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MELVIN GOODMAN

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Marco Rubio: The Secretary of Statelessness



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Question: What member of Trump's cabinet has four major posts, but only one job?

Answer: Marco Rubio

Marco Rubio is the uber-mensch of the Trump administration. He is the secretary of state, the acting national security adviser, the acting director of (what's left) of the Agency for International Development, and the acting director of the National Archives. His only full-time job has never been performed by a secretary of state, canceling visas for international students and making sure that migrants are sent to horrific prisons in El Salvador or the South Sudan where a civil war is taking place. He has even targeted a group of Venezuelan migrants who were given legal status by the Biden administration. Nearly every Rubio

decision on immigration matters has been illegal, and he presumably knows these decisions are illegal. Nearly every decision has been blocked or challenged in federal courts.

After his confirmation in January, Rubio began his campaign to cancel visas for at least 1,500 international students. The secretary of state has the power to cancel such visas, but Rubio is the first secretary of state to do so. Rubio has no interest in defending the free speech rights of students; he maintains that anyone who associates with protestors should not attend a U.S. university. This week, he ordered U.S. embassies and consulates to stop student visa applications, which will give the Trump administration time to issue even more restrictions.

Rubio favors an even broader crackdown on foreign students following the ban on foreign students at Harvard. Last week, he ordered embassies and consulate to screen the social media accounts of visa applicants. Any foreign student who has expressed a pro-Palestinian point of view will be denied a visa; those students already in the United States who do so will be detained and their legal status will be revoked. Anti-semitic content will also serve as a barrier to a foreign student visa or a student's legal status. The First Amendment has been shelved in the process. (On May 28, a federal judge extended the block on Rubio's efforts to prevent Harvard from enrolling foreign students.)

Like the China Hawks that populate the Trump aviary, Rubio proclaimed on May 28 that he will "aggressively revoke" visas of Chinese students who have ties to the Chinese Communist Party or who are studying in "critical fields." The 275,000 students from China represent the second-largest group of international students in the United States. Wesleyan University President Michael Roth, one of the few university president standing up to the Trump administration, believes this to be "terribly misguided, counterproductive and another way in which we are shooting ourselves in the foot."

Rubio has even gotten into a contretemps with Richard Grenell, a senior White House adviser who is close to Donald Trump. Grenell has a history of working with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, whom Rubio detests. Rubio favors no concessions to Maduro, but Grenell has had Trump's blessing to negotiate for Venezuela to take deportees in exchange for our buying oil from Venezuela. Grenell even had Maduro's agreement to take in deported Venezuelans, but Rubio undercut Grenell by lobbying successfully for sending the migrants to El Salvador. Again, a federal court said that the flights to El Salvador needed to be delayed, but Rubio ignored the order. More evidence that Rubio doesn't care if he's acting illegally.

Trump and Rubio received one of their only victories from the federal court when the Supreme Court upheld the termination of protections for up to 350,000 Venezuelans. This

decision reversed an order from the Biden administration that allowed them to live and work in the United States for humanitarian reasons. The Walt Disney Company, which has been cozying up to the Trump administration, moved quickly to place its Venezuelan workers on leave without pay following the high court's ruling. Disney did not have to do this because the decision itself did not stipulate that the Venezuelans had lost their legal status and work permits. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court is demonstrating that it will allow the egregious immigrant decisions to stand in view of the president's power to protect national security.

Rubio also favors the deportation of migrants from various countries to South Sudan, a conflict-ridden nation in no position to protect the safety of its own people, let alone migrants from Cuba, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, and Mexico. Rubio ensured that the migrants were given less than 24 hours notice before being placed on a plane. The 24 hours didn't even coincide with business hours for the judicial system. Rubio thus ignored his own department's official notice: "Do not travel to South Sudan due to crime, kidnapping, and armed conflict."

A federal judge did not order the return of the migrants but his judgments led the United States to divert the plane to a naval base in Djibouti. There is no additional information regarding possible screening interviews of the migrants and their access to lawyers. Once again, Rubio has demonstrated complete lack of concern for the humanitarian protections that are required by international law. The administration obviously believes that, by sending migrants to the worst possible places in terms of violence and danger, this will serve as a deterrent.

From the very start of the Trump administration, Rubio has signaled his association with the hardline views of Trump's deputy chief of staff, Stephen Miller, the ranking hardliner in the administration. Rubio has worked to speed up the deportation process, to reverse the protections for immigrants given by the Biden administration, and to ignore orders of federal courts. Trump has always advocated for the use of fear in national security decision-making, and Rubio has introduced fear into the foreign student and immigrant communities.

The immigration nightmare introduced by the Trump administration, led by Donald himself, Rubio, Miller, immigration tsar Tom Homan, and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem will go down as one of the ugliest episodes in the history of the United States. Rubio's performance is the worst of all because he is working opportunistically to enhance his own credentials, presumably to make a run for the presidency in 2028, while all of the others are doing what comes naturally. There has never been a more heartless and cruel team in charge of American national security policy.

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Melvin A. Goodman is a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy and a professor of government at Johns Hopkins University. A former CIA analyst, Goodman is the author of [Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA](#) and [National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism](#), and [A Whistleblower at the CIA](#). His most recent books are “American Carnage: The Wars of Donald Trump” (Opus Publishing, 2019) and “Containing the National Security State” (Opus Publishing, 2021). Goodman is the national security columnist for [counterpunch.org](#).