

Trump's FBI pick has plans to reshape the bureau

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Kash Patel has been well-known for years within Donald Trump's orbit as a loyal supporter who shares the president-elect's skepticism of the FBI and intelligence community. But he's receiving fresh attention, from the public and from Congress, now that Trump has picked him to lead the FBI.

As he braces for a bruising and likely protracted Senate confirmation fight, Patel can expect scrutiny not only over his professed fealty to Trump but also for his belief — revealed over the last year in interviews and his own book — that the century-old FBI should be radically overhauled.

Here's a look at some of what he's proposed for the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency. How much of it he'd actually follow through on is a separate question.

He's mused about shutting down the FBI's Washington headquarters

The first FBI employees moved into the current Pennsylvania Avenue headquarters 50 years ago. The building since then has housed the supervisors and leaders who make decisions affecting offices around the country and overseas.

But if Patel has his way, the J. Edgar Hoover Building could be shut down, with its employees dispersed.

"I'd shut down the FBI Hoover Building on day one and reopen it the next day as a museum of the 'deep state,'" Patel said in an interview on the "Shawn Ryan Show" that aired in September. "Then, I'd take the 7,000 employees that work in that building and send them across America to chase down criminals. Go be cops. You're cops — go be cops."

Such a plan would undoubtedly encounter legal, logistical and bureaucratic hurdles and it may reflect more of a rhetorical flourish than a practical ambition.

In a book last year titled, "Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth and the Battle for Our Democracy," he proposed a more modest reform of having the headquarters moved out of Washington "to prevent institutional capture and curb FBI leadership from engaging in political gamesmanship."

As it happens, the long-term fate of the building is in flux regardless of the leadership transition. The General Services Administration last year selected Greenbelt, Maryland, as the site for a new headquarters, but current FBI Director Christopher Wray has raised concerns about a potential conflict of interest in the site



Kash Patel speaks before Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump at a campaign rally at the Findlay Toyota Arena Oct. 13, in Prescott Valley, Ariz.

AP photo / Ross D. Franklin

selection process.

He's talked about finding 'conspirators' in the government and media

In an interview last year with conservative strategist Steve Bannon, Patel repeated falsehoods about President Joe Biden and a stolen election.

"We're going to come after the people in the media who lied about American citizens, who helped Joe Biden rig presidential elections," Patel said. The same applies for supposed "conspirators" inside the federal government, he said.

It's not entirely clear what he envisions, but to the extent Patel wants to make it easier for the government to crack down on officials who disclose sensitive information and the reporters who receive it, it sounds like he'd back a reversal of current Justice Department policy that generally prohibits prosecutors from seizing the records of journalists in leak investigations.

That policy was implemented in 2021 by Attorney General Merrick Garland following an uproar over the revelation that the Justice Department during the Trump administration had obtained phone records of reporters as part of investigations into who had disclosed government secrets.

Patel himself has said that it's yet to be determined whether such a crackdown would be done civilly or criminally. His book includes several pages of former officials from the FBI, Justice Department and other federal agencies he's identified as being part of the "Executive Branch Deep State."

Under the FBI's own guidelines, criminal investigations can't be rooted in arbitrary or groundless speculation but instead must have an authorized purpose to detect or interrupt criminal activity.

And while the FBI conducts investigations, the responsibility of filing federal charges, or bringing a lawsuit on behalf of

the federal government, falls to the Justice Department. Trump intends to nominate former Florida attorney general Pam Bondi as attorney general.

He wants 'major, major' surveillance reform

Patel has been a fierce critic of the FBI's use of its surveillance authorities under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and in his "Shawn Ryan Show" interview, called for "major, major reform."

That position aligns him with both left-leaning civil libertarians who have long been skeptical of government power and Trump supporters outraged by well-documented surveillance missteps during the FBI's investigation into potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign.

But it sets him far apart from FBI leadership, which has stressed the need for the bureau to retain its ability to spy on suspected spies and terrorists even as it's also implemented corrective steps meant to correct past abuses.

If confirmed, Patel would take over the FBI amid continued debate over a particularly contentious provision of FISA known as Section 702, which permits the U.S. to collect without a warrant the communications of non-Americans located outside the country for the purpose of gathering foreign intelligence.

Biden in April signed a two-year extension of the authority following a fierce congressional dispute centered on whether the FBI should be restricted from using the program to search for Americans' data. Though the FBI boasts a high compliance rate, analysts have been blamed for a series of abuses and mistakes, including improperly querying the intelligence repository for information about Americans or others in the U.S., including a member of Congress and participants in the racial justice protests of 2020 and the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Patel has made clear his disdain for the reauthoriza-

tion vote, though he's also said the tool is an important national security power in the fight against terrorism.

"Because the budget of FISA was up this cycle, we demanded Congress fix it. And do you know what the majority in the House, where the Republicans did? They bent the knee. They (reauthorized) it," Patel told Ryan.

He has called for reducing the size of the intelligence community

Patel has advocated cutting the federal government's intelligence community, including the CIA and National Security Agency.

When it comes to the FBI, he has said that he would support breaking off the bureau's "intel shops" from the rest of its crime-fighting activities.

It's not clear exactly how he would intend to do that given that the FBI's intelligence-gathering operations form a core part of the bureau's mandate and budget. Wray, who's been in the job for seven years, has also recently warned of a heightened threat environment related to international and domestic terrorism.

After the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, then-FBI Director Robert Mueller faced down calls from some in Congress who thought the FBI should be split up, with a new domestic intelligence agency created in its wake. The idea died, and Mueller committed new resources into transforming what for decades had been primarily a domestic law enforcement agency into an intelligence-gathering institution equally focused on combating terrorism, spies and foreign threats.

Frank Montoya Jr., a retired senior FBI official who served as the U.S. government's national counterintelligence executive, said he disagreed with the idea of breaking out the FBI's "intel shops" and viewed it as a way to defang the bureau.

Doing so, he said, "makes the bureau less effective at what it does, and quite frankly, it will make the intelligence community less effective at what it does."

COMMUNITY

BLP accepting entries for holiday lighting contest

CONTRIBUTED

Entries are now being accepted for the Grand Haven Board of Light & Power's Holiday Lighting Contest. The outdoor holiday lighting contest is broken into two different categories.

The first category is the "Griswold Award," which is the most over-the-top lighting display. According to the BLP, if it can be seen from space, then this is a good candidate display for the Griswold Award.

The second category is the "Classic Award" for the most gorgeously designed display that captures the holiday spirit and looks like it jumped directly off the front of a Hallmark card.

For more information about the contest or to enter, visit the BLP's website at ghblp.org. The deadline for entering the contest is Dec. 16. Winners will be announced on Dec. 19. Each award recipient will



receive \$150 in Chamber Dune Dollars to spend locally.

"Many residents put a lot of effort and pride into their holiday displays," said Erik Booth, Operations and Power Supply Manager at the BLP. "Giving them a chance to showcase their love of the holiday season by making the community a brighter place is just another way in which BLP can facilitate bringing the community together."

The BLP serves over 15,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in the City of Grand Haven, City of Ferrysburg, Grand Haven, Spring Lake, and Robinson Townships.

STATE NEWS



TNS file photo / The Detroit News

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel

Attorney General issues consumer alert on charitable giving for Giving Tuesday

LANSING — Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has reissued her consumer alert on wise charitable giving to remind residents to choose carefully when donating this Giving Tuesday.

The alert provides questions that residents should ask any charity before donating their money, time, or belongings. Those questions, which Nessel highlights in her charitable giving video, include asking how much of a donation will actually be used for the charity's purpose and whether the charity is registered to solicit donations by the Michigan Attorney General's office.

"On Giving Tuesday, many Michiganders generously donate their time and

money to charities that do important work in our communities," Nessel said. "To ensure your donations are used wisely and not lining the pockets of scam artists, consider these simple steps before giving this holiday season."

Residents can check an organization's status at the Attorney General's website at michigan.gov/ag or by calling 517-335-7571. Not all organizations are required to register, so many legitimate charities may not appear on the list. However, the organization must have an IRS 501(c)(3) status as a charitable organization for gifts to be tax deductible. The IRS Select Check tool can be used to search for 501(c)(3) organizations.

NATIVITY

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of Christ."

The Nativity is made up of heavy metal pieces that are now owned by the Tri-Cities Historical Museum; the museum lends the pieces to Bill Blynn each year. Blynn organizes a group of helpers, many who attend Covenant Life Church in Grand Haven, to help put up the Nativity.

"We just really enjoy doing it," Robison said.

While the Nativity scene is set up on the north side of the Grand River, it's visible to those on the south side of the river as you travel along Harbor Drive. The figures, several of which stand 10-plus feet tall, are clearly

visible during the day; at night, they're illuminated with lights.

A new addition this year, according to Blynn, is a sheep.

"There was a whole flock of them, but they got parceled out when the Nativity came down," he said. "I found four of them, including two in Rockford, one in Highland Park ... I'm going to pick the best one and we'll have that up as well."

The Nativity remains up until the second week of January, when the same crew convenes to take it down.

Volunteers braved the cold Tuesday to put up the Nativity scene pieces.

Tribune photo / Matt DeYoung



51st Annual
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9 am to 3 pm
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(formerly Grand Haven Community Center)
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For more information about the Christmas Craft Show, please call (616) 842-5518

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