

The Logic of Destruction

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What is a country? The way its people govern themselves. America exists because its people elect those who make and execute laws. The assumption of a democracy is that individuals have dignity and rights that they realize and protect by acting together.

The people who now dominate the executive branch of the government deny all of this, and are acting, quite deliberately, [to destroy](#) the nation. For them, only a few people, the very wealthy with a certain worldview, have rights, and the first among these is to dominate.

For them, there is no such thing as an America, or Americans, or democracy, or citizens, and they act accordingly. Now that the oligarchs and their clients are inside the federal government, they are moving, illegally and unconstitutionally, to take over its institutions.

The parts of the government that work to implement laws have been maligned for decades. Americans have been told that the people who provide them with services are conspirators within a “deep state.” We have been instructed that the billionaires are the heroes.

All of this work was preparatory to the coup that is going on now. The federal government has immense capacity and control over trillions of dollars. That power was a cocreation of the American people. It belongs to them. The oligarchs around Trump are working now to take it for themselves.

Theirs is a logic of destruction. It is very hard to create a large, legitimate, functioning government. The oligarchs have no plan to govern. They will take what they can, and disable the rest. The destruction is the point. They don't want to control the existing order. They want disorder in which their relative power will grow.

Think of the federal government as a car. You might have thought that the election was like getting the car serviced. Instead, when you come into the shop, the mechanics, who somehow don't look like mechanics, tell you that they have taken the parts of your car that work and sold them and kept the money. And that this was the most efficient thing to do. And that you should thank them.

The gap between the oligarchs' wealth and everyone else's will grow. Knowing what they themselves will do and when, they will have bet against the stock market in advance of Trump's deliberately destructive tariffs, and will be ready to tell everyone to buy the crypto they already own. But that is just tomorrow and the day after.

In general, the economic collapse they plan is more like a reverse flood from the Book of Genesis, in which the righteous will all be submerged while the very worst ride Satan's ark. The self-chosen few will ride out the forty days and forty night. When the waters subside, they will be alone to dominate.



Trump's tariffs (which are also likely [illegal](#)) are there to make us poor. Trump's attacks on America's closest friends, countries such as Canada and Denmark, are there to make [enemies](#) of countries where constitutionalism works and people are prosperous. As their country is destroyed, Americans must be denied the idea that anything else is possible.

Deportations are a spectacle to turn Americans against one another, to make us afraid, and to get us to see pain and camps as normal. They also create busy-work for law enforcement, locating the "criminals" in workplaces across the country, as the crime of the century takes place at the very center of power.

The best people in American federal law enforcement, national security, and national intelligence are being fired. The reasons given for this are DEI and trumpwashing the past. Of course, if you fire everyone who was concerned in some way with the investigations of January 6th or of Russia, that will be much or even most of the FBI. Those are bad reasons, but the reality is worse: the aim is lawlessness: to get the police and the patriots out of the way.

In the logic of destruction, there is no need to rebuild afterwards. In this chaos, the oligarchs will tell us that there is no choice but to have a strong man in charge. It can be a befuddled Trump signing ever larger pieces of paper for the cameras, or a conniving Vance who, unlike Trump, has always known the plot. Or someone else.

After we are all poor and isolated, the logic goes, we will be consoled by the thought that there is at least a human being to whom we can appeal. We will settle for a kind of anthropological minimum, wishful contact with the strong man. As in Russia, pathetic video selfies sent to the Leader will be the extent of politics.

For the men currently pillaging the federal government, the data from those video selfies is more important than the people who will make them. The new world they imagine is not just anti-American but anti-human. The people are just data, means to the end of accumulating wealth.

They see themselves as the servants of the freedom of the chosen few, but in fact they are possessed, like millennia of tyrants before them, of fantastic dreams: they will live forever, they will go to Mars. None of that will happen; they will die here on Earth, with the rest of us, their only legacy, if we let it happen, one of ruins. They are god-level brainrotted.

The attempt by the oligarchs to destroy our government is illegal, unconstitutional, and more than a little mad. The people in charge, though, are very intelligent politically, and have a plan. I describe it not because it must succeed but because it must be described so that we can make it fail. This will require clarity, and speed, and coalitions. I try to capture the mood in my [little book *On Tyranny*](#). Here are a few

ideas.

If you voted Republican, and you care about your country, please act rather than rationalize. Unless you cast your ballot so that South African oligarchs could steal your data, your money, your country, and your future, make it known to your elected officials that you wanted something else. And get ready to protest with people with whom you otherwise disagree.

Almost everything that has happened during this attempted takeover is illegal. Lawsuits can be filed and courts can order that executive orders be halted. [This is crucial work](#).

Much of what is happening, though, involves private individuals whose names are not even known, and who have no legal authority, wandering through [government offices](#) and [issuing orders](#) beyond even the questionable authority of executive orders. Their idea is that they will be immunized by their boldness. This must be proven wrong.

Some of this will reach the Supreme Court quickly. I am under no illusion that the majority of justices care about the rule of law. They know, however, that our belief in it makes their office something other than the undignified handmaiden of oligarchy. If they legalize the coup, they are irrelevant forever.

Individual Democrats in the Senate and House have legal and institutional tools to slow down the attempted oligarchical takeover. There should also be legislation. It might take a moment, but even Republican leaders might recognize that the Senate and House will no longer matter in a post-American oligarchy without citizens.

Trump should obviously be impeached. Either he has lost control, or he is using his power to do obviously illegal things. If Republicans have a sense of where this is going, there could be the votes for an impeachment and prosecution.

Those considering impeachment should also include Vance. He is closer to the relevant oligarchs than Trump, and more likely to be aware of the logic of destruction than he. The oligarchs have likely factored in, or perhaps even want, the impeachment and prosecution of Trump. Unlike Vance, Trump has charisma and followers, and could theoretically resist them. He won't; but he poses a [hypothetical risk](#) to the oligarchs that Vance does not.

Democrats who serve in state office as governors have a chance to profile themselves, or more importantly to profile an America that still works. Attorneys general in states have a chance to enforce state laws, which will no doubt have been broken.

The Democratic Party has a talented new chair. Democrats will need instruments of active opposition, such as a [People's Cabinet](#), in which prominent Democrats take responsibility for following government departments. It would be really helpful to have someone who can report to the press and the people what is happening inside Justice, Defense, Transportation, and the Treasury, and all the others, starting this week.

Federal workers should stay in office, if they can, for as long as they can. This is not political, but existential, for them and for all of us. They will have a better chance of getting jobs afterwards if they are fired. And the logic of their firing is to make the whole government fail. The more this can be slowed down, the longer the rest of us have to get traction.

And companies? As every CEO knows, the workings of markets depend upon the government creating a fair playing field. The ongoing takeover will make life impossible for all but a few companies. Can American companies responsibly pay taxes to a US Treasury controlled by their private competitors? Tesla paid no federal tax at all in 2024. Should other companies pay taxes that, for all they know, will just enrich Tesla's owner?

Commentators should please stop using words such as "digital" and "progress" and "efficiency" and

“vision” when describing this coup attempt. The plotting oligarchs have legacy money from an earlier era of software, which they are now seeking to leverage, using destructive political techniques, to destroy human institutions. That’s it. They are offering no future beyond acting out their midlife crises on the rest of us. It is demeaning to pretend that they represent something besides a logic of destruction.

As for the rest of us: Make sure you are talking to people and doing something. The logic of “move fast and break things,” like the logic of all coups, is to gain quick dramatic successes that deter and demoralize and create the impression of inevitability. Nothing is inevitable. Do not be alone and do not be dismayed. Find someone who is doing something you admire and join them.

What is a country? The way its people govern themselves. Sometimes self-government just means elections. And sometimes it means recognizing the deeper dignity and meaning of what it means to be a people. That means speaking up, standing out, and protesting. We can only be free together.

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