

Let the scientists rule

Donald Trump's expansionist plans are just a retread of century-old dreams of a continent run by technocrats, says **Brian J Ford**. Guess whose ancestor was to blame for that idea?

We all think it: why leave the governmental decisions to parliament? Let the scientists have a go. Democracy is all very well but just look at whom we elect. Let's hand it over to a group of technocrats.

Rule by scientists is not a new idea. It underpinned the technocracy movement 100 years ago. At its height, it proposed that the USA acquire the whole of North America, Greenland and down past Panama. This is what President Trump has been advocating in his recent speeches.

He proclaims that it must be done to protect national security, ensure economic dominance and free up natural resources. Those ideas mirror the principles of the technocracy movement, which once captivated Joshua Haldeman, a Canadian chiropractor and technocrat. He was Elon Musk's grandfather.

The technocracy movement peaked in the 1930s, advocating a society that abandoned elected politicians, in favour of scientists and engineers. Haldeman believed in what he called the North American Technate — a borderless, rationally managed superstate spanning the continent.

Trump argues that the USA and Canada are already so intertwined they should formalise the relationship. Canada's vast resources — oil, timber, electricity and water — could be optimised under a unified administration run with American scientific efficiency.

Greenland, sparsely populated and strategically located, is next. Trump's real-life interest in purchasing Greenland from Denmark was dismissed as a joke, but he frames it as a matter of national defence and resource exploitation, with Greenland's rare earth minerals fuelling a tech-driven economy. He sees a self-sustaining Arctic technopolis where engineers and scientists, not politicians, oversee mining operations.

Panama rounds out the trio. Trump wants the

Panama canal, proposing a modernised system run by a consortium from the USA. No more reliance on a small nation's government; the canal becomes a technocratic marvel, its tolls and operations fine-tuned for maximum profit and efficiency. He says that Americans built the canal, omitting that it was tens of thousands of Asian, Chinese and Black labourers who died doing the work, along with about 350 Americans supervising.

The second canal is never mentioned. I saw it being built; a larger set of locks to take bigger vessels. They opened in 2016 and were largely financed by the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation and the European Investment Bank. It could also be that Trump wants to regain control of the Trump Ocean Club in Panama, which he lost in 2013 (owing huge sums in unpaid tax).

[Trump's] ideas mirror the principles of the technocracy movement

When Trump took to Truth Social, X, and Fox News, touting the idea of a vast new empire, it was greeted as audacious. But it wasn't new at all. Technocracy Inc was active 100 years ago, and Elon Musk's grandfather laid the groundwork. The idea of an American Technate would have a single scientific authority that governed the whole of North America. The organisation became tainted by allegations of Nazi sympathies, so Canada temporarily banned it. Yet the movement still exists; it has a dormant website at technocracyinc.org — and the idea of rule by scientists still endures.

President Trump has never referred to the American Technate, though he's advocating the idea. Meanwhile, Musk may not yet be ruling the United States, an idea that his grandfather foresaw, but surely he's getting close. ■



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