

What to Know About Kash Patel, Trump's Pick to Lead the FBI

Patel is a longtime critic of the federal agency he's now poised to lead.

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Kash Patel, a former chief of staff to then-acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller, speaks during a campaign event for Republican election candidates at the Whiskey Roads Restaurant & Bar in Tucson, Ariz., on July 31, 2022. Brandon Bell/Getty Images



President-elect Donald Trump announced on Nov. 30 that he would nominate Kash Patel to lead the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

“I am proud to announce that Kashyap ‘Kash’ Patel will serve as the next Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation,” Trump wrote in a [post](#) on social media on Nov. 30. “Kash is a brilliant lawyer, investigator, and ‘America First’ fighter who has spent his career exposing corruption, defending Justice, and protecting the American People.”

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The post is currently held by Chris Wray, who took the post after Trump fired James Comey. For Patel to take over, Wray would have to step down voluntarily or be dismissed by the incoming president.



Patel is a longtime ally of Trump and has been outspoken in his denunciations of the agency he’s now primed to lead. And he’s



promised big changes.



Here’s what to know about Patel.

Legal Background

Patel graduated from the University of Richmond in 2002 with a degree in criminal justice and history, and received a Juris Doctor from Pace University School of Law in 2005.

After law school, Patel worked as a public defender in Florida for eight years, first working for Miami-Dade County before moving into the federal system. As a federal public defender, he represented several clients facing felony charges.

Patel was later hired as a trial attorney in the Department of Justice National Security Division and as a legal liaison to the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).

Opposition to Russia Collusion Narrative

In April 2017, Patel began to work as a senior aide for then-House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes.

Nunes, who went on to serve as the chief executive officer at the Trump Media & Technology Group, was an outspoken defender of the former president and used the committee's considerable influence to push back on emerging narratives that alleged Trump's campaign colluded with Russia in 2016.

In the senior role, Patel would have assisted closely with Nunes's efforts to challenge the accusations.

A memo released during Patel's tenure, dubbed the "Nunes memo," criticized the FBI's handling of the warrant application that allowed it to spy on former Trump campaign aide Carter Page in 2016.

Some reports at the time attributed authorship to Patel, though he's never taken credit for the memo.

Ultimately, an investigation by Special Counsel John Durham would vindicate the skeptics, coming to the conclusion that agents were motivated by "confirmation bias" in pursuing the probe.

During an appearance at CPAC, Patel called the Russia collusion narrative "the greatest conspiracy ever perpetrated against the American people."

National Security Background

Patel also has an extensive background in national security.

In his capacity as a legal liaison for JSOC and an aide to Nunes, Patel would have been granted security clearance, likely at a high level given the types of information handled in both roles.

In February 2019, Patel joined the National Security Council, initially working in the International Organizations and Alliances Directorate. In July 2019, he became Senior Director of the Counterterrorism Directorate, a new position at the time.

In February 2020, Patel began a job in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), serving as a principal deputy to then acting-ODNI chief Rick Grenell.

In the final three months of Trump's first term, Patel also served as chief of staff at the Department of Defense.

Bestselling Author

Patel is also a best-selling author, having published several books.

That includes a three-part series of children's books titled "The Plot Against the King" that converts the events of Trump's presidency and afterward into a fantasy story for children.

His first book for an adult audience, "Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy," was published on Aug. 1, 2024. It's currently the No. 1 bestseller in the constitutional law category on Amazon, and is a Wall Street Journal bestseller.

In the book, Patel targets what he describes as the deep state, the secret constellation of unelected federal bureaucrats and law enforcement agents who make the day-to-day decisions of the government, and proposes ways they can be countered.

The book was endorsed by Trump, who said it was a "brilliant roadmap highlighting every corrupt actor, to ultimately return our agencies and departments to work for the American People."

Patel also hosted the show "Kash's Corner" on EpochTV.

Big Plans for the FBI

Given his history of criticism for the FBI and Department of Justice (DOJ), it comes as little surprise that Patel has big plans for the agency he's poised to lead.

In the role, he'd work closely with Pam Bondi, Trump's nominee for attorney general.

Patel has indicated interest in making large-scale reforms to how the FBI conducts its business, with a focus on countering what he and Trump perceive as the weaponization of the agency over the past four years.

Aside from that, Patel has also expressed interest in shrinking the agency dramatically in order to save taxpayer money.

In a recent interview, Patel indicated he was concerned with what he called "personnel creep in the government," referencing the vast increase in FBI and DOJ personnel stationed in Washington.

"I'd shut down the FBI Hoover Building on day one and reopen the next day as a museum of the deep state. And I'd take the 7,000 employees that work in that building and send them across America to chase down criminals."

If he's confirmed to the job by the Senate, Patel would also have access to information about the FBI's actions over the past four years, which could be used as a basis for vast reforms to the agency.

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