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U.S. President Donald Trump speaks to reporters before boarding Air Force One at Palm Beach International Airport on March 23, 2026 in West Palm Beach, Florida./ (Photo by Roberto Schmidt/Getty Images)

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hold government officials accountable.

“You need the press to find out about your neighbors being abducted if it doesn't happen in front of your eyes, and it usually won't happen in front of your eyes,” said Seth Stern, chief of advocacy at the Freedom of the Press Foundation. “Whatever it is that you are most concerned about and that you want to resist during this administration, you know you're going to need a free press to give you the information you need in order to advocate effectively for your priorities.”

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRESS

The executive branch needs some amount of secrecy, which means the president and the press have “always been at odds with each other,” said Matt Carlson, professor at the University of Minnesota's Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

“Journalists' job is to bring all these things into the public eye,” said Carlson. “Even presidents who seem supportive of the press are always unhappy when what they're doing is reported into everyone's living rooms or everyone's computers or everyone's newspapers.”

Historian Harold Hozner said Trump is not the first president to criticize the media.

“The first president who talked about fake news was the first president, George Washington,” Hozner said.

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ESCALATION AFTER ESCALATION

In addition to verbal attacks on the media, the Trump administration has tried to restrict reporting.

In the first few months of the second administration, the White House took over deciding who would make up [the press pool](#), a job previously handled by the White House Correspondents Association.

The Trump administration tried to [ban the Associated Press](#) from White House coverage after the publication refused to change its style guide on the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. The Pentagon also [restricted access](#) to only allow journalists who agreed to various reporting restrictions. On Wednesday, they also [banned press photographers](#) from briefings on the Iran War.

The administration's actions against the press have escalated in recent months, with the arrests of three journalists in connection with their reporting at a protest in Minnesota and the raid of a Washington Post journalist's home.

Previous presidents, including former President Barack Obama, have used tools like the Espionage Act to go after sources that leaked confidential information, said Gabe Rottman, the vice president of policy at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

Arresting journalists for their protest is an attempt to "criminalize dissenting journalism."

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Stern added that government leaks have been crucial to some of the most important news in American history.

"If you see these instances in isolation, you can point to precedent for them under administrations of both parties," said Rottman. "When you put them all together, it's escalation after escalation."

A CHILLING EFFECT

By going after independent journalists, the Trump administration is trying to "intimidate" reporters everywhere, Stern said. He added that it makes journalists "second-guess whether they can safely do their jobs without getting arrested" and creates a landscape where people are unsure how laws are enforced.

"Nobody knows what routine conduct the administration is going to figure out a way to go after next," Stern said. "The only discernible rule that you can figure out if you're a journalist trying not to be targeted by this administration is to self-censor, to not report things that the administration doesn't want you to report."

Stern added that people do not always know when publications are self-censoring.

"We will never know how many stories we didn't read about because a journalist decided to self-censor, or a news outlet decided to self-censor," Stern said. "We know what news we do read. We don't know what we don't know. So it's entirely possible that some really significant news has not come across our radars because of fear of retribution."

Despite the Trump administration's wide variety of attacks against journalism and reporting, critical of the

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Trump never actually had a plan

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The Top 5

1

The Quiet Rise of Employee Surveillance

Mar 31, 2026

2

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Apr 05, 2026

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Polarization

Apr 03, 2026

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Deepfakes: The New Face of Cyberbullying and Why Parents, Schools, and Lawmakers Must Act

By Kacy Zurkus Apr 01, 2026



As a former teacher who worked in a high school when Snapchat was born, I witnessed the birth of sexting and its impact on teens. I recall asking a parent whether he was checking his daughter's phone for inappropriate messages. His response was, "sometimes you just don't want to know." But the federal lawsuit filed last week against Elon Musk's xAI has put a national spotlight on AI-generated deepfakes and the teenage girls they target. Parents and teachers can't ignore the crisis inside our schools.

AI Companies Built The Tool. The Grok Lawsuit Says They Own The Damage.

Whether the theory of French prosecutors—that [Elon Musk deliberately allowed the sexualized image controversy](#) to grow so that it would drive up activity on the platform and boost the company's valuation—is true or not, when a company makes the decision to build a tool and knows that it can be weaponized but

choose to release it anyway, they are making a risk-based decision, believing that they are not without

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Congress Bill Spotlight: Easter Monday Act, Federal Holiday

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Apple's upcoming AI-powered wearables highlight growing privacy risks as the right to record police faces increasing threats. The death of Alex Pretti raises urgent questions about surveillance, civil liberties, and accountability in the digital age./ Getty Images, aislan13

AI Wearables and the Rising Risk of Recording Police

By David M. Hatami | Mar 30, 2026

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Glowing ai chip on a circuit board. / Photo by [Immo Wegmann](#) on [Unsplash](#)

AI - Its Use, Misuse, and Regulation

By Ronald L. Hirsch Mar 25, 2026



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a black keyboard with a blue button on it / Photo by [BoliviaInteligente](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Overbroad AI Export Controls Risk Forfeiting the AI Race

By Frank Francone Mar 23, 2026



The nation that wins the global [AI](#) race will hold decisive military and economic advantages. That's why President Trump's January 2025 [AI Action Plan](#) declared: "It is the policy of the United States to sustain and enhance America's global AI dominance in order to promote human flourishing, economic competitiveness, and national security."

However, AI global dominance does not just mean producing the best AI systems. It also means that the

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