

The failure of Musk is not by chance

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Musk came, he saw, and he left, having wrecked the place.

There were no victories.

There was no gain.

It is estimated that 1,500 babies a day are now being born with HIV because his attack on USAID left their mothers without the protections that they need from that disease, meaning that their children are born with this condition.

The poorest, the most vulnerable, and those already facing the greatest stress in society, both in the USA and in countries impacted by cuts in USAID around the world, are those who have suffered the most as a result of Musk's reckless irresponsibility.

And, as he admitted as he departed the scene, reforming the government is not as easy as he thought. That is because, just like almost all the simple-minded people who strike it lucky in business and who, as a consequence, believe they can solve any problem by issuing autocratic instruction which those who work for them must comply with or face immediate risk of losing their jobs, the complexity of government is beyond their comprehension.

Government systems are not set up for the limited purposes of keeping bosses happy, if necessary by the supply of misinformation, and of ensuring organisation survival, as is the case with too much private sector enterprise. Instead, they actually try to meet need.

This is a goal almost beyond the comprehension of those business leaders who are most critical of government. They are so singular in their outlook that they genuinely believe that the world shares their belief that the perpetuation of growth in their wealth is the only worthy objective of humankind. The possibility that an organisation might not only be required to, but actually does, take account of the needs of those whom it serves, and is served by people who might have genuine concern for others beyond their own self interest, is so baffling to these supposed business leaders that they

completely fail to understand the systems created by those who embrace this type of thinking.

As a result, they are quite unable to comprehend the multifaceted nature of the systems that must be created when the impact of actions has to be taken into account when any decision is made, because the potential risks those impacts might give rise to are of concern to the decision-maker.

Of course, Musk failed as a result of this.

Over many decades, I have heard right-wing politicians complaining that government is wasteful, and if only they were given an opportunity, then they would cut its costs for the benefit of society. Then, when they reach office, they invariably discover that no such possibility exists. Instead, they realise that there are good reasons for the complex arrangements that government uses, not least because it seeks to avoid adverse consequences of any actions it takes (by and large, and I know there are exceptions).

Musk does, then, join a long line of those simpletons from the business community who have failed when taking on the challenge of government because the problems of managing an organisation with diverse, integrated, and socially essential goals is beyond their comprehension when they believe that every organisation exists solely for the purposes of maximising the wealth of its owners. This is most especially the case when they struggle to understand that government does not, as such, have owners, but is instead accountable to people on the basis of a relationship of trust that is not contractual.

The only problem in the case of Musk was that he was given unfettered power beyond the rule of law by a person at the peak moment of his ability to create havoc, before the forces of law began to constrain him, however much he wished otherwise. The result is that mayhem was unleashed, and it will take years, if not decades, to correct.

Meanwhile, lives will have been harmed irreparably as a consequence, and many will have been lost.

The price of Musk will, quite literally, be seen in death, sickness, chronic anxiety, destroyed well-being, devastated businesses, the abandonment of hope, the destruction of US soft power, a loss of faith in government, and disdain for all that he ever does again.

The world needs to learn a lesson from Musk and from his sponsor. That is that the far right cannot deliver. What is more, those who seek to copy them, as they move further to the right as they exit the neoliberal centre, also lack that capacity. That is because all those on the far right are devoid of the essential characteristic of successful politics, which is the capacity to care. The absence of this essential quality is why they will always fail, eventually.