

Restore trust through solutions, not force



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Lead Editorial

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Extraordinary scene of US troops sleeping in the Capitol, protecting Congress from disaffected American citizens. When it gets to this point, the government must recognise something has to change. Photo: Screenshot

As of writing, Washington, DC is teeming with National Guard units for security ahead of the inauguration of Joe Biden on 20 January. The mainstream media triumphalism over the demise of Donald Trump presents his presidency as an aberration from normal and sane government, as if order is now restored. Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull tweeted—ironically—neoconservative theorist Francis Fukuyama saying: “Trumpism must be repudiated and delegitimised root and branch, much as McCarthyism was in the 1950s.” The problem for the establishment’s narrative is that despite how erratic Trump’s presidency was, and how much the media demonised everything he did, 75 million Americans voted for him. That a percentage of those supporters are radicalised and potentially threatening is the excuse for the heavy security in Washington, but no show of force will guarantee America’s security unless its political leaders address the reason that 75 million Americans are so disenchanted with the mainstream that they would vote for Trump. Above all else, that means addressing the long-term, slow motion train wreck of the American economy.

This is not just true for the USA, but most of the world. Especially in supposedly advanced, developed Western countries, trust in government has crumbled. The collapse in trust has followed the same pattern as the USA, because it has followed the same economic policies:

- financial deregulation, which subjugated hard-working producers to the predatory excesses of financial gamblers in the big banks;
- privatisation, which stripped nations of assets and services, transferring wealth from the people to the 1 per cent;
- “free trade”, which smashed domestic industries through outsourcing manufacturing to low-wage economies and concentrated economic power in multinational corporations—a revival of the 19th-century British East India Company economic model;
- budget austerity, but only for essential services, not the bread and circuses, which eroded healthcare, education and infrastructure delivery, increasing the vulnerability of society and the real economy to crises like the current pandemic and frequent infrastructure breakdowns.

The spiralling crisis in the United States, which is closer than it has ever been to the civil war that former Democratic Congresswoman and Presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard warned of in 2019, is the wake-up call that is needed to motivate leaders and populations to concentrate on economic solutions. The National Infrastructure Bank Coalition in the United States, which is working very hard to shape the economic agenda of the incoming Biden administration, held a webinar on 14 January

appropriately titled “The Better Angels of Our Nature—A Non-Partisan Effort to Build the Nation’s Infrastructure” (p. 5). If the NIB Coalition can succeed in passing its bill for a US\$4 trillion National Infrastructure Bank, it will initiate an economic transformation of the United States that will truly unify Americans around an optimistic perspective for the future. This is how to restore order, not displays of force.

The Citizens Party’s campaign for an Australia Post bank and national development bank is the same fight. While not as extreme as the US situation, trust in government is also at record lows in Australia. In response, successive governments have resorted to increasingly draconian measures, in the name of combatting “terrorism”, political “extremism”, online “disinformation”, “foreign interference”, etc., giving themselves unprecedented surveillance and policing powers. Expanding their powers won’t restore trust in governments; only those governments changing their policies will. A post office “people’s bank” and a national infrastructure bank would enable the nation to invest in infrastructure and services in local communities right across Australia, restoring the functionality and productivity of all communities. Australia could unleash a wave of economic development that creates the new industries and jobs we sorely need.

Hence the importance of the Australia Post bank campaign (p. 3). The Christine Holgate saga has exposed the corrupt machinations of Canberra in a way that can’t be covered up, but can become a catalyst for achieving the public bank solution.

In this week's issue:

- Will Albanese retract his dishonest attack on Australia Post?
- China declares new era of development cooperation
- National Infrastructure Bank: a tool to get things done and bring the nation together
- Xinjiang: Pan-Turkism
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