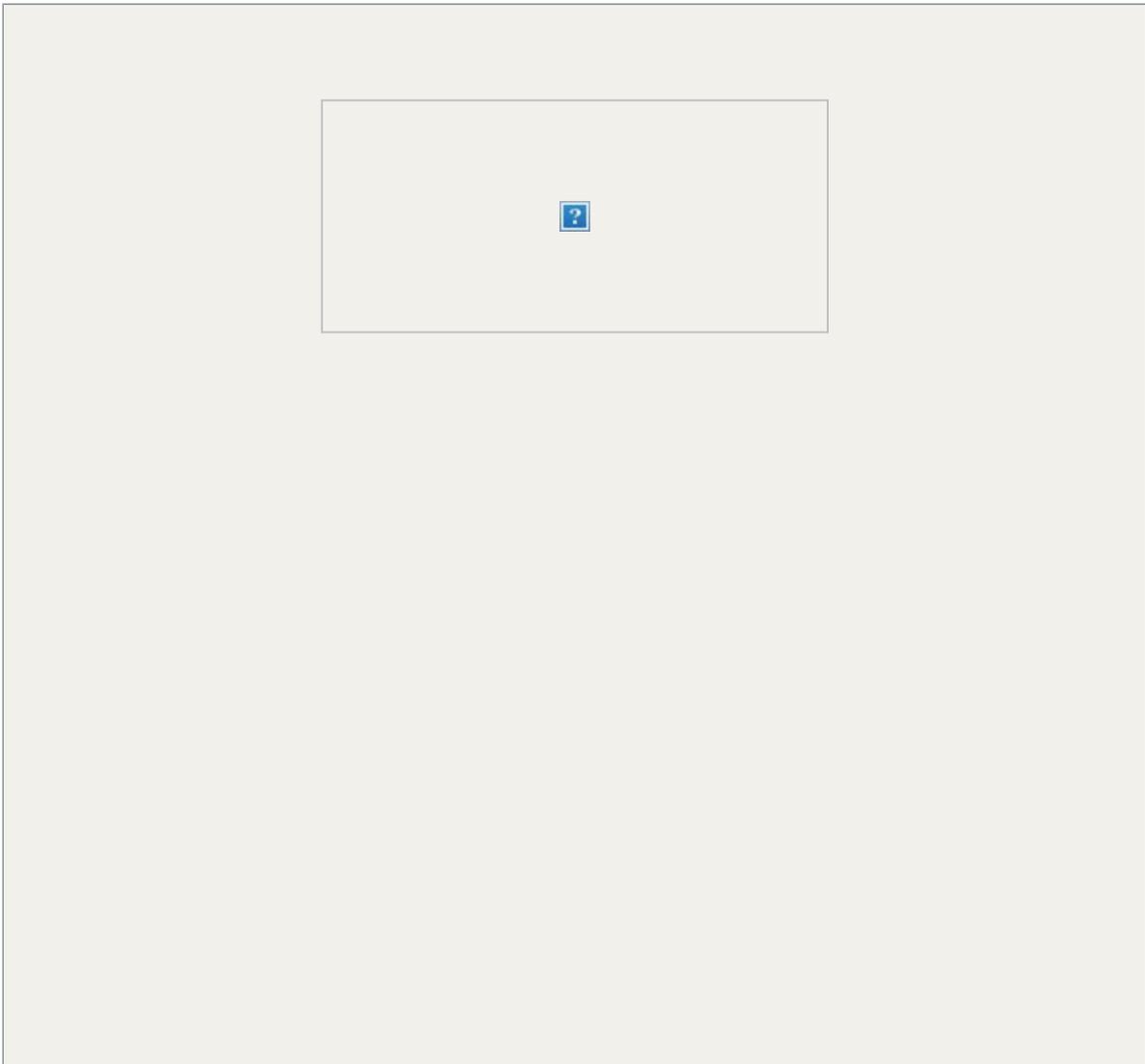


From: [Rick Dwyer](#)
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Subject: Executive Insight Brief
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Ladies & Gentlemen,
Below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group.

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November 21, 2025

Executive Insight Brief

Stay informed with The Roosevelt Group's Executive Insight Brief—your weekly roundup of key developments shaping federal policy, defense, and homeland security. Curated by our expert team, each issue delivers timely analysis and strategic context to help you stay ahead.

Notable Headlines

[White House prepares executive order to block state AI laws](#)

[Japan's exports to the world rise but drop to the US due to tariffs](#)

[Pentagon must do better to safeguard public information, GAO warns](#)

[Most of the Air Force's biggest programs will now be overseen by a 4-star under the deputy SecDef](#)

[Hegseth says terror designation provides Pentagon with 'new options' to go after Venezuela's Cartel de los Soles](#)

View From The Hill

With the federal government officially back open, Washington, D.C. was a flurry of activity this week, including on Capitol Hill. In what amounted to a major coup for both GOP Leadership and the White House, Congress overwhelmingly [**voted**](#) to pass a resolution requiring the Justice Department to turn over all files related to the disgraced late financier Jeffrey Epstein within thirty days. It is difficult to overstate just how big of a deal this resolution passing actually is. First, it was a privileged motion, known as a “discharge petition,” in which a majority of House Members sign their name to the measure. Under House rules, this prevented Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) from blocking the vote on the Floor and forced GOP Leadership to put it up for a vote. The vote was a near-unanimous 427-1, with only Rep. Clay Higgins (R-LA) voting against it. It passed with the unanimous consent of every Senator later the same day. The other dynamic at play was Congress reasserting its prerogative amidst what had previously been strong opposition and pressure from President Trump. This muscling by the Legislative Branch has been virtually absent throughout most of the first year of Trump’s second term. Sensing the math was not on his side, President Trump flipped the script the day before the vote, saying he supported

it.

Continuing with the drama in the House, Members **attempted** to force votes on four separate censure resolutions against various colleagues this week. Censures amount to a formal rebuke by the chamber and were once rare, but the bad blood roiling throughout Congress these days has made the procedure more common. On Tuesday, the House successfully voted on Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez's (D-OR) censure resolution against fellow Democrat Rep. Chuy Garcia (D-IL). The censure came amidst widespread backlash against Garcia, who announced his intent to retire from the House only after the filing deadline had passed for others to run. Only his chief of staff had thus filed, essentially allowing Garcia to handpick his replacement in Congress. The Democrat-on-Democrat censure, however, angered House Democratic Leadership, who viewed it as a distraction from party messaging on the shutdown, affordability, and the Epstein files.

Additionally, the House voted down a censure resolution by Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC) against Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-U.S.V.I.) over her direct contact with Jeffrey Epstein during a congressional hearing. Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC) also offered a censure resolution against fellow Republican Rep. Cory Mills (R-FL) for alleged misconduct with women. Democrats had planned to force their own censure vote on Mills, but abandoned the effort after the vote against Plaskett failed. Moreover, the Justice Department **announced** this week that a federal grand jury had returned an indictment against Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL), accusing the lawmaker of stealing a \$5 million overpayment of FEMA funding for COVID-19 testing in 2021 and using the money to fund her campaign for Congress. In each instance, lawmakers have refuted any allegations of impropriety and wrongdoing.

The top four Appropriations Committee leaders **met** for a "four corners" meeting on Thursday, seeking a way out of the stalled government funding negotiations. Reps. Tom Cole (R-OK) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) and Patty Murray (D-WA) met to discuss options to bring the nine remaining fiscal year 2026 spending bills up for votes, with a potential minibus

strategy centering on Defense and Labor-HHS-Education.

Lawmakers **continue** to struggle finding agreement on a health policy vehicle that can address rising insurance premiums for millions of Americans and rein in burgeoning healthcare costs. Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), who chairs the Senate Committee on Healthcare, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), continues leading bipartisan talks, but time is running short on a Dec. 31st deadline for pandemic-era insurance subsidies, and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle remain far from agreement on a unified approach. This has some in the GOP advocating for a Republican-only bill, but others worry about the electoral consequences in next year's midterm election should the Republican majorities fail to address insurance costs.

Pentagon News

On Monday, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Emil Michael **revealed** that the Pentagon had reduced its list of Critical Technology Areas (CTAs) from 14 to six. This decision is part of the broader acquisition reform agenda **announced** by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth last week, meant to accelerate warfighting capabilities. Reducing the list concentrates power, budget, and political capital into fewer tech lanes. These six new CTAs are Applied Artificial Intelligence (AAI), Biomanufacturing (BIO), Contested Logistics Technologies (LOG), Quantum and Battlefield Information Dominance (Q-BID), Scaled Directed Energy (SCADE), and Scaled Hypersonics (SHY).

The CTAs represent the cutting edge of research and engineering designed to deliver results to the warfighter. This is a strategic pivot away from slow, traditional R&D pipelines towards practical, war-focused innovation. Under

Secretary Michael **emphasizes** these six CTAs are not merely priorities but “imperatives” or core technology areas the Pentagon must rapidly develop and field to maintain U.S. military advantage. Department of Defense (DoD) officials **noted** that concentrating investment into these six areas allows for faster prototyping cycles, quicker fielding timelines, and more seamless integration with combatant command needs. This new CTA framework reshapes industrial-base alignment as companies pivot their research and development efforts toward these designated imperatives.

While the Pentagon is restructuring its own technology priorities, a new assessment from London highlights how rapidly China is advancing in areas where the U.S. and its allies remain vulnerable.

On Tuesday, London’s Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the oldest defense and security think tank in the world, **released** a report identifying China’s dominance of the global drone components market as a major constraint on NATO’s own production. China supplies around 80% of the global multirotor drone market, dominating critical components like rare earth elements, permanent magnets, sensors, and flight controllers. This has created a strategic vulnerability: while NATO and Ukraine urgently need to scale production amid the Russo-Ukrainian War, their efforts are limited because critical components are overwhelmingly sourced from Beijing.

This divergence has created a growing asymmetry. China is scaling unmanned capabilities at industrial speed, including long-endurance drones, small expendable platforms, and a fast-growing effort that mirrors the Pentagon’s drone “wingman” program. Concurrently, China has demonstrated its continued willingness to coercively use its supply chain leverage. This can be seen in China’s **sanctions** affecting crucial components like battery cells, which have limited exports to Ukraine, while China continues to export freely to Russia.

NATO and Ukraine have not been able to scale production because critical components are overwhelmingly from China, which has **become** a significant

challenge in Western drone production. The consequences are clear: NATO is unable to build a high-volume drone ecosystem while reliant on supply chains that China can **disrupt** at any time. The RUSI report warns that the shortages of key materials, especially magnets and sensors, will limit Western production during any conflict. Beijing holds leverage over NATO's military readiness, as drones have become necessary in warfare, seen by Ukraine's model of mass, modular drone use. Washington and their allies will need to diversify their supply chains and scale production, or they will have to face the strategic chokepoint China could be in future conflicts.

As NATO confronts these widening technological constraints, Ukraine is simultaneously facing new political pressures that could reshape the trajectory of the war.

On Thursday, following a meeting in Kyiv with U.S. Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy **said** he was willing to negotiate on a peace proposal devised by American and Russian **officials**. The plan would force Ukraine to make significant territorial concessions to Russia, including the entirety of the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine, in exchange for an end to the invasion. According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Ukraine still **controls** 14.5% of the Donbas. ISW has long assessed that Ukraine would lose the ability to defend itself from future Russian attacks if it were to cede the entire region. President Zelenskyy's announcement followed several denunciations of the plan by prominent Ukrainian officials. The Ukrainian president has also come under public scrutiny as an ongoing domestic **corruption probe** continues to uncover malfeasance by some of his close political allies.

President Trump named Secretary Driscoll as his new "Special Representative" to Ukraine last week, joining Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, who reportedly helped draft the 28-point blueprint. Ukrainian officials have reportedly been unmoved by any of the plan's proposed points, which dictate that Ukraine concede multiple contested provinces, cut its military force in half, relinquish its long-range weaponry, and give special protections to the Russian language and Russian Orthodox Church. The current draft also rules out an international

peacekeeping force, which had been a feature of earlier, European-backed proposals. While some may see these developments as a frustrating turn towards Putin, President Trump's [support](#) of a forceful sanctions package against the Russian economy presents an interesting contrast.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committee

House of Representatives

- NONE

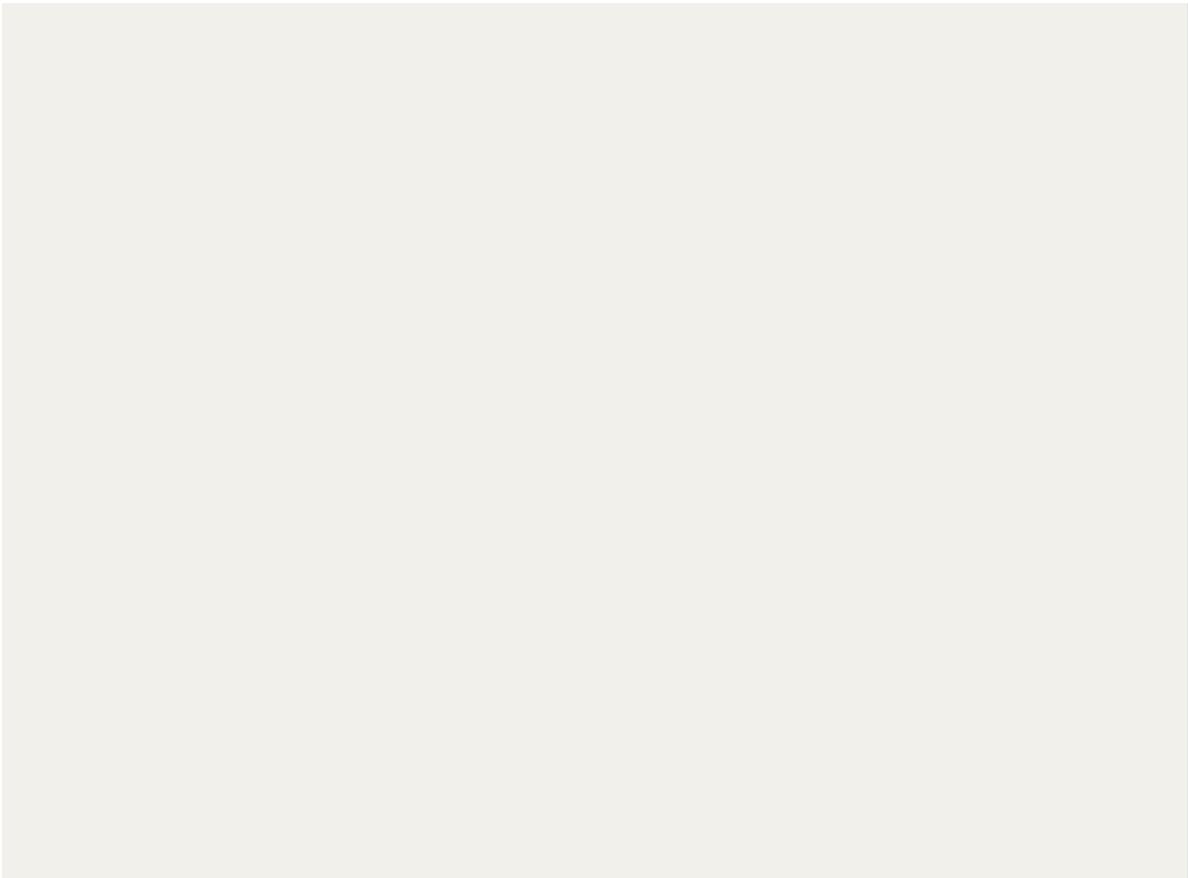
Senate

- NONE

Appropriations Committee

House of Representatives

- NONE



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