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DONALD TRUMP IS ON THE RUN

The Crisis of America's Leadership

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November 2, 2025 – Donald Trump is Missing in Action



The American government has shut down, paralyzing critical services, threatening the paychecks of those who serve the public, and jeopardizing the most vulnerable citizens. Yet, at a moment of profound domestic crisis, the nation's leader, President Donald Trump, appears to be on the

run, which is exhibiting a disturbing pattern of prioritizing political spectacle and credit-claiming abroad while abandoning the fundamental responsibility of governing at home.

This shutdown is not a matter of missing money; it is a profound failure of political will and moral priority. This crisis reveals a leadership who is more concerned with winning an ideological battle than with the well-being of the nation.

The Trillion-Dollar Question—Where is the Money?

The United States federal government operates on an annual Fiscal Year budget, collecting truly astronomical sums to provide for the public good. In other words, through a wide array of sources, which include individual income tax, payroll taxes, corporate taxes, tariffs on foreign goods, and excise taxes, the government collects a staggering amount of money, which is typically around \$4.9 to \$5.2 trillion annually. Given this colossal revenue stream, the inability to cover essential government functions and pay employees—including the dedicated men and women of our armed forces—is deeply insulting and unacceptable. As a veteran, I know the dangers that active-duty military face; they are on the front lines, risking their lives to defend the nation. Yet,

they are among those whose pay is threatened. Now the shocking math! The cost of military personnel, that is, the pay, allowances, and benefits for every active-duty member, amounts to approximately \$190–\$200 billion annually. This sounds like an enormous number, but it is actually less than 4% of the total federal revenue. The rest of the budget (over \$6 trillion in total spending) goes to mandatory programs (like Social Security and Medicare) and the remainder of discretionary spending.

The fact that the government has such a vast budget and yet a meager, necessary 4% expenditure for our troops' payroll is withheld during a political stalemate proves my point: the problem is not a lack of resources, but a colossal failure of prioritization and leadership. The president, members of

Congress, and their administrations do not suffer the financial hardship of a shutdown; it is the civil servants, the military families, and the lowest-level employees who are deemed expendable pawns.

The Cruelty of Calculated Chaos

This crisis is most acutely felt by the nation's most vulnerable, which is a direct result of the Administration's calculated decision-making, e.g., the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps, is a lifeline for millions. While the program's budget is strained by the government's failure to pass a spending bill, the administration's response has been deliberately vindictive. Moreover, the USDA, which administers SNAP, holds a contingency fund, which is a

reserve that is explicitly intended by Congress to be used during funding lapses to keep food benefits flowing. Yet, the Trump administration has refused to tap into these billions (arguing the funds are not legally available for monthly benefits); yet states have been very successful to sue, which force the release of these funds. What A National Disgrace! This refusal to spend a small fraction of the trillions collected to feed over 40 million Americans is an act of breathtaking indifference. It demonstrates a willingness to inflict maximum pain on low-income families and veterans to gain leverage in a political fight. When SNAP benefits, which is a critical need, are halted while the President travels the globe, the conclusion is inescapable: the leader is on the run from the very real consequences of the crisis that he helped create.

The Pattern of Absence and Credit-Claiming



The failure to resolve this domestic crisis is inseparably linked to a recurring pattern of behavior that defines this presidency, which is, abandon the tedious work of negotiation only to re-emerge later as the 'hero' who swooped in for the victory. Because at a time when a President should be relentlessly focused on bringing Democrats and Republicans to the table to restore order, President Trump is instead maintaining a regular schedule of travel, rallies, and international deal-making. While the nation's air traffic controllers work

without pay and SNAP recipients face hunger, the President is often physically and figuratively absent. Donald Trump is on the run.

This is not the standard of leadership that Americans expect in a crisis; it is a distraction that serves only to bolster his public image while the machinery of government grinds to a halt ... Therefore, the pattern is clear: avoid the long-drawn-out, messy negotiations until others have done the substantive work, and then rush in to take the credit. We saw this in the Middle East, where international pressure mounted on leaders to negotiate a ceasefire, only for President Trump to appear in the picture a couple of days later to claim the resolution. We saw it with Ukraine, where a difficult diplomatic challenge led to an abrupt public abandonment of the effort,

only to blame others for not wanting peace. The President prefers the image of the deal-closer to the hard, grinding, and often thankless work of sustained negotiation.

Notice the domestic retreat in how the government shutdown is the ultimate act of retreat. Instead of a relentless focus on bringing Democrats to the table to strike a deal, President Trump and the Republican leadership have largely held a distant posture, laying the blame entirely at the feet of the opposition while allowing the fallout to spread. This is the surest evidence that the President is on the run from the complexity of the problem.

The Political Self-Interest of Both Sides

While the President's actions are the catalyst for this crisis, the political distrust that is

driving the shutdown is a bipartisan sickness.

Both the Republicans (over issues like health care policy) and the Democrats (in their refusal to give the GOP a "win") are demonstrating a shocking prioritization of political self-interest over the public good. Both parties are being stubborn, caring more about the optics of "winning" the argument than preventing demonstrable harm. And the ultimate cost: the American people—from the military families wondering how to pay rent to the federal worker forced to furlough, to the SNAP recipient who will go hungry, are the ones who are paying the price for two sides who are determined to put political victory ahead of public duty. The American taxpayer is robbed twice: once by the lack of service during the shutdown, and again by the politicians who refuse to

compromise despite collecting trillions in annual revenue.

The core of leadership is to solve problems, not to escape them. The ultimate judgment on President Trump is not that he can't close a deal; it is that at the moment when his nation is in true distress, he appears most intent on running from the responsibility, leaving his people to suffer while he chases the next headline. The problem cannot be solved from thousands of miles away; it requires relentless focus, compromise, and presence. Until that changes, President Donald Trump remains on the run.