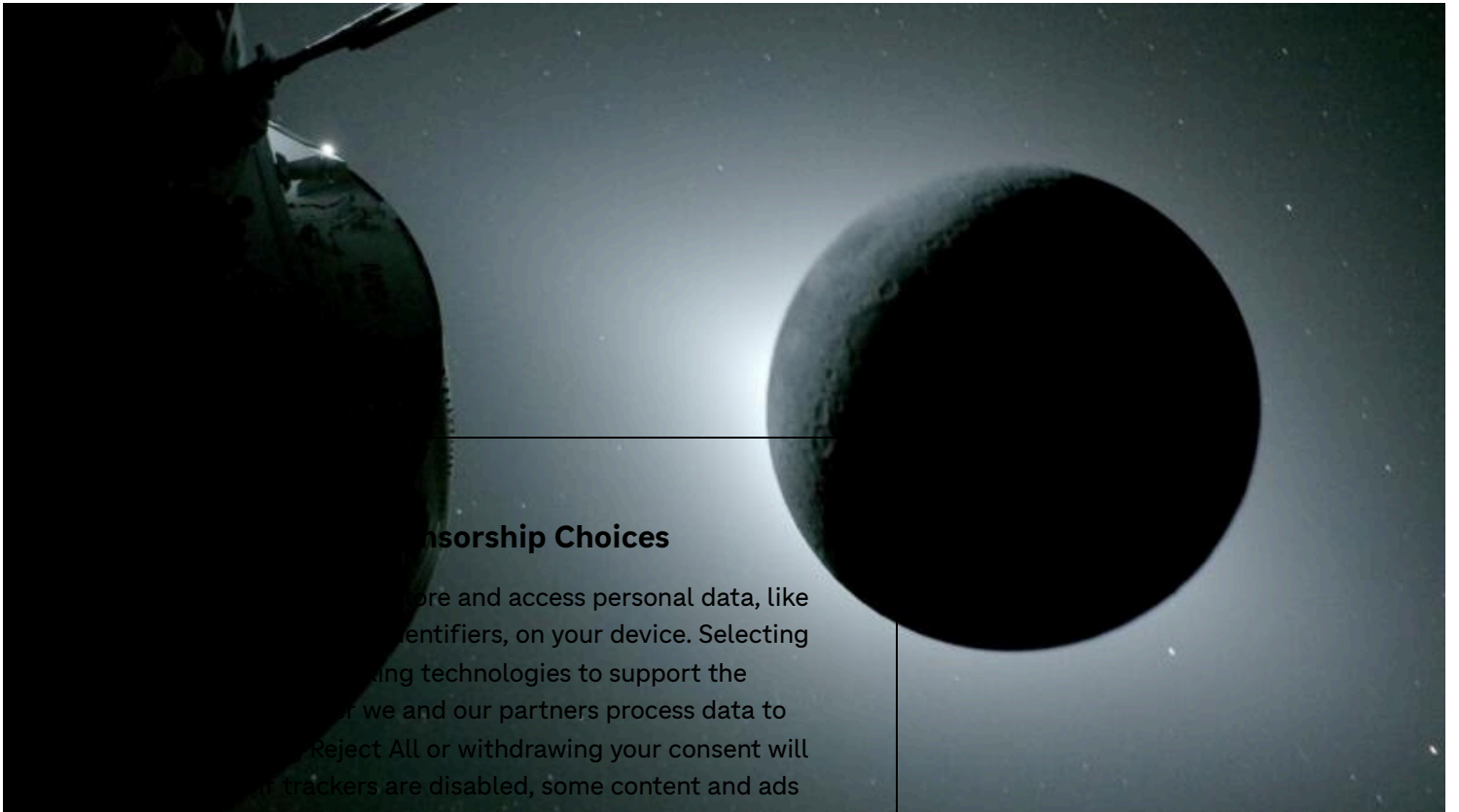
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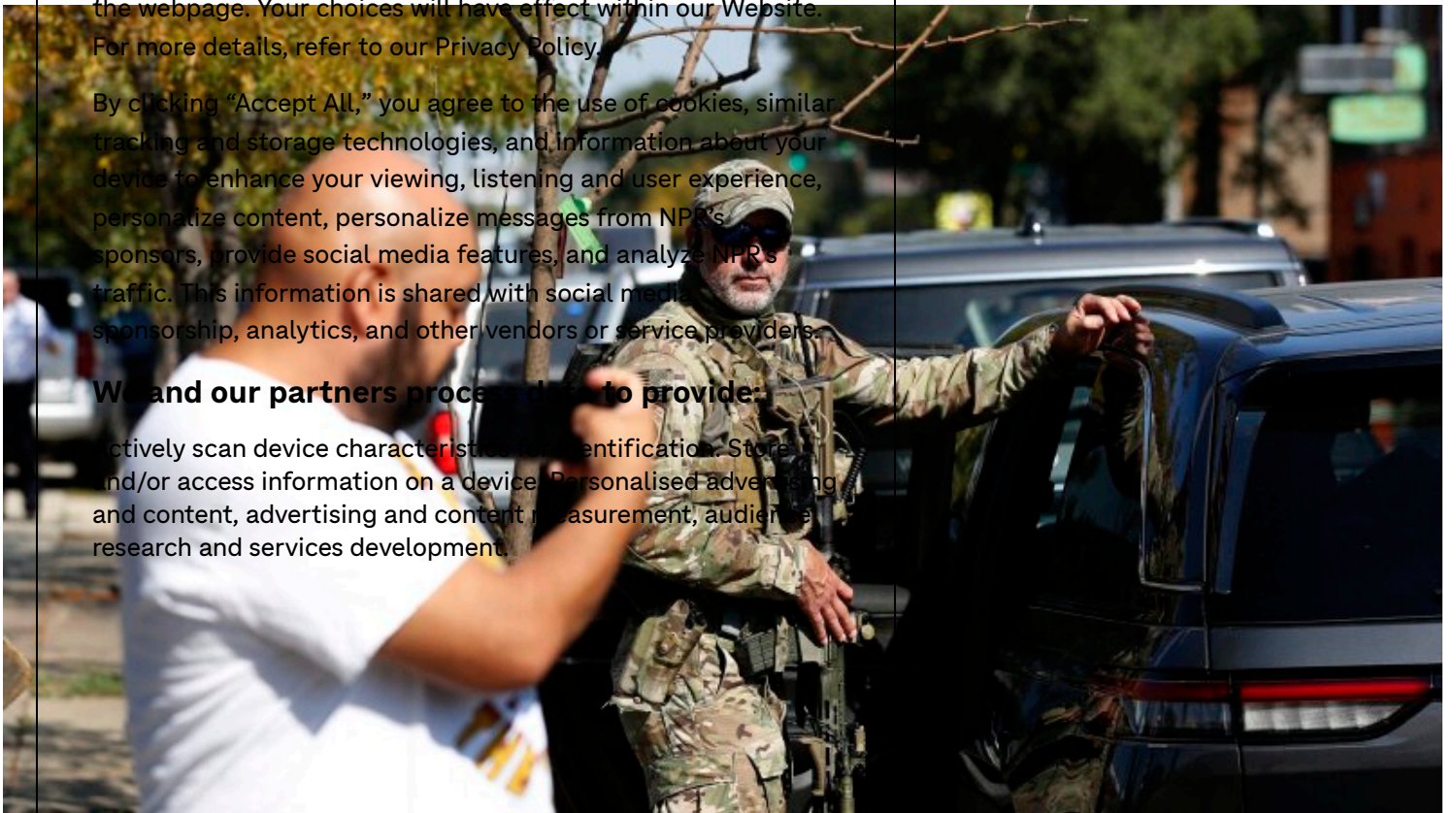
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The Artemis II crew saw parts of the moon never seen before. Here's what they said



TECHNOLOGY

ICE acknowledges it is using spyware



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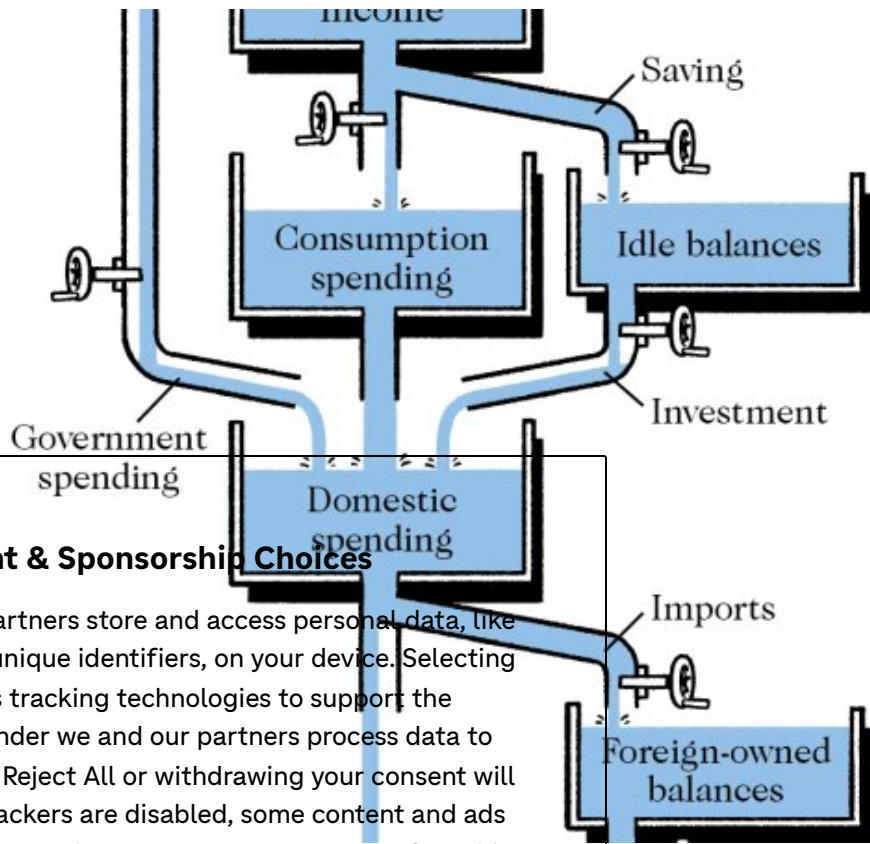
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HEALTH

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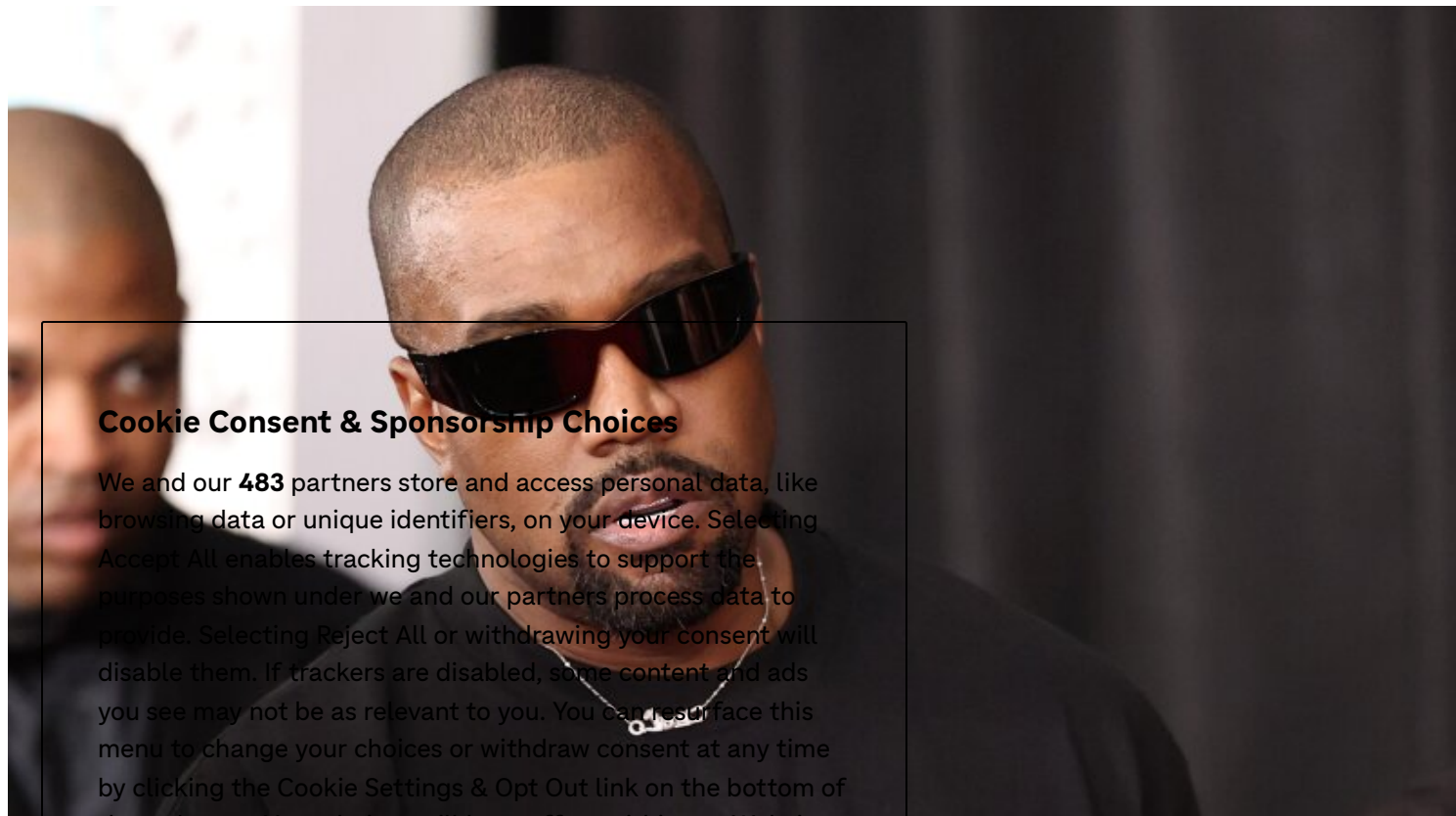
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POLITICS

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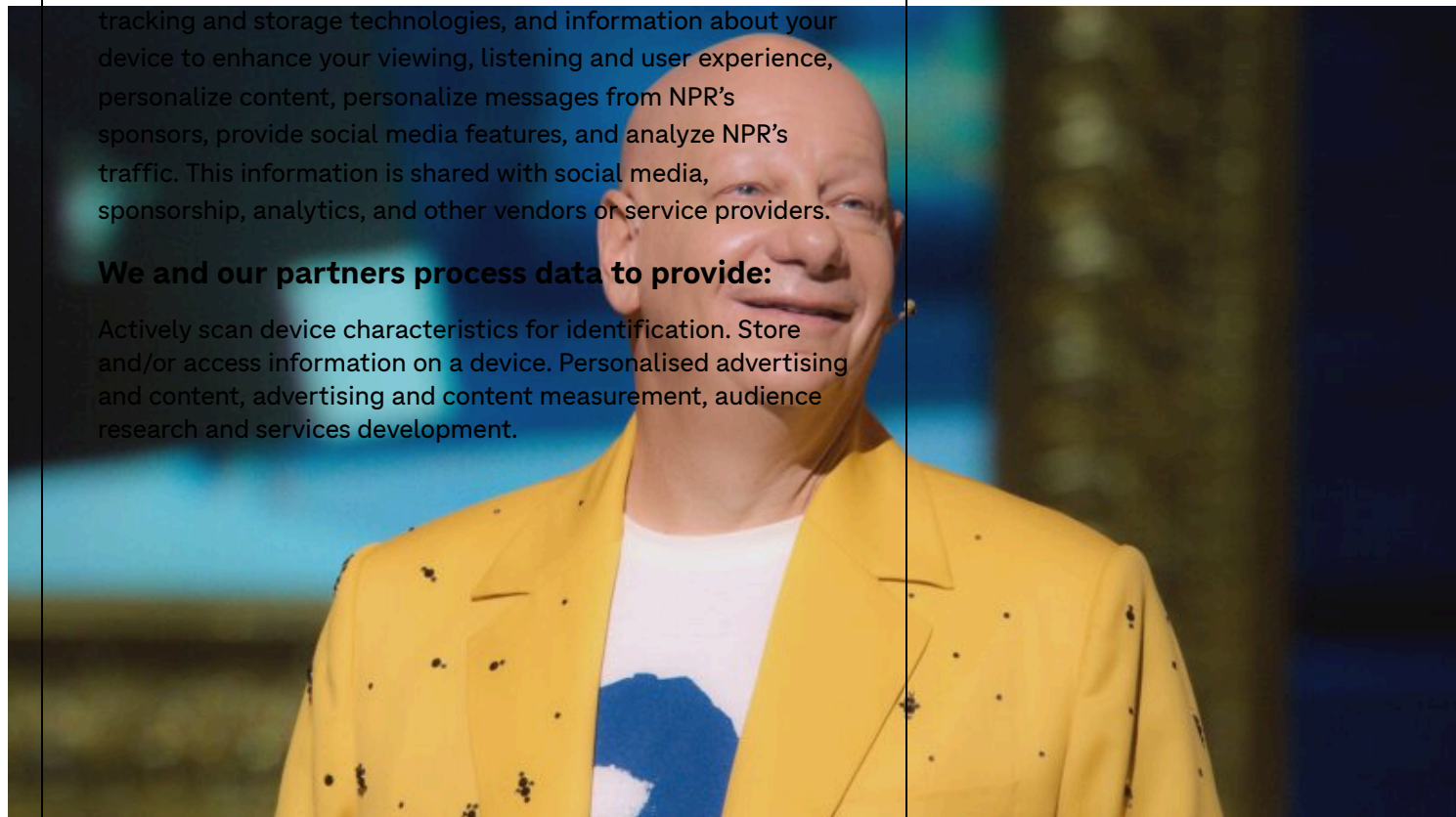
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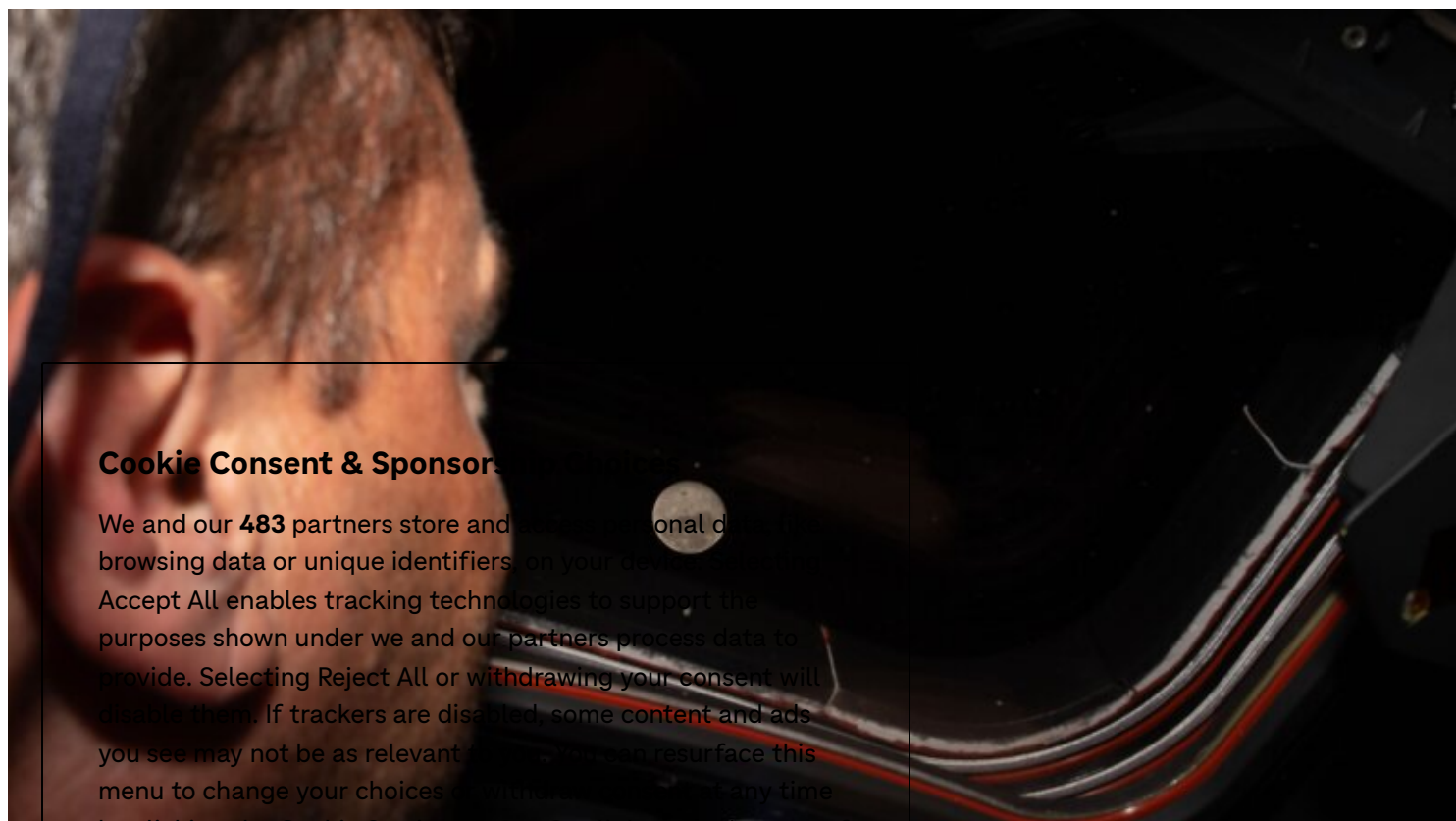
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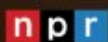
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SPACE Astronauts suggest naming a moon crater 'Carroll' after their commander's late wife

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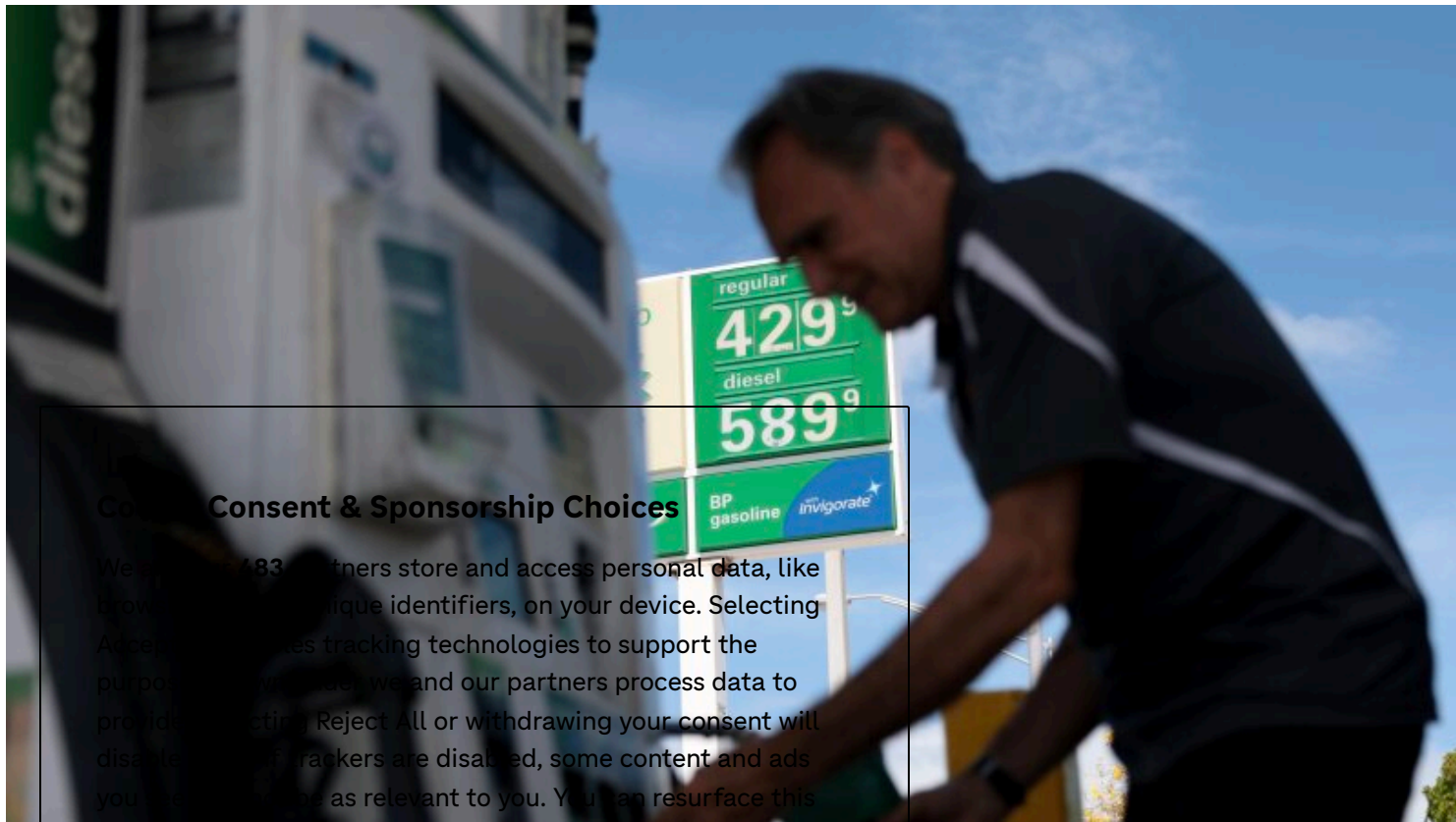
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