

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد      بدین بوم و پر زنده یک تن مېباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم      از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

MELVIN GOODMAN

18.04.2025

## The Meltdown of the United States



Photo by Eric Brehm

“The whole world has decided that the U.S. government has no idea what it’s doing.”

– Mark Blyth, “Inflation: A Guide for Users and Losers,” (New York Times, April 14, 2025.)

Professor Mark Blyth’s remarks were aimed at the Trump administration’s creation of turmoil in the world’s financial markets due to its completely inept handling of the bond markets and the start of a trade war with China. But Blyth’s charge could have been leveled at every aspect of Trump’s governance over the past three months, beginning with the appointment of the most inexperienced and least capable cabinet secretaries and agency heads in the history of the United States. Donald Trump’s inauguration address for his first term in 2017 talked of “American Carnage.” Well, eight years later, here we are—American Carnage.

In less than 90 days, the United States under Trump has become a very different country. It is not an exaggeration to say that the United States is facing a meltdown that will be difficult to reverse. The executive branch has taken on powers that are usually associated with wartime requirements. The legislative branch has been largely neutralized because of the near total abdication of the Republican Party. And the judicial system is facing an unprecedented challenge from a president and vice president who have no respect for our courts and our judges. Trump has fired at least 15 inspectors general who were tasked by the Congress to root out abuses in federal agencies. This is an open invitation for corruption and abuse.

The United States is facing existential, constitutional, and identity crises that mark the country's decline; the impact can already be seen in terms of our domestic and international instability.

**THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS:** Donald Trump's failure to obey the Supreme Court's unsigned order last week to take steps to garner the return of a Salvadoran migrant—Kilmar Abrego Garcia—marked the beginning of a constitutional crisis that was anticipated by many who feared Trump's return to the White House. Abrego Garcia was wrongfully deported to the most notorious prison in El Salvador, and there is still no evidence of wrongdoing on his part. He has never been arrested or accused of a crime. El Salvador President Nayib Bukele told Trump on April 14 that he would not return Abrego Garcia, and Attorney General Pam Bondi, sitting next to Trump, said that it was up to El Salvador to decide. In a perfect example of the abject cruelty and heartlessness of the Trump administration, Bondi added that "if they want to return him, we would facilitate it, meaning provide a plane."

Last week, Trump said he had no respect for the decisions of federal courts, but would obey the decisions of the Supreme Court. Two days later, the Trump administration threw down the gauntlet, stating that it was not required to engage El Salvador's government in order to facilitate Abrego Garcia's return. Abrego Garcia's deportation amounted to a case of "official kidnapping," as he was removed from the United States without due process. Trump's tone of defiance was backed by his Department of Justice that is moving to expand the powers of the executive branch in ways that are illegal and even unconstitutional.

**THE EXISTENTIAL CRISIS:** The constitutional crisis places the United States in an existential crisis that finds leading members of the administration, particularly the Attorney General and the Deputy Chief of Staff to the president questioning fundamental concepts of the rule of law and freedom itself. There has not been a challenge of this magnitude at any time in U.S. history with the exception of the Civil War period in the 1860s. For the past 150

years, U.S. politicians and historians have prided the United States on its exceptionalism, which set the United States apart and justified the export of U.S. traditions and values. “Exceptionalism” no longer works as a trope in political speeches and historical narratives.

Over the past 80 years, the United States took particular pride in playing an indispensable role in ridding the world of Fascist and Communist threats, but the Trump administration has created strategic confusion concerning U.S. goals and objectives. The state of the Atlantic alliance is now in question; the trade and tariff war with China is worsening; and the pressure on Ukraine has raised doubts about U.S. support among allies in Europe and Asia.

**THE IDENTITY CRISIS:** The identity crisis is marked by the profound meanness of Trump himself, who is personally responsible for the cruelty that marks his administration’s illegal and unconstitutional handling of refugees. The poem on the Statue of Liberty expresses the statue’s role as a symbol of welcome and hope. Now refugees in the United States, who have encountered violence in their own countries, find greater violence in the United States. Trump has committed himself to deporting one million immigrants in his first year, and only a lack of funding and staffing will probably prevent that goal. Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller is directing the deportation effort, pressing 30 countries to take migrants who are not their citizens. The case of Abrego Garcia is typical of the overwhelming meanness of the Trump team.

The revocation of the visas of foreign students by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, which appears to be his only activity these days, is another marker of the new U.S. identity. In less than 60 days, more than 1,000 international students have had their visas revoked as part of a phony effort to fight anti-semitism on college campuses. Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil was the first case in this crackdown, and it has caused many international students to self-deport, which is exactly what Trump, Rubio, and Miller favor. As a result, foreign students will not consider U.S. universities for their higher education, especially since Canada and Australia offer far more safety and support.

American citizens themselves are also experiencing the meanness of the Trump team. Trump has revoked security protection for President Joe Biden’s son and daughter, and even talked of Hunter Biden as deserving of the death penalty, which explains why Biden pardoned his son before leaving office in the first place. Trump’s language has created serious serious concerns for former national security adviser John Bolton, Dr. Anthony Fauci, and General Mark Milley, which probably explains Trump’s delight in removing their security protection. More than a dozen prosecutors who worked for special council Jack Smith’s criminal investigation of Trump have been fired.

Every important institution in the United States is being targeted by the troglodytes in the Trump administration, even libraries and museums that we rely on as the “most trusted sources of information in this country,” according to the CEO of the American Alliance of Museums. We used to say that the Soviet Union was the only country in the world that had an “unpredictable past,” but that charge could be applied to the United States as well. Last month, Trump issued an executive order called “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History,” which promises a revision of our historical narrative.

Trump himself has targeted the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of African American History and Culture for retooling and revision. Vice President J.D. Vance, who now sits on the Smithsonian’s board, is in charge of removing the institution’s “improper ideology.” Elite universities; successful regulatory agencies; health departments; and prestigious law firms are being targeted and weakened in the process. Donald Trump even engineered a direct takeover of the Kennedy Center, which was an example of his pathological narcissism.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was the “greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century.” It is possible that the Soviet collapse endowed the United States with too much power for its own good, leading to the misuse of power in the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; the twenty years of war in Afghanistan, and a continued military presence in Iraq that followed a similar twenty-year war. The greatest geopolitical disaster thus far in the 21st century may be the political and economic meltdown of the United States, which is having far-reaching results for the entire international community.

In addition to the domestic turmoil initiated by the Trump administration, the United States has been losing power and influence in the international arena, including the decline of U.S. influence in the Atlantic Alliance that had secured the safety of U.S. relations with Western Europe; the mindless and “monumental split” between the United States and China that makes no geopolitical sense whatsoever; the retreat from arms control and disarmament; the purge and politicization of the professional military; and last week’s threat to the global financial system that had secured the primacy of the U.S. dollar and U.S. bonds in international markets. Britain lost the primacy of the pound in the wake of the Suez War in 1956. History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme; perhaps we are witnessing the lost primacy of the dollar due to the idiocy of the Trump national security team.

APRIL 17, 2025

Melvin A. Goodman is a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy and a professor of government at Johns Hopkins University. A former CIA analyst, Goodman is the author of [Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA](#) and [National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism](#), and [A Whistleblower at the CIA](#). His most recent books are “American Carnage: The Wars of Donald Trump” (Opus Publishing, 2019) and “Containing the National Security State” (Opus Publishing, 2021). Goodman is the national security columnist for [counterpunch.org](#).