

Trump: the greatest threat in 2026

<https://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2026/01/03/trump-the-greatest-threat-in-2026/>

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2026 opens in a world more fragile than at any point since 1945.

This video explains why — and why the risk is not personality, but systems.

Donald Trump is accelerating every existing fault line: climate breakdown, democratic erosion, militarisation, forced migration and global instability. Small shocks now cause disproportionate damage, the defining feature of fragile systems.

This is a warning about climate denial, cruelty as policy, weakened diplomacy, and the abandonment of the post-1945 settlement built on cooperation and care. War is a risk, but slow catastrophes may be worse.

The politics of care is no longer optional. It is the only rational response.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxpK2-f8vUY&si=cdruhtBsAEx8ReXc>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=yg5s8-1a094d4-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

2026 is upon us, and Donald Trump is still with us. As a result, we face danger and fragility, and my point is we live in a fragile world, more fragile than at any point since 1945, and this risk exists because Donald Trump is accelerating every existing fault line in the world.

This video is not about personalities, although I will name Donald Trump quite a lot; it's about systems, and it is about risk.

Fragility means small shocks can cause huge damage.

Our world is fragile because climate systems are destabilising.

Resources are under strain.

Political trust is collapsing.

And violence is being normalised, not least by Donald Trump and the reckless way in which he's using US weaponry.

In fragile systems, reckless leadership is existentially dangerous, and there is a core issue within all of this, which is that climate change is being ignored.

Climate change is not paused by war.

It is not postponed by nationalism.

It is not solved by denial.

And yet climate action is being sidelined at present, and Trump represents active resistance to climate responsibility, and not just neglect, and that is making the world more fragile.

At the same time, forced migration as a consequence of climate change is already here. Hundreds of millions of people may need to move this century because of heat, water scarcity, crop failure, and rising sea levels. The question is not whether people will move. The question is whether they will be met with care or cruelty when they arrive at their destination.

Our world is getting more fragile because cruelty is becoming the norm, and that is intensely dangerous because conflict could result as a consequence.

Meanwhile, water scarcity is a silent crisis. Water is becoming a defining geopolitical resource. Shortages are arising partly because of AI, partly because of climate change, partly because we are literally seeing the world's lakes and rivers dry up as a consequence of increased heat. The shortages that result will drive conflict, displacement, and even state failure, yet water stress barely features in militarised

worldviews. Because it requires cooperation and not dominance, it is simply ignored as if it will go away, because armaments will solve the problem, and that is not the case.

While all this is happening, we have three superpowers emerging and one unstable order, and this in itself is also new. We've been used for the last 35 years to having just one global superpower. The USA, and before that, we had two: the USA and Russia, but now we live in a three-power world. The United States, China, and Russia are now the world's superpowers. And alongside this, we have the EU sitting wondering what on earth it is all about, even though it, in combination, could be the fourth on that list.

The particular risk is from China, in my opinion. That's not because I'm saying it is an immediate threat. It is because it's relatively new in this role, and as a consequence, its long-term intentions are still not fully known, and that makes diplomacy essential and not optional, but Trump is weakening diplomacy; he mocks it, and that is creating instability.

Instability is growing as well because democracy is no longer assumed. The democratic settlement born of the American Revolution and the French Revolution, both at the end of the 18th century, is now under threat in both Europe and the USA. Trump does not defend democracy. Nor, worryingly, are most leaders of most political parties in the UK, at least the three largest ones, Labour, the Conservatives and Reform.

Trump is testing how far he can push democracy before it breaks, and I am fearful that the same is happening in the UK, where our democratic system is obviously failing us, and yet no one is talking about real reform, at least in those three parties which might have the capacity to deliver it.

So we are talking yet again about fragility, and amongst all of this, and indeed creating it is the far-right, and they thrive on the fragility that is being deliberately created by the likes of Trump.

Far-right politics feeds on fear, difference, othering and conflict. They promise strength, but they deliver division, which in many ways is the exact opposite. Trump legitimises this politics globally, whether intentionally or not, and we are seeing the consequences in Europe and elsewhere.

All the while, the post-1945 commitments are being abandoned. After 1945, the world committed through the United Nations and other organisations to:

- * reduce poverty,
- * avoid arms races, prevent global war,
- * act collectively against social harms,
- * beat climate change, and

- * promote freedoms.

Trump's agenda reverses that settlement. It treats cooperation as weakness, and this is intensely dangerous.

War, as a consequence, is not the only risk. Yes, that risk is rising, and Europe is being driven into arms escalation, willingly or otherwise, whilst the Middle East is becoming a permanent flashpoint, but war is not the only, or maybe even the greatest danger.

The real risks are climate action being abandoned, refugees being denied safety, poverty deepening as states re-arm and care being replaced by coercion, while discrimination is normalised. These are slow catastrophes, but they're permanent ones, and that is why they are so dangerous.

And all the while, tyranny is being normalised. When fear dominates, accountability disappears, power centralises, and the threat that tyranny represents becomes normal. Trump has already shown how this works. January 6th 2021 was not an aberration. It was a rehearsal.

And discrimination is now policy. Difference becomes a threat. Identity becomes a weapon, and this is already happening. It is being scaled up quickly and across borders, and this is terrifying for all of those who feel othered as a consequence, and that is a real context for the fear that many have, which is feeding into the fragility of the world systems.

This time, in other words, the cost of Trump is higher. His first presidency was bad, and he failed to deliver for ordinary Americans, but this time everything is on a much grander and worse scale.

Global institutions are being fundamentally weakened.

Norms are being eroded, and global tensions are being deliberately stoked, so they are now much higher.

The damage will not be contained within the USA. Trump threatens us all, and not with peace. He threatens us with the very opposite of the politics of care, which I like to talk about.

He threatens us with:

- * militarisation,
- * rearmament and
- * permanent hostility.

And now we have politicians like Keir Starmer talking about military Keynesianism as if this is going to solve the economic problems of the UK when it can do no such thing because nobody wins from a war.

Even organisations like NATO are now being reshaped by this logic, and Trump is not the whole problem; let me be clear about it. Trump may not even survive 2026, either physically or politically, because he is an old man whose cognitive ability is clearly declining, but the agenda is now bigger than him. Others will continue it if he goes, and that is also the real danger that we face.

As a consequence, 2026 will be a year of strain, economic strain, political strain, environmental strain. We do not yet know if our systems are resilient enough to handle those strains, but what we do know is this: they will not survive without care.

This is not an issue about left or right, it's about care versus the collapse caused by fragility.

We must recentre climate action as a focus for politicians everywhere.

We must defend democratic accountability if our states are to survive in the form that we recognise them.

We must reject militarised economics because it does not deliver for people.

And we must rebuild international cooperation in place of conflict.

The politics of care is no longer optional. It is the only rational response to a fragile world.

Tell us what you think; there's a poll down below.

Poll

[poll id="281"]

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