

Do we succumb to the politics of might, or choose the p...

Published: January 18, 2026, 9:37 am

It would be terribly convenient to suggest that Donald Trump is mad; that his breaches of international law can be ignored; that his threats of imposing tariffs on countries including the UK, so that he might acquire Greenland, breach our own constitution, even in US law; and that, as a consequence, everything that he says can be ignored. That would be convenient.

It would also be wrong, for one very good reason, apparent most obviously on the streets of Minneapolis in the US state of Minnesota, where forces from Trump's Gestapo-like Immigration and Customs Enforcement service are terrorising the people of the city whilst deliberately breaking down the barriers that usually enforce law and order.

Trump might well be mad. His administration is heinous. Those who surround him appear to be intent on creating a far-right, white, male, evangelical Christian-focused theocracy that is utterly contemptuous of democracy, and which seeks to rule the world by force for the benefit of a tiny wealthy elite, but the problem is that he is willing to subject people to that force, and even kill them if they dissent.

In comparison, he might argue that threats to impose tariffs to force European agreement on the US acquisition of Greenland are an exercise in moderation, but they are nothing of the sort. It is war by any other name; let's stop pretending otherwise. Keir Starmer might still talk about things like special relationships, but he talks a lot of nonsense, and this is typical of the stupid commentary to which he is inclined.

So, let's talk facts here. The US is now a fascist dictatorship. Its leadership is violently imposing its views upon people in that country. Its democracy has failed. Like most fascist dictatorships, it is seeking to rapidly expand its colonial influence to acquire territory that it can subjugate and exploit to support what will, inevitably, be domestic economic failure. And, again, as is normal for fascist dictatorships, it is threatening those it perceives to be weaker with retaliation if they have the temerity to object to what it is doing.

I wrote [a reasoned response](#) to this situation this morning, but the more I think about it, the more I realise that the power is actually with Europe. In that case, we need simple-to-explain and very obvious strategies that challenge what the US is doing, which do need to be discussed by European leaders publicly, so that the US knows that a response is in mind.

The first is that if the US wishes to challenge European sovereign territory, Europe can no longer host its military bases. Doing so is now absurd. Would we have offered Hitler the use of a giant airbase in Suffolk in 1939? Of course not. Why are we doing that now for the USA? The message has to be delivered loudly and clearly that these forces will need to go home if the US comes anywhere near European territory or even threatens to do so.

Secondly, since Trump is using taxes as a weapon, so should we. The US has just exempted itself from involvement in a new worldwide tax treaty designed to end corporate tax abuse, meaning that action against it is, in any case, justified. The obvious response is to require that UK tax at the basic rate should now be withheld from payments of dividends to US companies, or the subsidiaries of US companies, wherever they might be located around the world, and the same should be true with regard to interest payments from the UK to US companies, where tax should also be deducted at source. We do not do this at present, but we could, and if the US is going to be a pariah state with regard to taxation, as well as much else, then we have to use the weapons available to us, and this one is high on the list of those that might be used.

I am sure that our politicians will not want to use these tactics, but what else are they going to do when the country that was once seen as our biggest ally is now our decidedly hostile foe, and is imposing upon its own people a system of government that we fought a world war to defeat? What else are we meant to do?

The question for Keir Starmer is straightforward. Is he going to stand aside and say, “Please carry on, Donald, because you’re my best friend”, or is it time to act? So let’s be clear: I am not suggesting threats of military action. I am simply suggesting that we respond in style to what the US is doing. And let’s also be clear: what we have to accept is that, whatever happens, this could turn very nasty. That is unsurprising. Nasty is what small-minded fascists are.

Importantly, if we are to say that we have to be sure as to what that nastiness involves. Clarity matters at this moment since it provides us with our reasons for action, and what Trump is doing involves:

- * Removing the rights of women around the world whilst subjugating control of their lives and bodies to men’s wishes.
- * Removing the rights of all non-white people around the world, all of whom will be treated as opportunities for exploitation, at best.

- * Refusing to recognise any form of diversity, whether with regard to sexual orientation, neurodiversity, gender, or any other such issue.
- * Denying the right to free speech and free thought, whilst requiring acceptance of a singular worldview, with the threat of punishment for failing to do so.

We have a choice. Do we defend the human rights of the vast majority of people in the world, or abandon them? Do we succumb to the politics of might, or choose the politics of care? That is the choice. I know what I want.