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# ACLU and other advocates sue to block migrants from being sent to Guantánamo Bay

MARCH 1, 2025 · 11:56 PM ET


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 Sacha Pfeiffer

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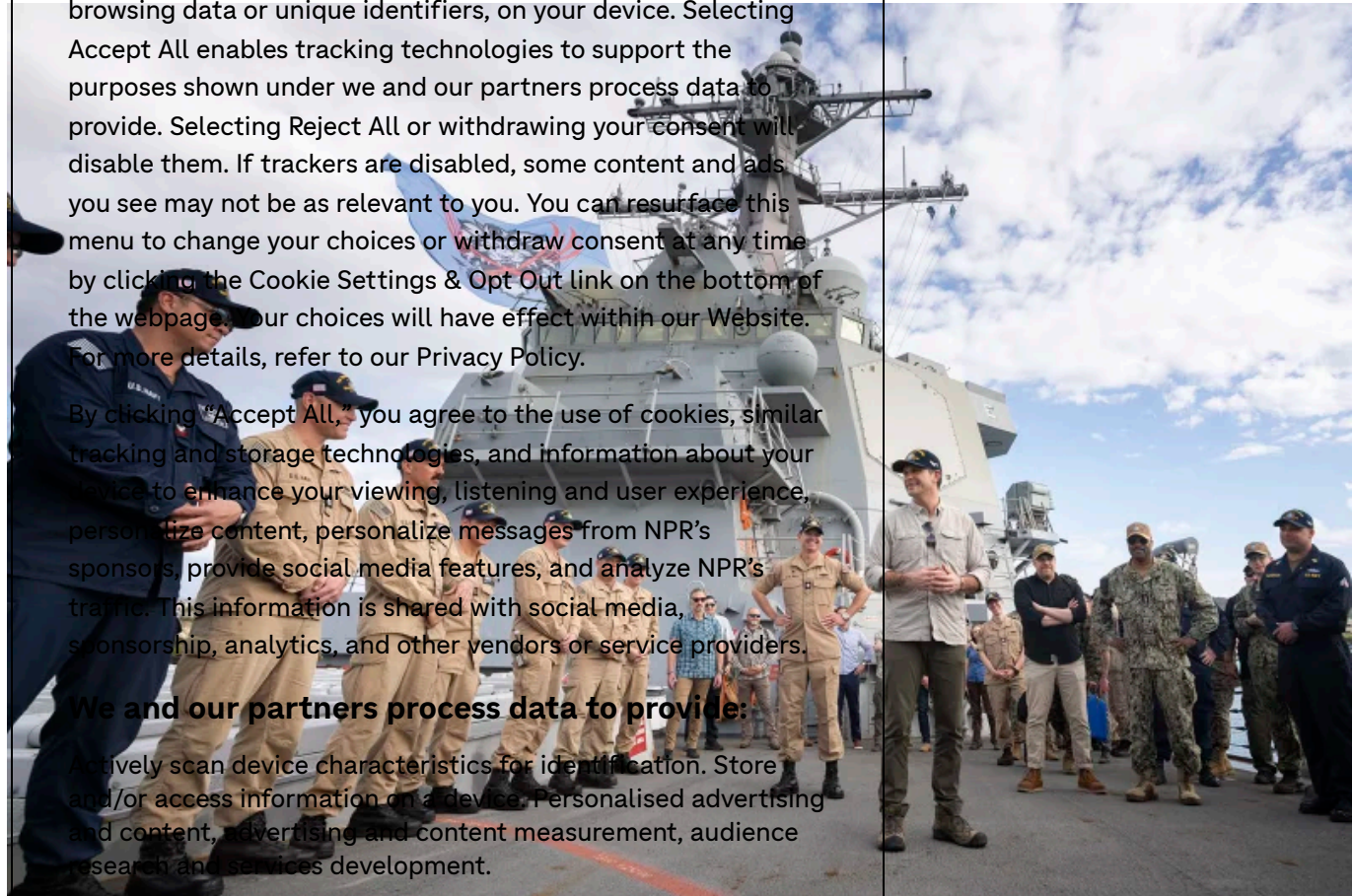
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Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth meets with Sailors assigned to Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hudner (DDG 116) during his visit to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Feb. 25, 2025.

Alexander **Manage Preferences** Secretary of Defense

A coalition of immigrant rights and legal aid organizations has sued the Trump administration to try to stop the transfer of migrants from the United States to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.





## INVESTIGATIONS

### ACLU and other advocates sue for access to migrants moved to Guantánamo Bay

Saturday's lawsuit does not challenge the U.S. government's authority to detain migrants on U.S. soil, or to deport them directly to their home country or another country allowed under immigration law. Instead, the American Civil Liberties Union and its partner civil rights groups -- the Center for Constitutional Rights, International Refugee Assistance Project, and ACLU of the District of Columbia -- argue that it is illegal for the U.S. to first send those migrants to Guantánamo.

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The **wit** maintains that there is no legitimate reason to do that because the government has ample detention capacity inside the United States, and because holding migrants in the U.S. is more financially and operationally practical.

The lawsuit alleges that the reason the Trump administration is sending migrants to Guantánamo is to "instill fear in the immigrant population."

"Sending inmates to a remote abusive prison is not only illegal and unprecedented, but illogical given the additional cost and logistical complications," Lee Gelernt, lead counsel and deputy director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, said in a statement. "Ultimately this is about theatrics."



NATIONAL

### The first group of migrants has been sent to Guantánamo, but legal challenges loom

The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of ten migrants "at imminent" risk of being transferred to Guantánamo from detention centers in Texas, Arizona and Virginia. All of the men, who are from Venezuela, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, are being detained pending final removal orders.

The litigation lays the groundwork for an eventual broader lawsuit that aims to block the transfer of any migrant to Guantánamo. The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Since President Donald Trump returned to office in January, his administration has sent more than 200 migrants to Guantánamo, where it has said it plans to hold them temporarily until it can find other countries to take them. The majority of those migrants were transferred to Venezuela within a few weeks, but additional migrants were later sent to Guantánamo.

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NATIONAL SECURITY



## Trump says the U.S. will send the 'worst criminal illegal aliens' to Guantánamo Bay

Last month, the ACLU and its fellow plaintiffs filed another lawsuit against the Trump administration demanding that migrants at Guantánamo be given access to lawyers. That suit is pending.

"This lawless project to take people from U.S. soil and detain them at this notorious offshore prison must be stopped," Kimberly Grano, a staff attorney with the International Refugee Assistance Project, said in a statement.

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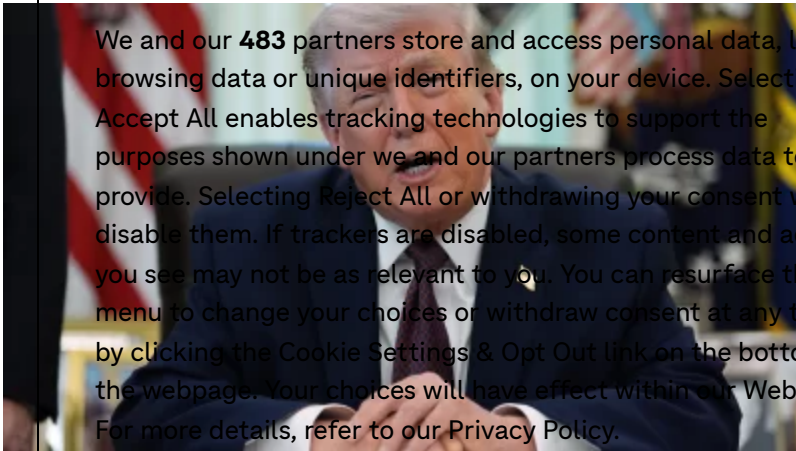


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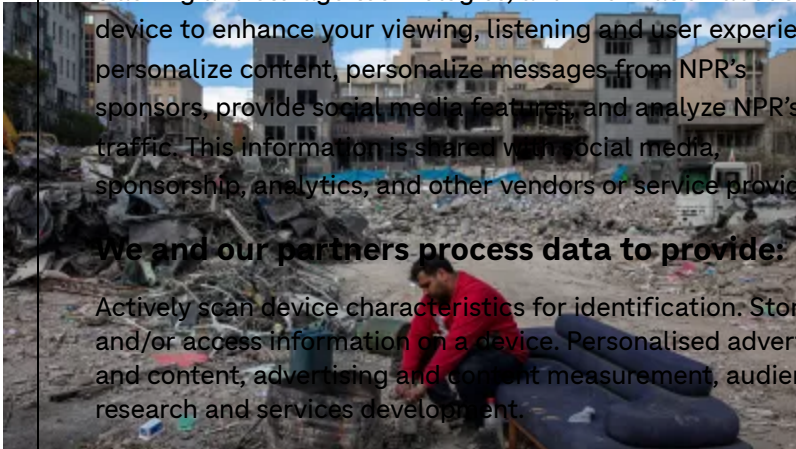


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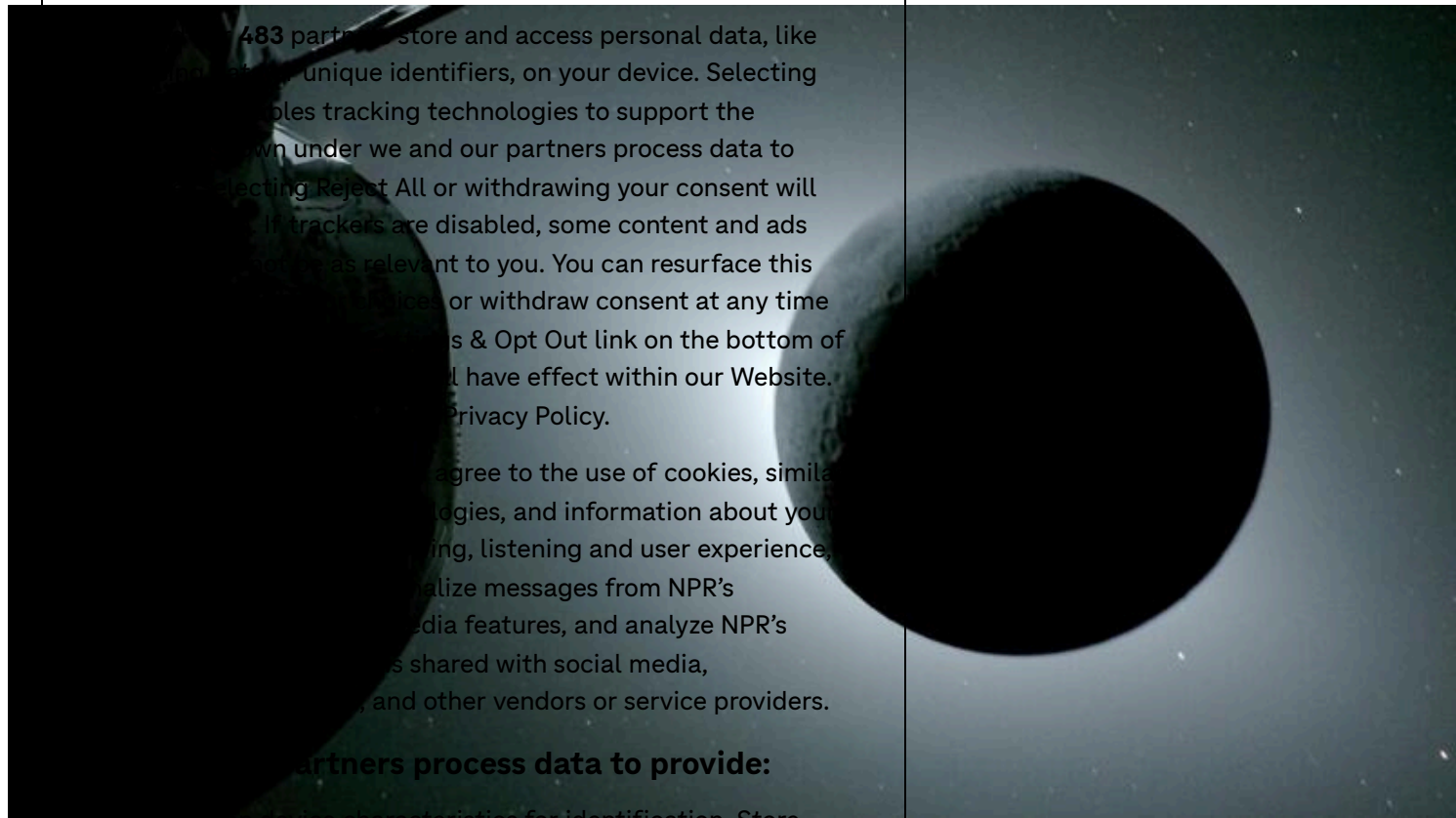
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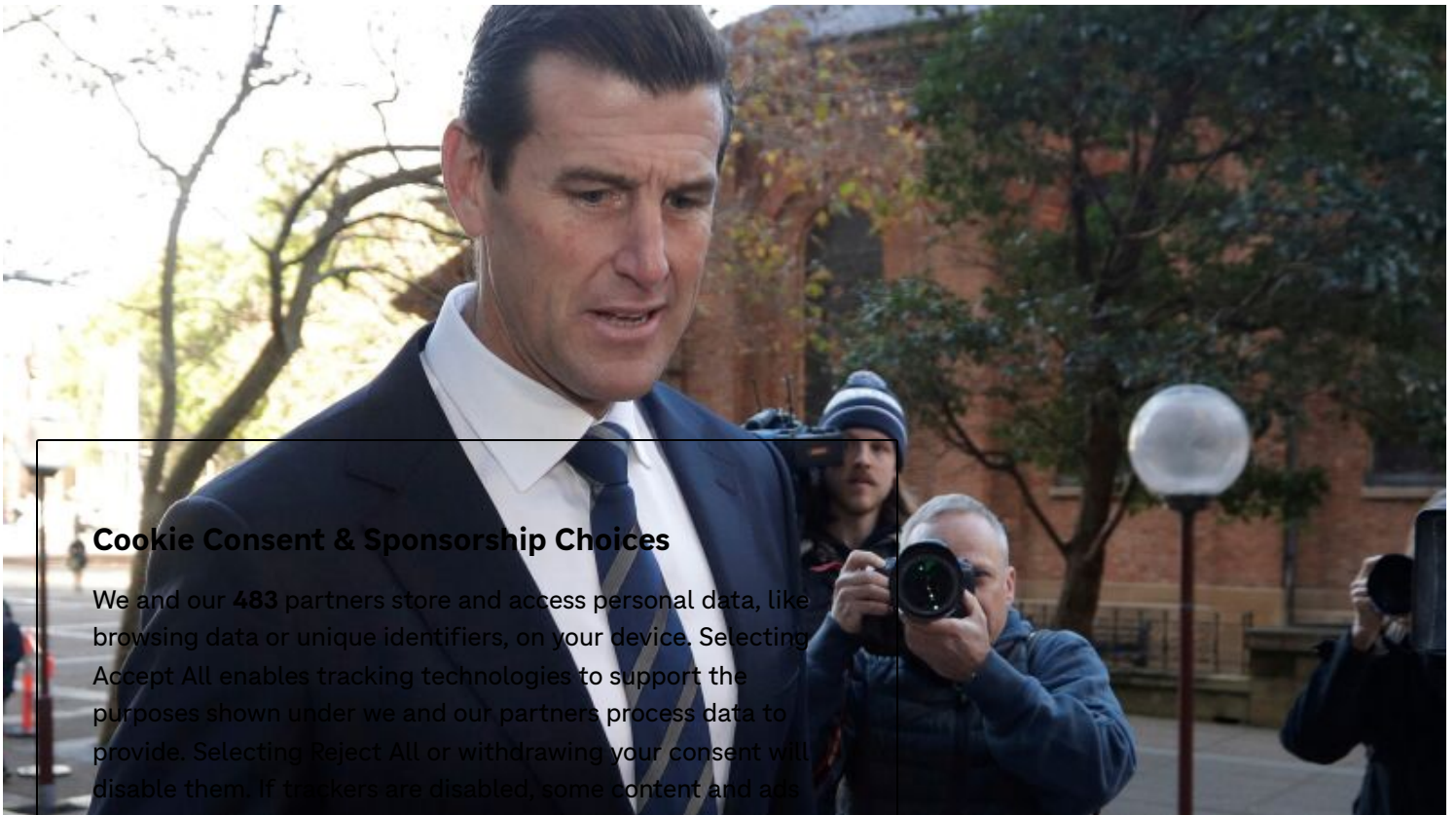
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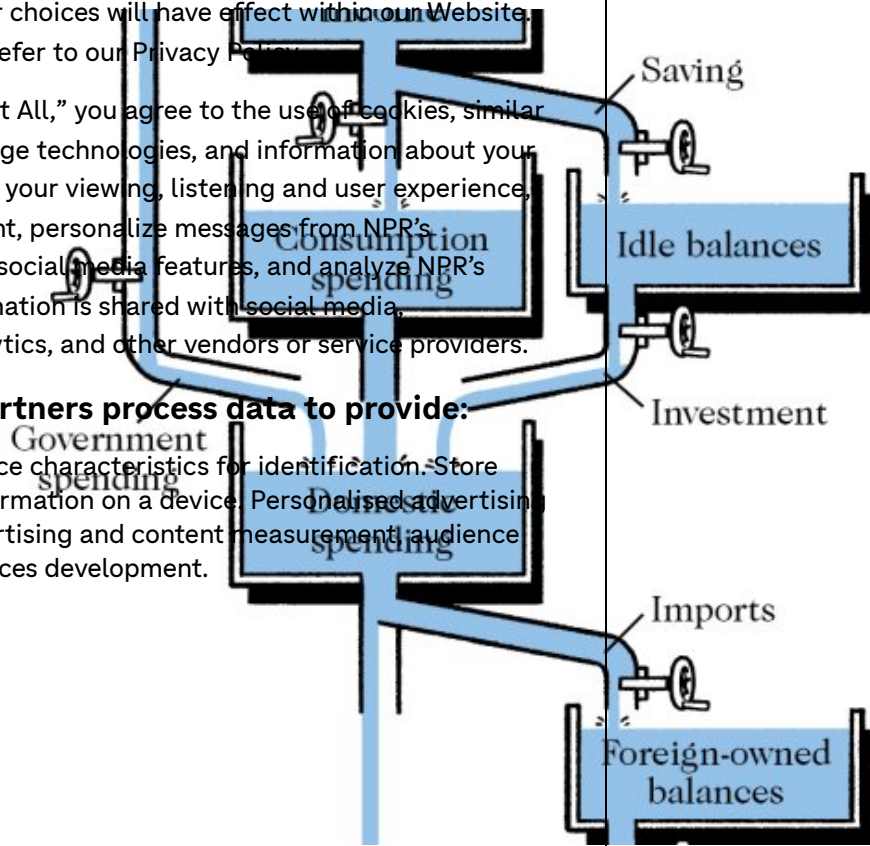
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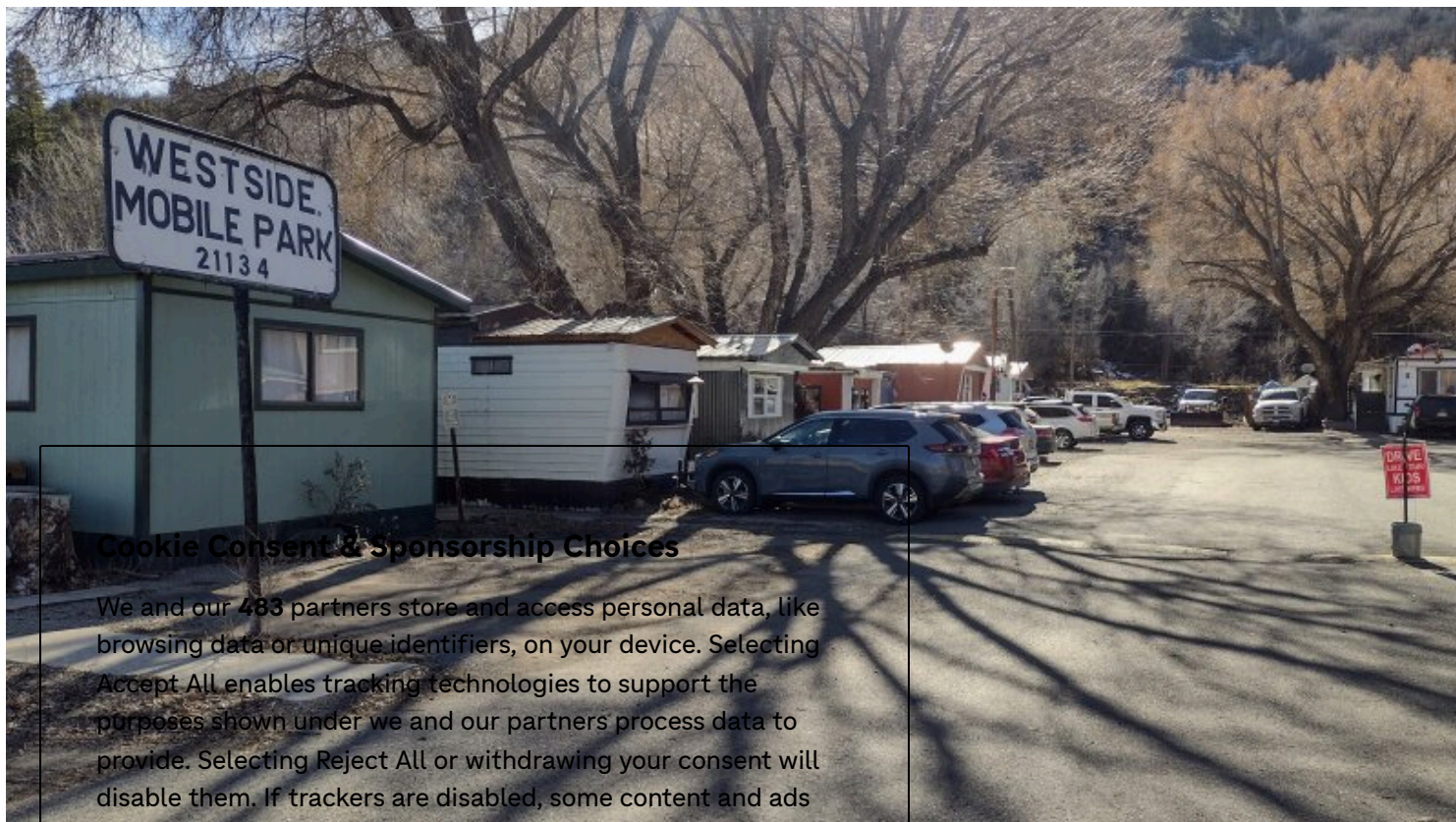
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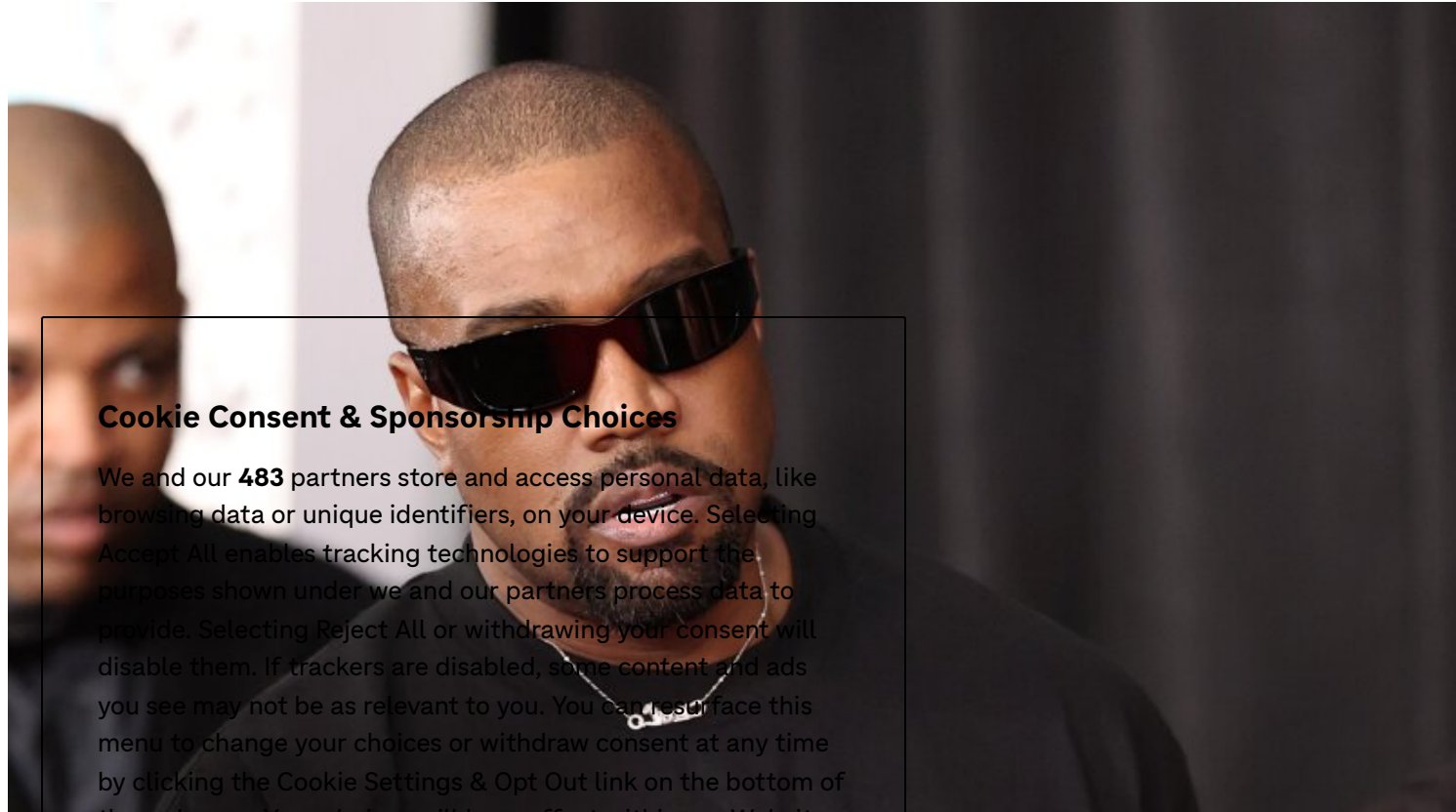
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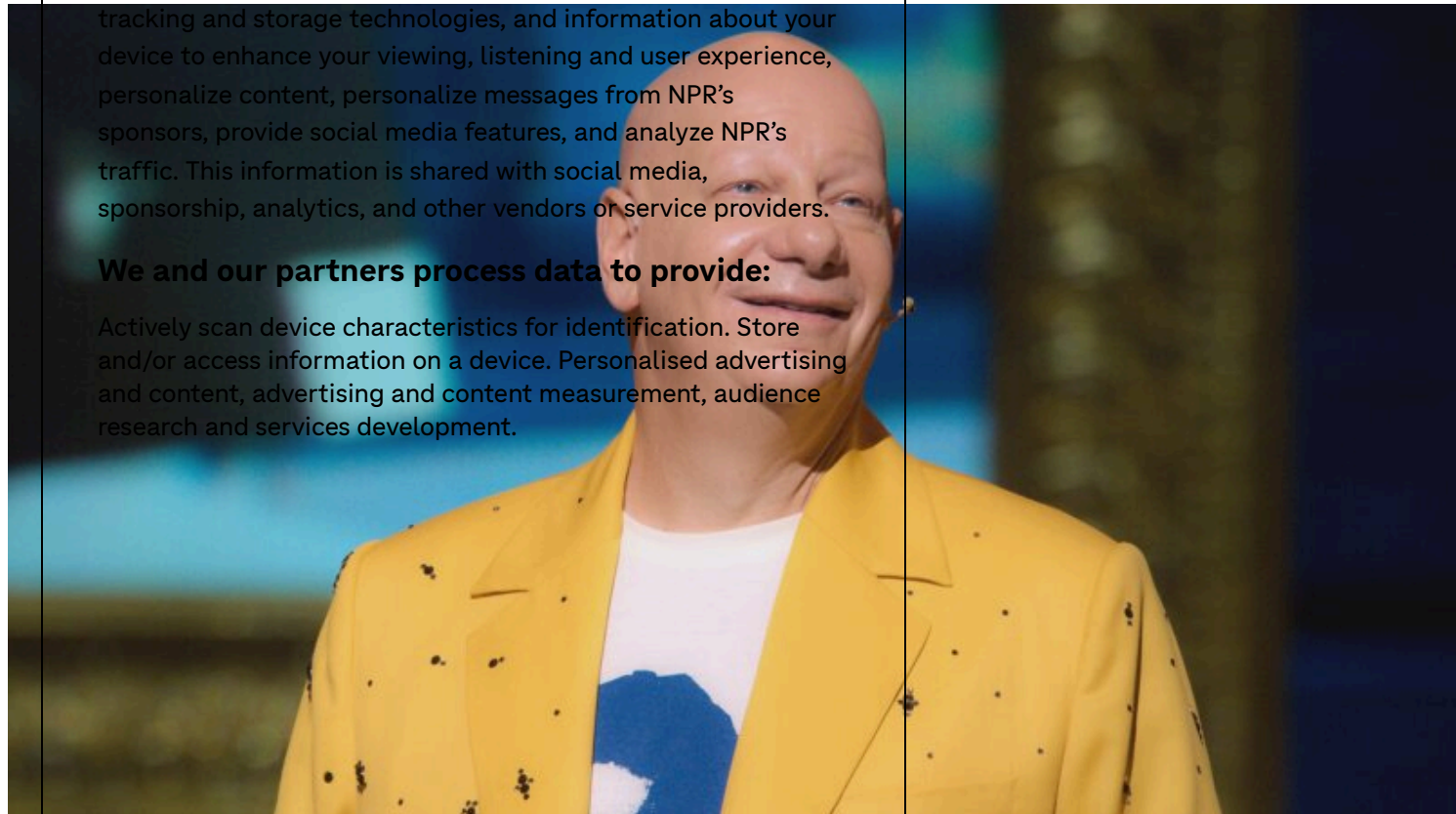
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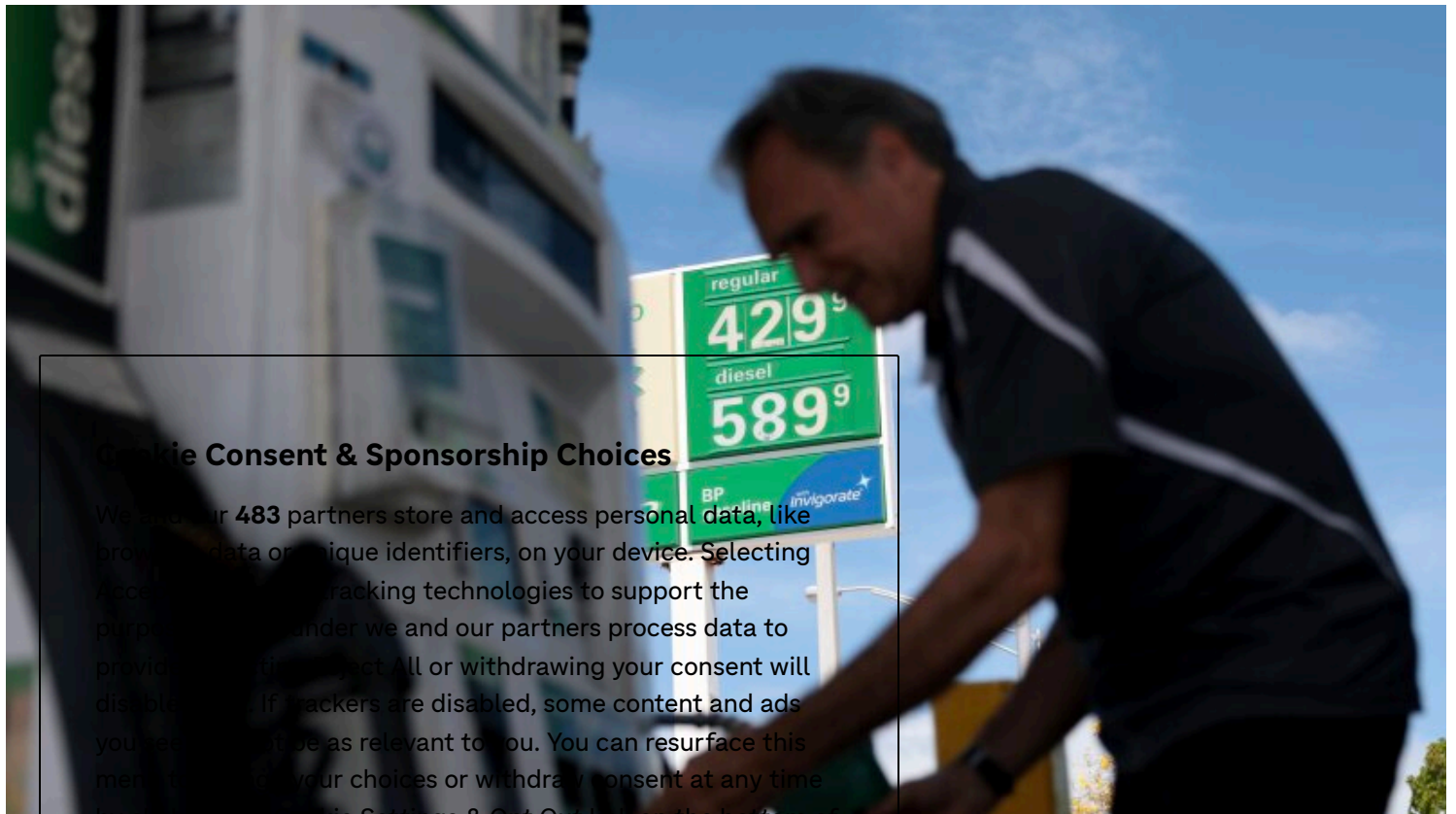
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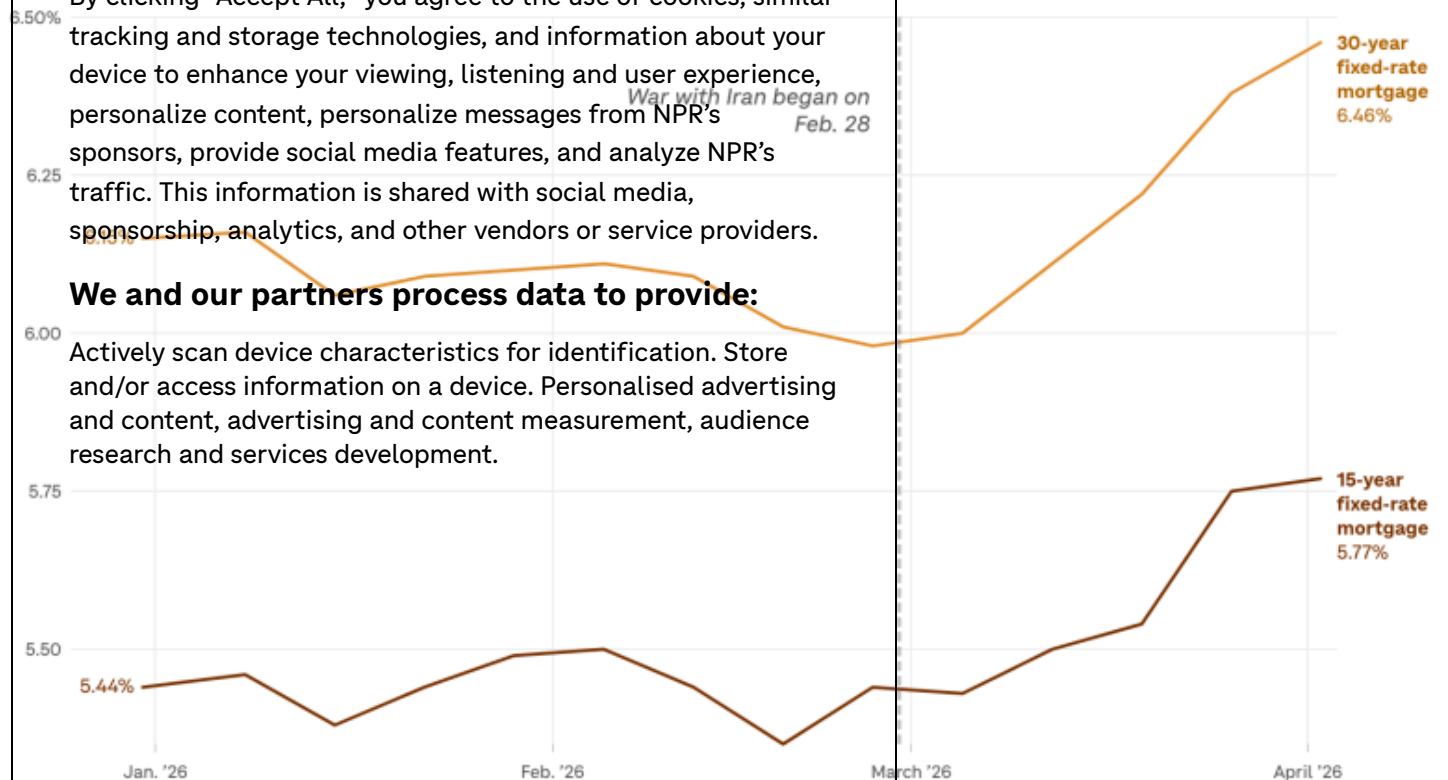
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