Funding the Future

The necessary post-Trump consensus

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Another day, and more madness from Trump. What else can I say about his Davos appearance yesterday?

Fools appear to be celebrating that he had backed off military action, as if his word might be relied upon. What planet are they on, if they think that? Why should he, or their judgment, be trusted?

Then he withdrew the threat of tariffs for the time being, claiming he had struck a deal with Mark Rutte, the boss of NATO, who seems very unlikely to have the authority to agree to any deal for anyone.

So what is really happening? Who knows? That is the only honest answer that is available.

Perhaps Tuesday's 2% fall in the S&P 500, discussed in this morning's video, spooked Trump.

Maybe the talk of central banks dumping dollar reserves has done the same thing.

Or, perhaps, Trump decided to spread confusion and incoherence again, as is his plan, and even his strategy.

The fact that he could not, apparenrtly rcall the name of the territory he is so desperate to acquire was, maybe, part of that shtick, or he could have been threatening Iceland as well. It is impossible to tell for sure. What I did not see was evidence of dementia.

We cannot know anything for sure, but I think to wise to assume:

* The threat of violent seizure of Greenland still exists.
* There is no deal on any issue.
* Trump is spinning to wear down his opponents, who were lulled into a temporary sense of security yesterday afternoon.

* This is not over yet.

What all that means is that some things are known:

* The US and its credibility is irreprably harmed by this.
* No one trusts Trump or his administration, and that is irrecoverable.
* NATO is, for all practical purposes, an organisation now treating the USA as an enemy, and not an ally, let alone as a member.
* The post-war Western defence framework has been shattered as a result.
* We need a new framework because, as Mark Carney said on Tuesday, middle states can only survive if they work together. Unless they do, they will be picked off, one by one.

The last point is vital: the need to work together remains. Without new relationships of trust, Trump and his fascist regime might still win.

That necessary new framework needs some foundational agreements to be reached very quickly. Thankfully, that work has already been done. The foundations can be found in:

* The UN Charter
* The UN Declaration of Human Rights
* The NATO Charter

Each of these was designed to tackle fascism and the threat of oligarchic rule. The task remains the same today,

However, there are reasons for work to be done. In particular, these treaties were also based on an economic consensus. This stressed that:

* Nations existed to serve their populations above all else.
* This required active states.
* The goal was to deliver freedom from fear, and not just from the terror of war and authoritarian rule, but from:
* Hunger
* Homelessness
* Poverty
* Joblessness and a lack of income

* Exclusion through a lack of education
* Sickness
* Discrimination
* War, in all its forms

* These goals were more important than:
* Growth for its own sake
* Profit maximisation
* Wealth inflation
* Division created by chosen inequality

To achieve unity, stability, security and freedom from fear now, the goal is not just lip service to the UN and NATO charters; it has to be about delivering real freedom by eliminating poverty, discrimination and the fear of war. That is possible, but not in the neoliberal framework that brought us to this point.

That does not mean an end to prosperity. It means deciding to share it for the greatest prosperity of all.

And that does not mean uniformity. It requires:

* Recognising difference.
* Embracing diversity.
* Letting people flourish.
* Measuring wealth in terms of well-being, and not just financially.
* Accepting that variation will happen.
* Agreeing that the harm from differences that impose stress on society must be addressed, whatever their cause.
* Appreciating that harm to one is harm to all, and that mitigating harm is essential to creating common wealth.

My point is - and this has been written hastily - that deals are required now, and they must be principles-based, as those agreed after World War 2 were. But the consequence of embracing principles must be understood. We must cease living in a society where greed, excess, and the celebration of the size of the gaps between

people in a society define success, and start living in societies where the success of all is the concern. Then the middle states can survive, and given that we live in a middle state here in the UK, this should matter to us, a very great deal. Our future depends on this.