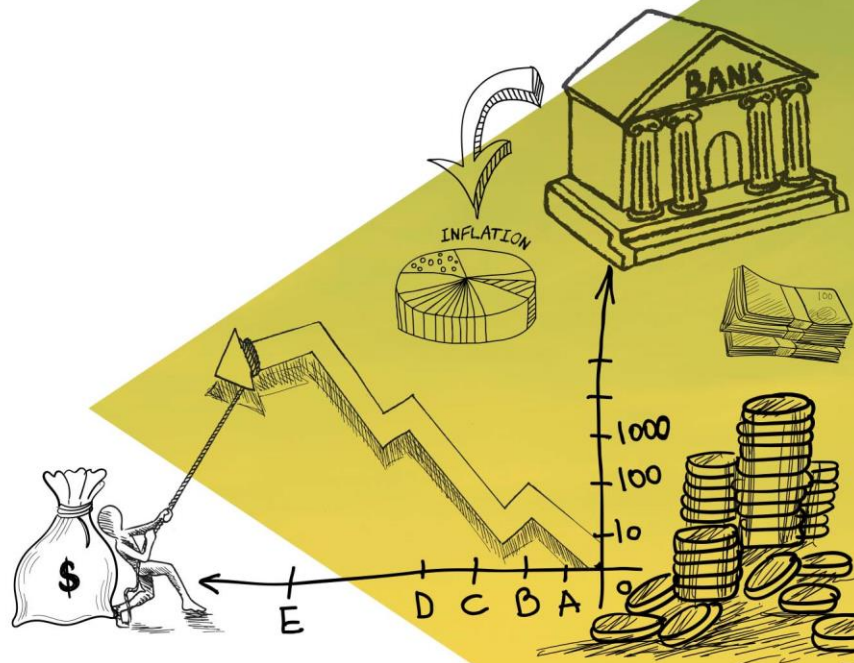


TRUMP: A Second Administration in Seven Economic Paradoxes

Dr Usman W. Chohan

Advisor to President

An Essay



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President

Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd)

Edited by:

Sarah Siddiq Aneel

Layout

Hira Mumtaz

All correspondence pertaining to this publication should be addressed to CASS, Islamabad, through post or email at the following address:

Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies

☎ +92 051 5405011

✉ cass.thinkers@casstt.com

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CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES

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Introduction

The aim of this essay is to shed light on the economic and political implications of a second administration under Donald Trump, by exploring seven key paradoxes that may characterise his approach to complex socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and geoeconomic decisions. In highlighting these paradoxes, the essay aims to emphasise the paradoxical modes of governance and conflicting ambitions that the Trump administration will wrest with based on the multiplicity of its stated objectives. In particular, Trump's blend of populism, protectionism, and nationalism will manifest in policies that may work at cross-purposes, because they emanate from disparate ideological sources and interest groups: the nativism of Project 2025, the disenchantment and rebellion of the downtrodden, the pragmatism of the corporatocracy, the protectionism of working class voters, the recidivism of male voters, and the technofeudalism of big tech. The paradoxes that emerge from such a mish-mash will nevertheless reshape both American as well as global economics, politics, and society, which is why this essay may serve an equally prescient purpose for those that did vote for him as did not, and for those who can vote in US elections as those that cannot.

There are seven paradoxes that warrant examination in this essay and will be addressed in the following sequence. First, the essay will consider the paradox of restricting both legal and illegal immigration with the promise of driving innovation and economic competitiveness. Second, the essay will address Trump's ambition to sustain dollar hegemony while simultaneously reducing America's trade deficit, a paradox that will likely accelerate dedollarisation efforts globally. Third, it will explore Trump's desire to project America's global economic leadership without the traditional largesse extended to allies, a shift likely to provoke new geopolitical realignments as the cost-benefit equation of following along with America becomes increasingly disfavoured for other nations. Fourth, the essay will examine the paradox articulated by Project 2025 of expanding the American population without a corresponding investment in human capital ('growing numbers, shrinking futures') —a dynamic that would product more Americans but worse ones.

Fifth, the essay will discuss the paradox of strengthening family structures under Project 2025 while simultaneously imposing restrictive policies that may erode personal autonomy and increase domestic stressors, tighter family units that are



tightened by force. Sixth, the essay will explore Trump's efforts to ease economic hardship through protectionist policies (sweeping tariff measures raising import costs in an import-dependent country, and tougher migration policies raising labor costs), which could paradoxically worsen rather than ease conditions for consumers. Finally, and seventh, the essay will examine Trump's reliance on scapegoating societal groups, a strategy that may foster divisions rather than address underlying economic issues, and on the need for problems to exist in order to appear as the 'fixer,' this giving the semblance of fixing problems than actually solving them.

Each section will analyse these paradoxes in terms of their potential impact on either economic growth/stability, social cohesion, and America's global standing; which is to say: economics, society, and both domestic and international politics. The essay concludes by reflecting on the broader consequences of these paradoxes, noting that they reflect a nation that is at odds with itself, and that the resolution of the paradoxes may not occur in ways advantageous to America's long-term interests.

Paradox 1: The Closed Gate

The Loss of Global Talent in a Restrictive Immigration Landscape

The paradox of the 'Closed Gate' centres on a longstanding tension within US immigration policy, with the simultaneous need for a robust inflow of global talent versus the implementation of cumbersome, restrictive, and in some cases, overtly hostile immigration policies under the auspices of nativist impulses amongst American voters. For the past 200 years, and especially since 1945, the United States has served as a beacon for the world's best and brightest, thereby securing its edge in science & technology, culture & the arts, medicine & public health, and 'innovation' broadly speaking. However, Trump's deportation stance and anti-immigration rhetoric risk detering this influx of talent at a time when skilled professionals are critical to economic growth and national competitiveness.

But the practical reality of immigration for skilled workers is often overlooked in the broader discourse. For example, in recent years, US immigration pathways for high-skilled professionals (the H-1B category, for example) have been far too narrow to cater to the burgeoning requirements of the most innovative sectors. Queues for the



H-1B category move far too slowly, and so the legal pathways for the most specialist migrants are exceedingly restrictive and dissuasive. Compounding this issue is the restriction on illegal entry, which has two components. The first concern with illegal entry is that it has grown substantially over the past few years (although it fell in 2024), and American sentiment has soured significantly in the subject. Whereas less than 30% of American voters saw the illegal border crossings as a major issue when Biden took over in 2020, by 2024 more than 55% of Americans were highly concerned about it, and the allegedly callous attitude of the Biden administration on the subject certainly contributed to Democrat defeat in 2024. Yet many of these migrants address labor market needs by serving in occupations that many (perhaps most) Americans would refuse to fill. At the same time, another significant proportion of 'illegal' migrants comprises those who originally entered legally but overstayed their visa term. This 'overstay' category includes many skilled professionals who find themselves stranded due to inefficiencies within the immigration system. Either way, with little prospect for accessible, legitimate means of residency or work status, many highly skilled immigrants may view the United States as a less feasible option and seek opportunities elsewhere.

Moreover, the emphasis on being 'tough on immigration' resonates strongly with Trump's voting base, and he is likely to continue enforcing policies that appeal to this demographic, particularly around border control. While such policies may attract domestic approval, they ultimately diminish the US's appeal on the global stage as a destination for skilled professionals. Supporters in sectors like Silicon Valley may argue for a policy shift that would attract top-tier talent (as the All-In Podcast's tech guru members do), but such arguments are unlikely to outweigh the political capital gained by Trump's tougher approach to immigration. Instead of addressing the structural gaps in legal pathways for high-skilled immigrants, the administration's anti-immigrant stance risks a broad exclusion of the talent pool that has historically driven US economic dynamism.

Meanwhile, countries like Canada have recognised the value of skilled immigrants and have capitalised on this by creating streamlined pathways for high-end talent. The Global Talent Stream, for example, fast-tracks work permits for specialised professionals, providing a compelling alternative to the bureaucratic complexities of US visa programmes. Canada has also taken proactive measures to attract former H-



1B visa holders whose US applications were unsuccessful, thereby transforming America's loss into its own gain. This trend will likely accelerate under another Trump administration, as skilled professionals increasingly perceive the US as an inhospitable environment both legally and socially.

The issue extends beyond foreign talent alone; a hostile social environment may drive white American talent abroad as well. For white-collar professionals, particularly women and minorities who feel marginalised by the administration's rhetoric and policies, the appeal of international opportunities grows stronger. Searches for jobs outside the US by high-skilled white Americans (especially women) are also rising, as they start to view alternative global hubs as viable and even preferable options, especially when confronted with an environment that is both economically and socially restrictive. The long-term consequences of this restrictive stance could undermine the United States' competitive edge in technology and innovation, allowing other countries to assume roles as hubs for global talent and investment.

Paradox 2: The Dollar Hegemony

The Imbalance of Global Power Without Domestic Deficit

The 'Dollar Paradox' centres on an inherent contradiction in US economic policy goals: maintaining the dollar's global dominance while reducing America's trade deficit. Under Trump's potential second administration, this tension is poised to escalate as he advocates for policies that seek to protect US interests and reduce perceived economic vulnerabilities, especially the deficit. However, reducing the US trade deficit while preserving dollar hegemony globally presents a fundamental economic contradiction. The dollar's global dominance is sustained by demand from international markets that rely on it as a reserve currency and medium of exchange. There will always be a greater demand for a reserve currency outside of its borders, since other countries must hold it widely to trade amongst each other, thus causing a deficit for the producer of the reserve currency. As such, achieving dollar hegemony without a deficit is virtually impossible, unless the US economy alone accounted for the majority of global activity (which it did not achieve even after devastation everywhere else occurred due to World War II).



Trump has spoken about curbing the deficit in terms of 'America's loss', but this deficit is the mathematical result of the dollar's dominance in global trade. It is the price of economic hegemony (the 'exorbitant privilege,' as the French called it). Is the United States really a 'loser' because of its trade deficit from reserve currency dominance? Arguably, the power of the dollar reserve is far greater, a far larger contributor to the United States being a winner. As the world approaches multipolarity, however, the logic of singular dependence on the US dollar wanes. The gap between America's economic size and the rest of the world has closed, and blocs such as BRICS now account for more economic might than not merely the US but the G7 nations combined. The US economy can no longer dominate as it did in 1945, and maintaining the dollar's primacy now requires a continuous flow of dollars abroad. This flow manifests as a trade deficit, as the US imports goods and services, sending dollars abroad in exchange, which other countries accumulate as reserves.

As such, the drive to reduce the trade deficit without sacrificing the dollar's central role poses an irreconcilable dilemma. Trump's emphasis on reducing the trade deficit appeals to domestic voters (especially the MAGA crowd), who continue to frame it as a drain on US wealth and a sign of economic 'losing.' The response in the previous Trump administration was to 'nativise' the economy through reshoring and friendshoring policies, where the reshoring component would theoretically narrow the trade deficit. However, by limiting dollar outflows, such policies would reduce the supply of dollars available globally, a point exacerbated by the higher interest rates that the U.S. Fed imposed in 2022 to combat post-Covid inflation. In addition, the litany of sanctions imposed on Russia in 2022 effectively weaponised the dollar and sent a terrifying signal to many countries that the dollar was neither a reliable nor neutral currency for global commerce.

When taken together, these factors have added further impetus to the already strong dedollarisation process that many nations are undertaking. Countries such as China and Russia are among the most active in that regard, both within the BRICS framework as well as outside of it, by working to establish alternative mechanisms that bypass the dollar. These include bilateral trade agreements in local currencies and the development of digital currencies (CBDCs). Trump's protectionist and deficit-reducing policies would further fuel this trend, as global partners would look to hedge against



US-centric financial risks (US debt levels), the weaponisation of the currency, and policies that curb dollar supply (Trump's deficit goals).

The consequences of dedollarisation could be severe, both for the US economy and for global financial stability. As more countries turn away from the dollar, US borrowing costs may increase due to reduced demand for dollar-denominated assets. This would impact domestic rates domestically and could raise the cost of financing the federal debt, putting additional pressure on an already stretched fiscal landscape. Moreover, if the dollar loses its reserve currency status, the US may face limitations in its ability to monetary policy towards preserving hegemony.

Paradox 3: The Leaderless Hegemon

Pursuing Global Influence Without Global Investment

The exercise of hegemony requires complex combinations of coercive and punitive measures on the one hand and appetising rewards and incentives on the other. Such a proverbial carrot-and-stick approach involves the construction of a cost-benefit calculus for other countries to respond to incentives that adhere to the hegemon's designs. Although the US has had previous bouts of isolationism, its post-WW II liberal order has offered carefully crafted carrots along with sticks that have moved many countries into equilibria that favor US interests. However, the Trump administration's foreign policy may increasingly reflect a unilateral, 'America First' approach, perhaps more so than even historic isolationist bouts in America's past, including through the withdrawal of incentives that have kept allies (such as those in Europe, Latin America and Asia) aligned with broader US objectives.

The Trump administration would thus be paradoxically seeking to maintain global influence while curbing the very forms of largesse that previously supported US hegemony, which could create a more fragmented global landscape (and accelerated multipolarity), where both allies and adversaries find fewer incentives to align with American priorities, especially as the perceived costs of associating with the United States continue to rise.¹ Trump's vision of limiting the carrots (economic investment,

¹ One may note here, by way of example, the unflinching bipartisan support for zionist atrocities against Palestine, which have further eroded trust in the US as fair player and also eroded its moral authority to lecture the world, as the genocide is televised.



security umbrellas etc.), however, reveals an underlying paradox: maintaining global leadership may not be sustainable if the benefits of US partnership dwindle because of a focus on 'America First'.

Under a minimalist foreign assistance / engagement model, the United States may find itself without the necessary leverage to influence its allies or maintain cohesion among strategic partners. European nations, for instance, may accelerate their drive toward greater autonomy within the EU and NATO frameworks, as European leaders have recently observed, moving toward a European defense policy that is less dependent on American military support. Furthermore, in regions like Latin America, where Trump's previous policies on immigration and trade have already stirred discontent and resentment, a reduction in diplomatic and economic engagement may lead to further alienation. This is particularly true when 'America First' policies disregard the interests and wellbeing of immigrant communities from Latin American countries, who view these populations as extensions of their citizenry through diasporic ties. A hardline immigration stance, combined with economic isolationism (including conversions from friend-shoring to reshoring), may thus encourage these countries to seek alliances outside the US sphere of influence, deepening ties with other regional players like China, or to seek to operate independently (dismantling the Monroe Doctrine), and in the most extreme case even pay heed to broader anti-US coalitions.

The global south, particularly the BRICS or SCO nations, represent another major axis of shifting alliances. Countries like China, Russia, and India, along with new members or sympathisers, are poised to solidify their shared economic and strategic interests, going beyond the burgeoning rhetoric of recent summits towards substantive action. In fact, the BRICS' recent expansion, despite internal diversity, is a testament to their commitment to challenging Western-led institutions in their explicit commentary. For these countries, the US approach under Trump could serve as a further impetus for dedollarisation (see above) and economic decoupling. Unlike administrations that fostered multilateralism through institutions like the World Bank and IMF (i.e. until the Obama period), Trump's emphasis on bilateral, transactional diplomacy may limit US influence in international economic discussions. Major economic discussions might increasingly occur in non-Western settings, with US policy and priorities given less weight, and such divergence could pave the way for more enduring anti-American



alliances, notably those among Russia, Iran, and China, who see mutual benefit in presenting a unified front against US policies.

Domestically, American actions also play into this paradox, since rising domestic tensions, particularly surrounding issues of race and minority rights, further complicate international relations. A spate of recent text message spam programmes have targeted minorities telling them their time is up, and once mass-spamming targeted Americans of African descent to report to their nearest plantation. Incidents of racial violence and internal strife in the US have a global audience (as Black Lives Matter evidenced) and their impact on America's moral authority should not be underestimated.² For many allies and partners, associating closely with the US under these conditions may carry reputational risks, diminishing the appeal of aligning with an America perceived as increasingly isolationist and inward-focused. In such a climate, countries that once looked to the US as a standard-bearer of democratic and human rights values may now question its credibility (and indeed, many already do), further driving the desire to distance themselves and pursue independent or alternative pathways.

Ultimately, Trump's vision of global leadership rests on a paradoxical foundation—one that seeks to diminish America's financial and strategic commitments abroad (fewer carrots) while expecting the world to adhere to US interests. However, influence cannot be exerted in a vacuum, and without cultivating alliances through meaningful support, the US risks not only isolation but also the formation of robust, enduring counterbalances, as the world's major economic players increasingly conduct business without America at the table.

Paradox 4: Growing Numbers, Shrinking Futures

In the context of the demographic policies that might emerge under the second Trump administration, 'Growing Numbers, Shrinking Futures' refers to a push toward encouraging population growth, especially among white Americans, without proportional investment in the resources needed to nurture the capabilities, education, and well-being of a budding generation. Project 2025, a conservative agenda backed

² The recent pro-Israel carte blanche has only worsened American standing in global eyes.



by segments of the Republican base,³ endorses an increase in birth rates, but this focus is not matched by a commitment to the kinds of social investments necessary to support these future generations' long-term potential. The paradox here is evident: while Project 2025 espouses the importance of expanding the American population, it simultaneously endorses cuts to key social programmes that ensure access to quality education, health, and economic security.

A critical aspect of this paradox is that Project 2025's objectives may, at their core, encourage higher birth rates among white families by reinforcing a somewhat exaggerated 'traditional' vision of American demography. Its agenda concocts a mix of anti-abortion, anti-divorce, and anti-reproductive rights stances, promoting the idea that the ideal American family is one that grows and thrives without (what many conservatives deem) the social 'threats' posed by progressive family policies. However, this vision disregards the complex realities of social development, since children who are raised in resource-poor environments, with limited access to quality early childhood education, safe communities, and robust health services, are more likely to experience socioeconomic challenges and dysfunction, thereby limiting their ability to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society.

Project 2025's focus on increasing population numbers without equitable investment reflects a fundamental disregard for the quality of upbringing, not least for children growing up in households from underprivileged minorities. The policies associated with this agenda often work to reduce support and opportunities for minority children through measures aimed at restricting access to welfare support, reducing education budgets, and limiting access to affordable healthcare disproportionately impact minority communities, which will further exacerbate inequalities in developmental opportunities. Thus, even as Project 2025's supporters aim to build a larger American generation, the lack of investment in all children—regardless of background—runs the risk of creating a less empowered, less educated, and ultimately less capable future workforce.

The consequences of such a one-sided policy agenda are not just theoretical; historical and global examples offer stark warnings. Nations that have expanded their

³ Trump has distanced himself from Project 2025 but there are many members of his faction within the Republican party who are deeply sympathetic and strongly inclined towards Project 2025



populations significantly without equivalent investment in education, health, and infrastructure have faced significant societal challenges, from stagnating economic growth to rising unemployment and social unrest. In Pakistan, for example, the population has ballooned eightfold in less than a century, but the lack of sufficient investment in public infrastructure and social services has created a demographic landscape with high rates of poverty, limited educational access, and inadequate healthcare, resulting in nightmares such as the stunted growth crisis. Similarly, in the United States, scaling up birth rates without the backing of robust social services may lead to an underprepared and economically vulnerable generation.

Ultimately, 'Growing Numbers, Shrinking Futures' speaks to the superficial pursuit of growth without substance, and while advocates of Project 2025's demographic objectives may see immediate gains in terms of ideological alignment and support among conservative constituencies, the longer-term repercussions of neglecting investment in quality education, healthcare, and economic security could manifest in a diminished American workforce and declining economic power on the global stage. The balance between quality and quantity would falter, and the sympathisers of Project 2025 would do well to recognise the essential link between human capital investment and sustained growth—an understanding that champions a truly strong America.

Paradox 5: 'Strengthening the Family'

The Economic Risks of Project 2025

Although some Republicans publicly distance themselves from Project 2025, it does exert substantial ideological influence in conservative circles close to Trump. The project aspires to 'strengthen the American family' by establishing it as the fundamental unit of public policy and superseding the state in the process. This is why Project 2025 envisages a reduction in footprint of the Federal government and distillation of policy down to American families (with subliminal emphasis on white families). Project 2025 aims to reinforce family structures by: curtailing access to divorce, abortion, and single-parenting options; thus enforcing a very tightly-knit family structure, ostensibly as a means of ensuring social and economic stability. However, this paradoxically undermines economic stability by enforcing constraints



that could intensify family strife, diminish labor productivity, and increase costs associated with domestic turmoil.

The central idea behind Project 2025 is to encourage traditional family growth, particularly among certain demographics. However, by prioritising family size over quality of life, and diminishing individual agency, the measures of Project 2025 are likely to exert economic strain rather than build family resilience. Forced family cohesion, especially within troubled relationships, could trap individuals in economically debilitating circumstances, intensifying issues like domestic violence and mental health challenges that hinder workforce productivity. Economic literature has long illustrated that strained family environments and high domestic conflict impose real costs on the economy.

Furthermore, Project 2025's pro-natalist stance overlooks the economic necessity of investing in the quality of the next generation (see above). Policies that emphasise family size while reducing access to social services—such as education funding and health programmes—may yield a population increase, but with reduced aggregate human capital. Moreover, the imposition of rigid family structures carries significant economic risks, particularly in liberal democratic contexts. By legally discouraging family separation and single-parenting, Project 2025 unleashing waves of hidden authoritarianism within households, leading to severe personal dissatisfaction and decreased economic productivity. While proponents of Project 2025 argue from the standpoint of conservative family-centred welfare, the inevitable rise in domestic conflict and diminished personal autonomy could incur substantial economic costs, more than offsetting any potential savings.

Paradox 6: 'Easing' American Life by Making it Harder

The paradox of 'easing American life by making it harder' encapsulates a fundamental tension in the Trump administration's economic approach. While Trump claims that his policies will make life easier and make things more affordable for Americans, two of the administration's explicitly stated objectives—enacting tariffs and enforcing strict immigration—are likely to cause greater hardship. These measures, while aimed at protecting domestic industries and reducing labor competition, are likely to backfire



when increasing consumer costs and reduced access to essential labor and damage the wallets of American consumers, thus harming the people who those policies aim to protect.

Trump's admiration for tariffs is well-documented, and he views them as both as a powerful economic weapon and a means for 'payback' from other countries, indeed describing them as the 'most beautiful word in the dictionary' (incidentally, it is an Arabic word).⁴ However, tariffs increase costs not only on imported goods but also on domestic products that rely on global supply chains. Companies that import products from overseas also raise the prices of domestically-produced goods, so that consumers do not automatically turn to the domestic goods and the imported goods remain unsold. This is why one is hard-pressed to find any serious economist, irrespective of their ideological orientation, who would advocate for tariffs as an appropriate measure, even in the most protectionist of agendas.

Additionally, by making imported raw materials and components more expensive, tariffs indirectly raise prices across the board, and complex supply chains involve the transboundary movement of inputs that culminate in finished goods we consume. This unintended 'tax' on the American consumer undercuts any supposed benefit of tariffs, creating higher costs for households and raising inflationary pressures. The same is true for Pakistan, as we have seen in recent years, where imports are required to drive exports, and it is equally true for the United States, where global supply chains mean that American exports still require imports if inputs. This is another reason that Economists overwhelmingly critique tariffs as oversimplifying and counterproductive.

Along with tariffs, the administration's hardline immigration stance further compounds the problem in terms of labor costs. By intensifying deportations and curbing undocumented immigration, the administration aims to make jobs available for Americans, which is a reasonable prima facie calculus. In practice, however, removing migrant labor creates labor shortages in sectors like agriculture and construction, where many jobs are seasonal, physically demanding, or low-paying—roles that often struggle to attract domestic workers. For example, US agriculture is 'utterly dependent' on migrant labor (particularly from Mexico), and these farms will face rising costs as

⁴ The English word services from the Arabic word عرف / تعريف that is also the root of the Urdu words تعريف and تعرف (praise and introduction). It traveled from Arabic into Persian into Urdu and Ottoman Turkish, then into Italian, French, and finally into English.



they struggle to find replacements willing to accept lower wages, and those costs will be passed on to consumers, particularly lower-income households for whom food occupies a larger proportion of the budget.

Ultimately, this paradox challenges the notion that domestic protectionism and immigration crackdowns can ease economic strain. While such policies may appeal to segments of the population yearning for national resilience, they come at the cost of higher prices for goods and services, and so by increasing the cost of labor and consumer goods, the administration's approach inadvertently creates the very financial pressures it promises to alleviate. Thus, the paradox of 'easing by making it harder' underscores a critical gap between rhetoric and outcome, highlighting the potential for such policies to worsen economic strain on American households.

Paradox 7: Scapegoating as Economic Policy

Fixing Problems by Needing Them to Exist

Trump's economic strategy paradoxically depends on keeping problems visible rather than actually resolving them, especially through a model of 'scapegoating' that diverts attention from deeper structural flaws. By targeting migrants, LGBTQ communities, and other marginalised groups as supposed 'threats' to society (see above), the administration cultivates a narrative of 'fixing America' that resonates with specific voter bases. However, this approach circumvents more substantive, economically grounded issues like income inequality, monopolistic power, and middle-class erosion. The need for these 'problems' to remain visible for political leverage makes genuine reform unlikely, as addressing structural issues would demand politically risky moves against entrenched economic power structures.

Historical comparisons illustrate the dangers of such an approach. Idi Amin blamed the Indians, Hitler blamed the Jews, Mugabe blamed the whites, Suharto blamed the Chinese, Modi blames the Muslims, Orban blames the Gypsies, and Trump has blamed everyone under the sun who isn't white (Mexicans, Muslims, Afro-Americans, Chinese, just to name a few). Yet in all of the aforementioned examples, even getting rid of the minorities once and for good would not solve the subjacent issues which are either the product of a rapacious elite (whether an external hegemon's elite or a local one).



In the same vein, Trump's scapegoating diverts public attention from America's own entrenched economic challenges, such as stagnant wages and rising costs of living, and by directing anger at marginalised groups rather than addressing root causes (healthcare affordability or corporate monopolisation) the administration shall avoid confronting the true economic actors who shape these issues. As the protest slogan once said, 'the enemy doesn't come on boats, he comes in a limousine.'

A second Trump administration's approach may create a certain veneer of problem-solving and bolster short-term approval, but will certainly fail to address the broader economic ailments of American society. Moreover, focusing on marginalised groups will deflect scrutiny from those institutions that stifle America's economic vitality (and viability): powerful corporations, political lobbies, and the military-industrial complex. Reforming these sectors, which is to say: actually 'draining the swamp,' would require very stern mettle in confrontation with vested interests, as well as the implementation of policies that could level economic disparities. Yet the administration's likely fixation (based on its track record) on highly visible 'social threats' instead of systemic reform will not lead to meaningful change.

Economically, this strategy poses severe risks, since factors such as limited upward mobility and job market inequalities shall persist and further weaken the United States socially and economically. Focusing on migrant labor, for instance, does not resolve wage stagnation but merely obscures it, enabling powerful monopolies and privileged elites to maintain economic dominance. Ultimately, Trump's stance on 'fixing' America without addressing entrenched economic disparities reveals a fundamental contradiction. True reform in America would entail challenging the privileged sectors that fuel economic inequality and implementing policies that strengthen the middle class and expand economic opportunity. However, as long as the focus remains on scapegoats rather than economic restructuring, the paradox persists: America's deeper issues shall remain entrenched, with temporary optics substituting for durable economic progress.



Conclusion

As Trump has won the 2024 election and bears the responsibility of living up to the aspirations of the American people, one must remain cognizant of the abovementioned paradoxes in his faction's psyche, for they reveal a nation that is firmly and unquestionably at odds with itself. While aspiring to global leadership, America will tighten its borders and push talent away. While touting economic dominance, it will seek a false remedy of curbing a deficit that is the very price of its hegemony. While trying to give America greater economic opportunities, it will curb the movement of both goods and people. The rhetoric of strength and unity coexists with policies that tear at the very social fabric of families, take a brutal toll on everyday lives, and scapegoat communities as a means to define 'identity' (à la Project 2025). America, once seen (perhaps wrongly) as a beacon for prosperity and inclusion, now risks entrenching isolation, stagnation, and division in the name of resilience. In striving to 'fix' what it deems broken, it overlooks the root causes of discontent, instead cultivating a cycle where perceived enemies justify continued struggle. These paradoxes are not mere inconsistencies but powerful symbols of a society wrestling with its own ambitions and contradictions, as many have witnessed first-hand already. As it moves forward, America faces a choice: to perpetuate the cycle of paradoxes, or to confront these tensions and resolve them in manner that not simply strengthens America but strengthens the world as a whole.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Usman W. Chohan is an international economist and academic who was one of the founding Directors of CASS, now serving as Advisor to President CASS on Economic Affairs & National Development. He is among the Top 100 Authors across all subjects & disciplines (out of 1.2 million authors) on the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). At CASS, he has authored/edited eight books in the past five years published with Routledge. He has been published in prestigious journals such as *Policy & Society*, *The International Journal of Public Administration*, and *Parliamentary Affairs*.

Dr Chohan has a PhD in Economics from UNSW Australia and an MBA from McGill University (Canada), with coursework at MIT-Tsinghua. His previous practitioner experience includes working at the National Bank of Canada and the World Bank. He appears frequently on domestic and international television, podcasts, and lecture series in various languages.

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in Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies

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