

Trump 47: A Civilizational Fork in the Road

By Glenn Harlan Reynolds

[“This was no ordinary victory. This was a fork in the road of human civilization.”](#)

That was Elon Musk, super-hyped in his Trump inaugural rally victory speech. And he’s one hundred percent right.

The single most important thing that’s happening now, and that will unfold over the next several decades, is humanity’s transition from a planetary to an interplanetary species. (And, eventually, to an interstellar one.) And that’s tied to the election.



Martian greenhouse, from the [Red Planet Resorts](#) Instagram account.

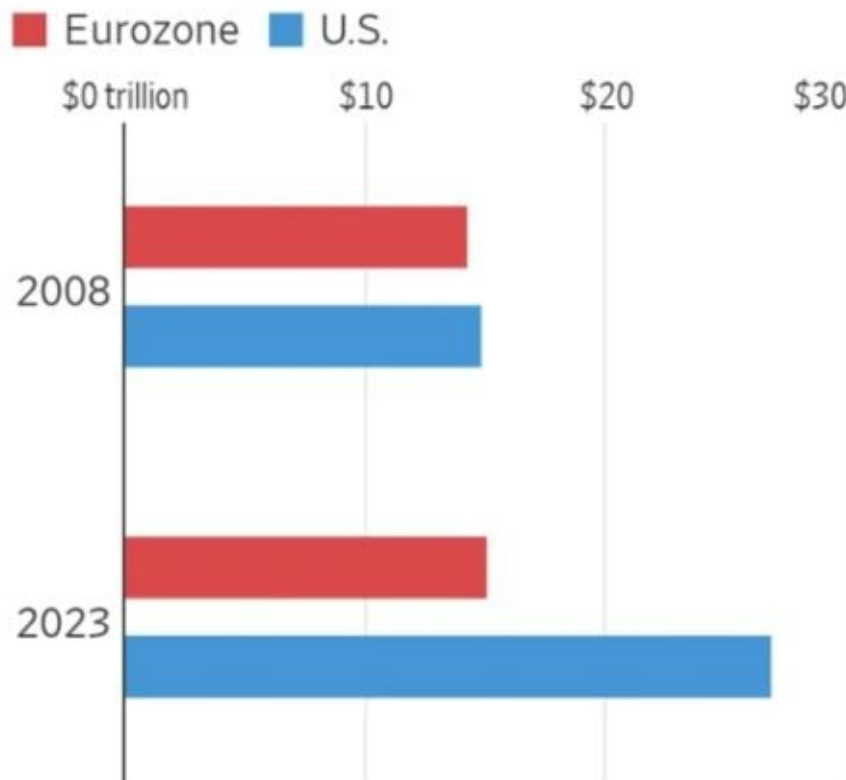


Dinner aboard a Mars-bound Starship, same source.

Had Trump lost, that might still have happened. Space policy over the last decade was surprisingly consistent across Republican and Democratic administrations. But I doubt it. The Harris Administration would have gone after Elon, out of pique for his purchase of X and wrecking of their global censorship plan if nothing else. He's an extremely smart man, and has a lot of resources – he wisely made himself indispensable to the most powerful part of the Deep State on several fronts – but before the election I polled my Admin Law class and a substantial majority thought that Elon would wind up prosecuted and probably jailed if Harris won the election. This surprised me a bit, but I think that Elon [thought that too](#) and that it's one reason he took an active hand in the campaign. And he was right to do so: While his companies would have survived his jailing, his vision probably wouldn't have. It's shared by people like SpaceX CEO Gwynne Shotwell, who is as big a space fanatic as Elon (including the "interstellar species" part) even though she's considered something of a balance wheel for him, and it's shared by many, many of his employees. But he's the driving force. SpaceX without Elon would be like Apple without Steve Jobs – still around, still profitable, but . . . boring.

And it's not just space and SpaceX. America was headed for the sort of crony-capitalist bureaucratic-governance stagnation that afflicts Europe. That's bad for citizens, whose incomes lag, and it's bad for nations, whose economies lag. And it's bad for space settlement, because frontiers aren't generally opened by stagnant societies. There's a reason why SpaceX happened in America instead of, say, France.

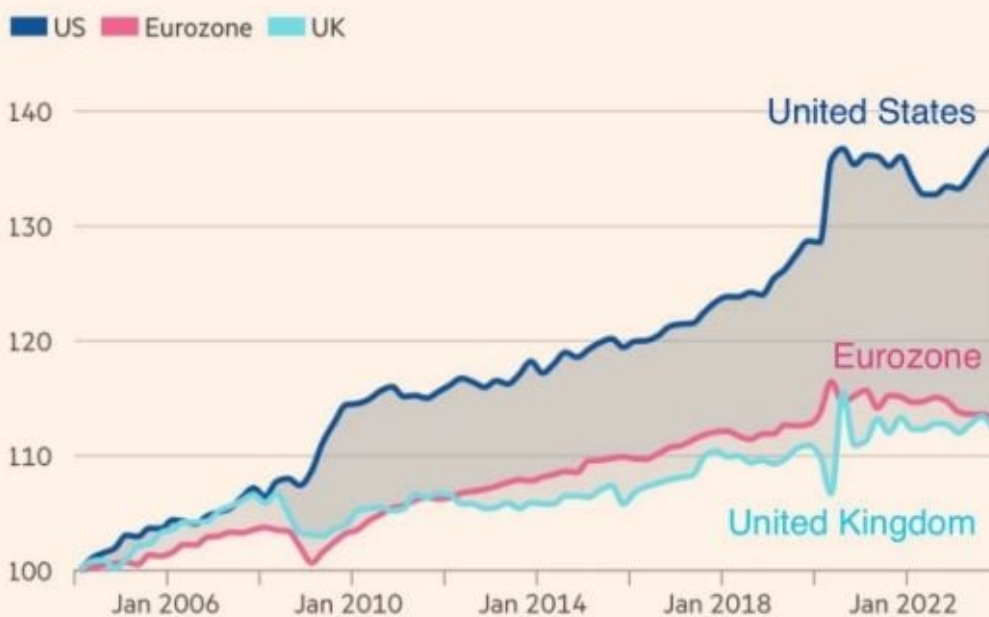
Gross domestic product, current prices



Source: International Monetary Fund

Productivity has risen much faster in the US than in Europe

US non-farm output per hours; eurozone/UK output per hour worked (real, rebased)



Trump 45 did some good at slowing this trend, but didn't attack the problem head on. This time, with a much clearer view of how the bureaucracy and the Deep State operate, he's mounting a Pattonesque blitz, with DOGE and a flurry of executive orders.

I hope he succeeds to Millei-like levels in slashing the government and in eviscerating bureaucratic power. If he does, if he gets even half that far, it will be a Golden Age of America indeed.

And all around the world, the reverberations are putting cracks in the edifice of control that Western governments have tried to erect on top of their populations. Censorship is failing, two-tier law enforcement is coming under pressure, "far-right fringe" political parties are approaching majorities, open borders are beginning to close, and in general the normies are figuring out what was being done to them and what the plans for the future are, and starting to push back.

Five or ten more years – say two Kamala terms as President – and the changes underway would have been, if not actually irreversible, at least impossible to reverse without substantial bloodshed and destruction. We made it, by the skin of our teeth.

But it's not over yet. As Yogi Berra said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

We were on a path to destruction, and now there's a fork in a much more positive direction. It's up to us to make sure we take it.

Trump's victory is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to saving America, and quite possibly the world. It will take years of unrelenting effort to make sure that we do, in fact, take that fork. So enjoy the celebration, and then get to work.

What kind of work? I have some thoughts.

First: Preparing for the 2026 elections. They'll be here before you know it. In 2018, Trump lost Congressional control, allowing Democrats to tie him up with hearings, inquiries, impeachment, etc. Historical odds are for that to happen again, but it will be much easier to enact major reforms without that. Registering voters – look what Scott Presler did in Pennsylvania – is a major step. So is demanding and working for election reforms that make cheating much harder. You can take an active hand in that.

Second: Pressing the Congress – and the Administration – to focus on making the most of the next two years. Winning in 2026 would be great, but this majority is the only one we can count on. This means putting the kibosh on unproductive infighting, and pressing the majorities to actually advance the programs they ran on.

Third: Go to war with the media. They're on the run now, and losing influence, but they haven't learned their lesson, as recent efforts to spread the bogus story that Elon Musk gave a "Nazi salute" demonstrate. Sure, even the ADL called that story [bogus](#), but that didn't stop major networks from running with it. (Lawsuits from Elon might provide a lesson, and he can certainly afford them). And as for PBS and NPR, they should be defunded, but that means more than just a cutoff of federal funds. Much of their income comes from payments from local affiliate stations, which pay dues and also pay for programming. Much of those payments, in turn, comes from state-government-controlled affiliates, such as state-university-controlled radio and TV stations. State governments can cut that, and surely such efforts in red states would be likely to succeed. This wouldn't leave NPR and PBS entirely penniless, but it would be a sore blow. And even an effort along those lines might send a valuable signal about partisan broadcasting on the taxpayers' backs.

Fourth: Go after nonprofits. The nonprofit sector serves as a largely unaccountable shadow government in many ways. Its accounting controls are usually shoddy, its oversight comes, if at all, mostly from state attorneys general, and the requirements that 501(c)(3) entities be nonpartisan are . . . loose. My advice: Get your state attorneys general and state tax officials to start looking closely at the records.

Fifth: Everything I said above goes quadruple for universities. They're pretty partisan despite being 501(c)(3) entities, their financial accounting is often slipshod, and they serve as money laundries for leftists in ways big and small. Paid staffers, whose numbers have exploded, are footsoldiers and propaganda consumers for leftist causes and candidates, big-ticket speaker fees go overwhelmingly to leftist speakers, money for "documentaries" and textbook sales goes mostly to leftists, and of course, faculties are overwhelmingly leftist and a perusal of any university faculty and staff's political donations on OpenSecrets will show a virtual blue wall. They need to be pressed on all of this, and they need to be pressed to diversify their faculties politically. Claims that "conservatives aren't smart" or "conservatives just don't apply" should be treated similarly to claims that blacks or women don't measure up or apply.

Anyway, there you have it. There's a fork in the road. It's time to make sure we take it.

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