

Is Trump Making America Great Again?

President Donald Trump took the reign of power for the second time in January, 2025 with the aim of Making America Great Again (MAGA). Trump's election campaign was thoroughly based on this agenda. To execute his plan, Trump did not waste time in brandishing his powers to the world. He threatened to take control of Greenland, to take back Panama Canal and imposed sweeping tariffs on foes and friends in the first month of his presidency. Trump also asserted the US hard power in cutting funds for global crisis and shut down major multilateral institutions. Apart from this, Trump is burning the midnight oil to lower the US global interdependence. However, here one should raise a question that how these harsh moves are making America great again? As a matter of fact, these initiatives seem more anti-US than to favor its progress. Washington, if continue to use force and coercive measure would lose the present dominant status rather to move towards greatness.

'Power is the ability to get others do what you want.' Trump fails to understand the actual essence of power. Power can be practiced in the form of coercion, payment and attraction. Trump's administration is focusing on the first two aspects of power, which no doubt is extremely important. However, these two yields short term outcomes and represent the harshness of a country. Threatening allies such as Canada and Denmark is no diplomacy at all, it's sheer demonstration of power. Contrarily, the attraction part of power plays a significant role in the foreign policy of a country. If US is able to attract countries by using its soft power approach, allies will find it trustworthy and would likely to follow US's policies. Thus, Trump is deceiving himself and the country by raising a slogan which contradicts his policies.

Moreover, in the midst of icecaps melting, severe droughts, and extreme temperature, Washington, in a drastic move, announces to cut funding for climate change, research related work and non-governmental organization working for the welfare of people. The realities of climate change is more visible today than ever. US itself is a major contributor to climate emission. According to US Environmental Protection Agency, US contributes 15% to global carbon emission.

Despite these stark realities, Mr. Trump, in a puzzling move, withdrew from Paris Agreement and ceased funding for all climate related initiatives. Similarly, despite American research institutions being at the zenith of their progress, Trump's administration reduced their budget as well. And most importantly, the non-governmental organizations which play a key role in promoting US soft image in the Global South also came under Trump's protectionist policies. Hence, Washington's isolationist's policies seem not to make it great again.

Additionally, Mr. Trump is also not happy with the US's interdependence on other countries. The most important step he took after taking power was to impose tariffs on countries America have trade deficit with, as stated by Trump. However, in reality he slaps every country with tariffs whether they are a friend or an ally. Poor little penguins of Norfolk Islands also had their share of tariffs. Trump considers this move as to strengthen domestic industries. However, he is being skeptic about the realities of globalization. As stated by British Economist, David Ricardo, that global trade can create value through comparative advantage. By opening trade, countries can specialize in what they do best. Thus, how is Trump making America great again? He is simply not.

US, being the world's superpower for almost a century have major influence on the world. Being militarily, economically, and technologically strong, US have shaped the global affairs for decades. However, table seems to be turning now by the rise of Mr. Trump for second time. Trump succeeded in holding power with the objective to make America great again and for this purpose he introduces many policies and initiatives. He likes to use coercive measures to achieve US's interests. Mr. Trump also deprived NGOs, climate change programs and research institutions for funding. Adding salt to the misery, Trump is also not in the favor of global interdependence. All these stringent policies do not appear to be making the country great but to end its century long dominance.