

June 7, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Acting National Security Advisor  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Acting National Security Advisor Rubio:

I write seeking details on the contingency plans the U.S. government has in place if Elon Musk breaches his current contract obligations with the United States and fails to deliver services national security agencies are counting on to keep Americans safe.

President Trump and Mr. Musk's public disagreements about the upcoming reconciliation bill are escalating into a conflict that could have serious implications for U.S. national security.<sup>1</sup> On June 5, President Trump, amidst a public meltdown on social media, proposed terminating Mr. Musk's U.S. government contracts and subsidies, and in return, Mr. Musk threatened that SpaceX would "begin decommissioning its Dragon spacecraft immediately."<sup>2</sup> The state of the president and Mr. Musk's mercurial relationship is uncertain, but regardless, this incident raises broader concerns about the nation's dependence on a single individual for key national security services.<sup>3</sup>

If Mr. Musk breaches his current contracts or they are canceled immediately, it could leave critical gaps that endanger U.S. interests and national security. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has an approximately \$5 billion contract with SpaceX to send and bring home astronauts and supplies to the International Space Station, and the Dragon capsule "is the only U.S. vessel capable of carrying astronauts to and from the International Space Station."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Politico, "'Such ingratitude': Musk, Trump blow up over GOP megabill," Aaron Pellish and Irie Sentner, June 5, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/05/elon-musk-donald-trump-fight-00389480>.

<sup>2</sup> The Hill, "Musk: SpaceX will ground spacecraft used to shuttle astronauts, cargo to space station," Sylvan Lane, June 5, 2025, <https://thehill.com/business/5335638-musk-spacex-will-ground-spacecraft-used-to-shuttle-astronauts-cargo-to-iss/>; Reuters, "Trump suggests terminating Musk's US government contracts, subsidies," Doina Chiacu and Bhargav Archarya, June 5, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-suggests-terminating-musks-us-government-contracts-subsidies-2025-06-05/>.

<sup>3</sup> Politico, "Trump, White House aides signal a possible détente with Musk," Dasha Burns, June 5, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/05/trump-white-house-aides-signal-a-possible-detente-with-musk-00391502>.

<sup>4</sup> Reuters, "Musk-Trump breakup puts \$22 billion of SpaceX contracts at risk, jolting US space program," Joey Roulette, June 6, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/spacex-will-decommission-dragon-spacecraft-musk-says-feud-with-trump-escalates-2025-06-05/>.

As a result, “decommissioning of Dragon could pose a serious threat to the Trump administration’s ability to bring astronauts and cargo between the space station and Earth.”<sup>5</sup>

The Department of Defense also depends heavily on SpaceX. It has awarded the company \$7.6 billion since 2003,<sup>6</sup> making it an “indispensable national security asset.”<sup>7</sup> SpaceX provides launch services that support Space Force operations and spy satellites.<sup>8</sup> Starshield, which supports military space capabilities, “has already captured market share from established satellite communications operators that have supported the Defense Department for generations.”<sup>9</sup> Even before this latest disagreement, the Department of Defense raised concerns about “depending upon billionaires and their potential fickleness for military services.”<sup>10</sup> If Mr. Musk turns off these capabilities without warning it could create dangerous gaps in our nation’s ability to detect and respond to national security threats.

Congress has also repeatedly raised concerns that the U.S. government’s dependence on a mercurial billionaire puts U.S. national security at risk. In May 2024, I urged the Department of Defense to hold SpaceX accountable following reports that the company was allowing Starlink terminals to be used by Russian forces and sanctioned paramilitary forces.<sup>11</sup> Following additional reports that Mr. Musk had high level and sustained contact with senior Russian officials, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, then-Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jack Reed and Senator Jeanne Shaheen also asked the Department of Defense Inspector General and the Department of Justice to review whether Mr. Musk should be able to continue to be involved in Department of Defense and intelligence community contracts.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Hill, “Musk: SpaceX will ground spacecraft used to shuttle astronauts, cargo to space station,” Sylvan Lane, June 5, 2025, <https://thehill.com/business/5335638-musk-spacex-will-ground-spacecraft-used-to-shuttle-astronauts-cargo-to-iss/>.

<sup>6</sup> The Washington Post, “Elon Musk’s business empire is built on \$38 billion in government funding,” Desmond Butler, Trisha Thadani, Emmanuel Martinez, Aaron Gregg, Luis Melgar, Jonathan O’Connell, and Dan Keating, February 26, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/>.

<sup>7</sup> SpaceNews, “Beyond launch: SpaceX’s expanding role in U.S. defense,” Sandra Erwin, May 16, 2025, <https://spacenews.com/spacexs-expanding-role-in-u-s-defense/>.

<sup>8</sup> SpaceNews, “NRO reaches milestone with over 200 satellites deployed in two years,” Sandra Erwin, April 20, 2025, <https://spacenews.com/nro-reaches-milestone-with-over-200-satellites-deployed-in-two-years/>; Breaking Defense, “Amid Trump, Musk blowup, canceling SpaceX contract could cripple DoD launch program,” Theresa Hitchens, June 5, 2025, <https://breakingdefense.com/2025/06/amid-trump-musk-blowup-canceling-spacex-contracts-could-cripple-dod-launch-program/>.

<sup>9</sup> SpaceNews, “Beyond launch: SpaceX’s expanding role in U.S. defense,” Sandra Erwin, May 16, 2025, <https://spacenews.com/spacexs-expanding-role-in-u-s-defense/>.

<sup>10</sup> New York Times, “Elon Musk Dominates Space Launch. Rivals Are Calling Foul,” Eric Lipton, May 28, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/us/politics/elon-musk-space-launch-competition.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, May 6, 2024, [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren\\_oversight\\_letter\\_to\\_dod\\_on\\_starlink\\_proliferation.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_oversight_letter_to_dod_on_starlink_proliferation.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Jack Reed to Department of Defense Inspector General Robert Storch and Attorney General Merrick Garland, November 15, 2024, <https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/241115lettertoigdoj.pdf>.

No petty social media fight between the president and a billionaire should jeopardize U.S. national security. In the wake of this disagreement, there have been calls to nationalize SpaceX<sup>13</sup> or use the Defense Production Act “to seize control” of the company.<sup>14</sup> The federal government could also exercise its government patent use power under 28 U.S.C. 1498 to use SpaceX’s intellectual property without a license.<sup>15</sup> In order to understand what contingency plans and options the administration may exercise to ensure that mercurial decisions by President Trump or Mr. Musk do not create an interruption in critical national security services, I ask that you provide answers to the following questions by June 14. I am happy to receive a classified briefing on this matter, although we ask that you also prepare answers that can be released to Congress and the public.

1. What alternative service providers are available in the event that SpaceX or other companies owned by Mr. Musk are stripped of their contracts or if they refuse to provide critical national security services?
2. What remedies and penalties are available to the U.S. government if Mr. Musk or his companies breach any current U.S. contracts?
3. If Dragon is decommissioned, how will the U.S. continue to provide critical supplies to astronauts at the International Space Station?
4. If Starlink is turned off, what will be the impacts on U.S. agencies’ satellite communications, intelligence collection, and military operations?
5. If Starlink is turned off, what will the impacts be on U.S. allies’ satellite communications, intelligence collection, and military operations?
6. What is the current status of investigations or reviews to assess whether Mr. Musk and his companies are responsible contractors to determine whether they can continue to receive U.S. contracts?
7. Has any government agency recommended that Mr. Musk, his companies, or employees of his companies be suspended or debarred in the last five years? Please provide any responsibility determinations or related analysis to support those recommendations.

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<sup>13</sup> Post on X by Raheem J. Kassam, June 5, 2025,


<https://x.com/raheemkassam/status/1930725292013658443?s=12&t=a66XOgzqe9PtBWclQ-QO9Q>.

<sup>14</sup> Post on X by Megan Messerly, June 5, 2025, <https://x.com/meganmessengerly/status/1930740705611120933?s=46>.

<sup>15</sup> Congressional Research Service, "The Role of Patents and Regulatory Exclusivities in Drug Pricing," Kevin J. Hickney and Erin H. Ward, January 30, 2024, pp. 25-26, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R46679.pdf>.

8. Has the administration conducted any analysis of its authorities and options under the Defense Production Act to address vendor lock, monopolies, or contractor refusal to meet national security needs? Please provide any analyses.

Sincerely,



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator