

Does Trump understand government?

Published: January 13, 2026, 10:39 pm

Trump's new government looks as though it is going to be made up almost entirely of people who have no clue about what government is but think it can be run like a business. The trouble is, the two are nothing like each other, and as a result, things could go horribly wrong very quickly for the Trump administration.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NMw2Do4Nm&si=30dnJ_tOCPjyOFzZ

This is this transcript:

Does Trump understand government? It's a question that needs to be asked because I think the answer is that he doesn't.

Now let me be clear what I mean here. Government is not like business. Trump thinks he's the most amazing business person of all time, and he's willing to tell anyone who's willing to listen that that is the case.

But I don't believe that he is the best business person of all time. I don't think he's recruiting a team of great business people to support him. But I do believe that all the people that he is recruiting to run his government believe that it is just like another form of business and that they will run it in that way.

In his 2016 to 2020 administration, Trump employed a lot of people who were experienced in government and who understood government does not run like a business. As a consequence, they did, to some degree, save him and the USA from the worst that Trump had to offer. But this time, I don't think any such protections exist. To use the current parlance, the guardrails have been taken away. These people who are now in charge, they believe they are going to rule the world, and that is their intention.

But there are fundamental differences between what a government does and what a business does. Let me take a simple, straightforward example. If a government decides to sack a lot of people, and it looks as though it is Trump's intention to sack a great many people because he is talking, and Elon Musk is talking, about cutting the US federal budget by \$2 trillion a year, which you can imagine is going to result in very large numbers of people who work for that government being out of employment. Those people do not disappear as a result.

If you run a business and sack people, they cease to be your responsibility once the payoff is concluded, and in the US, payoff settlements aren't good. But if you run a government, the people don't disappear because you sack them. They are still in your economy.

They still need to work, but there is now no work for them to do.

They still need to be fed, because you aren't giving them a death sentence.

Their children still need to be educated, but their parents are no longer paying tax to assist that process.

You still need to provide them with Medicare, if that is what they are dependent upon, and yet you've just eliminated the whole Medicare program that is there to assist them.

And you're creating a crisis as a consequence.

All of these realities are things that governments have to face that businesses don't.

So, it was entirely possible for Elon Musk to come into Twitter and sack 80 per cent of its staff and rename it X whilst doing so, and he has sort of got away with it - although we can see the consequences, that it became loss-making, and it haemorrhaged advertising, and now it is losing followers like fury. But he could sack those people, and they were no longer his responsibility. And that's how he views the world. He wants to be irresponsible with regard to those with whom he engages.

But the government can't do that. Because, as I say, people will still be there. And I don't believe that anyone inside the Trump government really understands that simple fundamental point. That the role of government is to actually manage the economy so that people can live - everyone can survive.

Now, let me just add a caveat here. I do know that Trump is going to try to export 11 million people from the US as part of his policy in government. He says that's what he's going to achieve. These are the so-called undocumented people working in the US at present, many of them undertaking household support tasks like child care and gardening and decorating and DIY, or working in similar shadow style businesses, but who nonetheless are providing essential support functions within the US economy, which Trump now wants to take away. Apart from the fact that he's going to upset vast

numbers of wealthier people in the USA who employ these people to undertake the tasks I just mentioned, there is also the fact that he's actually got to find someone to take them.

Trump presumes that just like a private business, he can get rid of these people, and they are no longer his concern. But actually, that's not true. He can try to expel 11 million people from the USA, but that doesn't guarantee there's anywhere for them to go. Mexico might say, thank you very much, but these people are not coming back through here to wherever they came from.

And other people, of course, come from all over the world to the USA to work and are not necessarily documented. And so his task will be to persuade the rest of the world to take the 11 million people, and I very strongly suspect that many of them will have nowhere to go.

I don't believe that this is something he has thought about, because the small-minded, microeconomic attitude that he and his colleagues have towards government, which they think is like a business, has never thought through the fact that these people remain their problem until somebody else will take them, even if they manage to find 11 million people, round them up and try to force them out.

This is small-minded management, in other words. Well, not just small-minded, small mean-minded management, in other words. But that very bad form of business management, which appears to typify most of those on whom Trump is relying, is wholly unsuited for use by government.

And that is my point. The more that Trump tries to pretend that government can be run like a private equity operation, or like one of his businesses from the past, then we're going to see problems. The USA is going to see problems. The world is going to see problems. You cannot be president of the USA and recruit a team of people to support you, none of whom have real government experience, but all of whom think that the world can be run like a business and get away with it. You will crash government, and the USA with a crashed government is a prospect that I find pretty terrifying.