

# Trump's assault on the USA: seeking an explanation

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*Please excuse this much longer-than-usual post. I am seeking to explain something that has appeared almost inexplicable - which is Trump's assault on the USA. I should not have begun thinking about this on a Saturday afternoon, but this is what flowed when I did, starting with an explanation as to why I began to even address the issue.*

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I am three weeks or so into my so-called retirement from employment, which, as you will have noticed, has had precisely no impact at all on what I'm doing on this blog or on my YouTube channel, but I have to say that things are not going that well.

I stress that this has very little to do with the way in which I am now choosing to work. That said, I have, I admit, found it slightly unsettling to realise that I now have the option to try to do things really well rather than just get things done on time to meet deadlines. This has meant, for example, that I have had the chance to sit back, think, draft, edit, and reflect more before publishing anything whilst also learning new techniques along the way. This is something that I am enjoying, and I am hoping that over time, the benefits will become obvious. However, this is not the issue that I am referring to.

The reality is that, for better or for worse, I decided to retire from employment before Donald Trump was elected to a second term as president of the USA, and even in my worst nightmare, I would not have imagined that he would be as bad as it turns out he very obviously intends to be. What is not going well in life right now is that Trump is intent on systemic destruction. I have hinted at this in some recent videos, but the dawning realisation is that this is not some sort of fad but might represent the whole plan for his presidency. This now requires that I tackle the issue head-on.

There are exceptionally perverse factors to what Trump is up to. Like just about every arch-neoliberal or neo-fascist - and there now appears to be little difference between the two - Trump has always made clear he hates government. However, even during

his first term in office, he behaved like all other politicians of this type have done when they have reached positions of power, which is to administer the state in ways that are both broadly predictable and very largely consistent with precedent, the odd bit of madness (such as the massive tax cuts for the wealthy that Trump delivered) apart.

As if to confirm the normality of this behaviour, just recall all those Tory leaders in the UK who have echoed the sentiments of the Tufton Street think tanks whilst in opposition, saying as a consequence that the government is the enemy of the people and that when they got into office they will dismantle a very large part of it, and then – with the exception of Liz Truss – who proved herself too incompetent to do anything – they never try to do so. Nor do they ever find any of the inefficiency or waste that they claimed existed before they reached the higher echelons of power because it is not there to be found. So it was with Trump the first time around.

Except not this time. With four years to prepare after the failed coup of 6 January 2021, and with a massive grudge to drive him, he listened to the Heritage Foundation and its partners and set out to deliver the type of reform that no one imagined anyone might ever try, because no one imagined that anyone would ever be stupid enough to do so. Trump does, however, fit that bill.

So, what is it that Trump is trying to do? It is, obviously, difficult to predict precisely what Trump is up to. A person as unstable as he is, with someone as erratic as Musk advising him, is not someone who is totally predictable, at least when it comes to the minutiae of what he might do. However, it is not the detail that I'm worried about here. What concerns me is the grand scheme of what he is trying to do.

As I see it, Trump has a series of objectives that he, or those around him, are seeking to fulfil. What, however, characterises them all is that they are not about creating systemic risk within the existing processes of government by undertaking significant reform to those structures, which is what most administrations seek to do.

For example, many governments might want to make changes to the ways in which universities operate, maybe by changing their system of funding, or governance, or by bringing them closer to, or further from the influence of central government as a result. Changes that might, however, question whether those institutions that we recognise as universities should even exist do not arise. Nor is it suggested that what we now call universities should cease to have the right to determine what it is they might teach, or what ideas they might promote, or how they might examine this, and what they might research. That is because to do so would challenge the existence of what we call universities, but that is what Trump is doing.

Likewise, whilst we can see the UK government is more than willing to make changes to the social security system, whether for better or worse, they do continue to claim that they are committed to its perpetuation. The same cannot be said to be true for Trump. It would seem as if his administration is quite willing to turn the social security system

off, apparently having no conscience about doing so.

Trump has already closed down USAid.

He wishes to do the same for the federal education department.

His contempt for the US legal system is apparent. He would, very obviously, rather do away with it.

There are also significant question marks over his intentions with regard to the continued provision of medical support for the tens of millions of people in the USA - including one-quarter of all children - who are dependent upon the federal government to supply that service.

And now that Musk has discovered, as he claims to have done, that there are fourteen computers within the US government that are capable of creating money out of nothing - of which capability he has claimed himself to be previously unaware - we can only presume that he might soon wish to close down this federal government capacity to create the US dollar, which he claims to be out of control and the source of unreliable data on government finances supplied to Congress and others.

To put this another way, the threats that Trump is now creating are not located within the US system of government. The threats are, instead, to the US system government. My suggestion is that Trump has, in other words, become president so that he can destroy precisely what it is that he is in charge of.

It is important to note that there is a profound paradox within this policy. The more that Trump destroys the government, the less his power is.

The more that he destroys the rule of law, the less his ability to influence outcomes within the state.

In fact, the more that he questions the very existence of the USA as it is, not least by undermining its entire foreign policy whilst simultaneously questioning the nature of its borders, the more that he makes whatever it is that he thinks he rules over ungovernable precisely because the unknown cannot be controlled.

This does, however, then make clear just how great the threat that Trump has created really is. If government is usually about a process of mitigating risk, Trump is doing the exact opposite. He is deliberately creating risk.

What is more, the risks that he is creating are not small but are instead on what might be described as being on a previously almost unimaginable scale. And I reiterate, because the point is so important, that the risk is not within the government, but to the existence of the government of the USA, and so even to the existence of that country. He is asking not just if the USA need exist, but whether it should exist.

As a result, he is asking the question beloved of so many right-wingers over the last century or so, which question we thought to have been resolved by the American Civil War, which is whether or not any form of federal organisation is actually required in North America.

It would seem that it is his desire to devolve power to the individual states, even though it is very likely that this will be profoundly harmful to the majority of those who voted him into office because most of the states where they reside are to be found in middle America, which is much poorer overall than the US east and west coasts. I cannot imagine that he will worry about the consequences of that, partly for reasons I will note below.

Such a move achieves another goal of the American far right. It threatens the existence of the human construct, which has, above all else, given the USA its power, which is the US dollar, the power of which currency is based in turn upon the power of the US federal government to tax income, in particular.

The far-right wing in the USA has challenged both the existence of the Federal Reserve and the right of the federal government to charge a federal income tax for more than a century. It would seem that Trump is now seeking to deliver on the promise to dissolve both, but with the consequence that the dollar as we know it then ceases to exist.

In turn, so too will the US internal market in goods and services, which is based on a monetary union, as well as much of US economic power, US financial markets, and much of the world order of trade. And all this might happen as, simultaneously, the US ceases to be a world power, leaving a void in the international political order.

There are three questions to ask. First, why is Trump doing this? Second, who gains from what Trump is doing? Third, what are the consequences?

The answer to these questions too, upon reflection, appear fairly straightforward to me, although of course I might be wrong. I stress I have looked for the glaringly obvious reasons when offering the explanations that follow. In my experience, simple solutions are usually the right ones.

Firstly, what Trump and his cohort are doing is entirely logical if you put themselves in their position. They are immensely wealthy people or are the servants of such people or believe in the absolute right of such people to govern. What they are intensely aware of is the fact that when there was last a similarly powerful group of people within the USA, in the very early years of the 20th century, steps were taken to control the power of such people through the passing of legislation at a federal level that cut that power.

President Theodore Roosevelt used anti-trust legislation at that time to bring legal action against forty-three of the largest companies inside the USA to constrain their power by requiring them to be broken up into smaller, more competitive companies. As

a consequence, he simultaneously constrained the power of those who owned such companies to exercise control over the US economy. Their wings were clipped.

When we are now in a situation where an even smaller number of companies exercise even more power over the US economy than did those that Teddy Roosevelt challenged during the course of his presidency, then the threat that Musk, Zuckerberg and others now feel to their wellbeing is what, almost certainly, motivates their actions. Trump's opinion of his status aligns with those of this group, and I suggest that all their actions are motivated by the desire to prevent the revival of anti-trust legislation that they perceive threatens their positions and wealth via the challenge it represents to the companies that they control.

To ensure this threat cannot be raised, it is my suggestion that:

- \* They are seeking to both capture and neuter the power of the US legal system.
- \* They are, likewise, seeking to both capture and neuter the power of the US federal government.
- \* In the process, they are trying to devolve the power of the federal government to the individual states of the USA, none of which they believe could pose a threat to them because at least some of those states would support the continuation of their monopolistic power in exchange for license fees and other types of incentive. They can be sure of this as they know that state capture by corporate interests is entirely possible because it has happened in tax havens around the world.

What they are undertaking, in that case, is a direct assault on the USA as a country, as a judiciary, and as a power. This is being pursued by Trump, and all of it in plain sight, whilst it is being funded by, motivated and intellectually driven by those who wish to maintain their monopolistic power in the world.

The second question that I asked was, who gains from this? The pattern of what is happening makes clear who that will be, but there is a twist in this tale. When Teddy Roosevelt was in power, the basis for the wealth of the corporations that he challenged was their control of the physical infrastructure of the USA, coupled with their control of the finance that underpinned that control.

Now, the basis of the power of the corporations that are supporting Trump's assault on the USA is their control of the data infrastructure of that country - and, in many ways, of other countries as well. What they do, however, know is that there is extensive federal legislation that has sought to constrain that power and to ensure that it might be exercised, at least to some extent, for the common good. This, too, is seen by these companies as an assault on their wellbeing.

The gain to these companies from the assault on the existence of US federal power is,

then, that the threat from anti-trust legislation and from legislation that seeks to control their use of data for corporate gain is removed. If, simultaneously, they can, as Musk is obviously doing, also capture some, if not all, of the data belonging to the federal government in a form that enables them to use it, then they not only remove the threat to their power, but they considerably extend it. In fact, if they can capture that data whilst at the same time destroying the power of the federal government to use it, they create a new monopoly for themselves because they can then, in turn, license that data to the individual states who will need that information to operate whatever vestige of government might remain in North America after the collapse of the USA.

Who gains from this assault on the structure of the USA? It is those who control the most data in the USA - who we can see are behind this unprecedented power grab on that country. Given that data is now power, they are seeking to ensure that there are no state rivals to their power by capturing state data for their own profit, whether by legitimate means or otherwise. What they also know is that their window of opportunity to do so is limited, hence the speed with which Musk is moving.

I suggest that everything else that Trump is doing is peripheral to these goals or is intended to clear the way for the removal of the US federal government. This is, for example, why Trump is withdrawing the USA from engagement in the world, because he expects there to be no USA to continue with this role fairly shortly. This is also why he wishes to close down federal programmes, because his intention is that if there are to be programmes with regard to education, social security and medical support, for example, then they will be provided at a state level, where in many cases they will be entirely unaffordable.

Who gains from this strategy? That is very obviously those who Trump made so prominent at his inauguration - who are the new oligarchs in the USA. He was sending out a signal for us all to see. We just needed to pick up on it. There is no more, and no less, to his strategy than this.

Who will lose out? At a superficial level, it will be everyone who is dependent on the support provided by the US federal government, from the armed forces, to veterans, to those most vulnerable in the USA. They are the obvious losers.

But so too will those oligarchs be losers - unless, of course, they have alternative currencies to use when the dollar ceases to be all-powerful, which is precisely why Trump and this cohort are so keen on cryptocurrencies. These are, very clearly, integral to their plans. Privately created, so-called currencies suit their purposes very well, they think. That they cannot survive or even be of use without the power to tax has not probably occurred to them as yet. Or rather, if it has, then taxes might come in a very different form - for example, transaction levies for the right to use the currencies they create to buy the assets they control.

I stress what I am offering here is an idea. Call it a theory if you wish. It's more

obviously an evidence-based explanation of what I can see happening, which has appeared to be confusing to date precisely because it has taken us so far, and so quickly, into unknown space. I suspect I will want to revise it. I could be entirely wrong. But as far as I can see, this explanation has coherence to it and even explains motivations and their consequences, which have been hard to spot.

Comments are welcome.