Post

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Older Americans, you already lived through this.

You were told globalization would make goods CHEAPER.

> And it did.
>
> But nobody told you the full price.

In 1979, America had roughly 19.6 MILLION manufacturing jobs.

Then the model changed.

During the 1980s and 1990s, American companies increasingly moved production overseas because labor and manufacturing costs were lower.

> Consumers benefited.
> TVs got cheaper.
> Clothes got cheaper.
> Electronics got cheaper.
> Household goods got cheaper.

But then something else happened.

> The factories in American towns started closing.
>
> > Steel.
> > Textiles.
> > Furniture.
> > Machinery.
> > Electronics.
> > Auto parts.

Jobs that once allowed someone without a four-year degree to buy a house, raise a family and retire disappeared.

Then came the major policy decisions.

> 1994: NAFTA took effect after being negotiated under President George H. W. Bush and implemented under President Bill Clinton.
>
> 2000: President Clinton signed Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China.
>
> December 2001: China entered the WTO.

The argument was simple:

> Open global markets.
> Move production where it is cheapest.
> Give American consumers cheaper products.
> And perhaps greater economic integration would eventually change China.

That was the BET.

Then came what economists later called:

THE CHINA SHOCK.

Between 2000 and 2010, America lost almost 6 MILLION manufacturing jobs.

Not all because of China.
Automation mattered.
Technology mattered.
Recessions mattered.

But researchers estimate Chinese import competition contributed to roughly 2–2.4 MILLION American job losses from 1999–2011.

And here is what Washington missed:

A worker who lost a factory job Monday did NOT magically find an equally good job Tuesday.
Some towns never recovered.
Wages fell.
Communities declined.
Families were disrupted.

The economist said:

"The economy will adjust."

The worker discovered:

I AM the adjustment.

Then America sold the next generation another idea:

GO TO COLLEGE.

The factory job your father had was disappearing.

So get a degree.
Borrow money.
Enter the new economy.

Student debt went from roughly $340 BILLION in 2001 to about $1.65 TRILLION today.

Think about that generational progression.

Grandfather:

Factory → paycheck → house → family.

Father:

Factory closes → economy restructures.

Son or daughter:

Borrow tens of thousands of dollars because now you need a degree to compete.

Meanwhile politicians in BOTH parties kept the basic globalization model moving.

Then COVID hit in 2020.

Suddenly America discovered that the cheapest supply chain isn't necessarily the safest supply chain.

> Pharmaceuticals.
> Semiconductors.
> Medical equipment.
> Critical minerals.
> Electronics.
> Industrial components.

So much had become dependent on production thousands of miles away.

President Trump had already begun challenging that model.

In 2018, he imposed major tariffs on Chinese goods.

Washington screamed:

> TRADE WAR.

And yes, tariffs can raise costs.

That criticism is legitimate.

But President Trump was asking a fundamentally different question.

For decades Washington asked:

> Where can we make this CHEAPEST?

President Trump asked:

> What does America NEED to be able to make itself?

Then something interesting happened.

President Biden came in...

> ...and kept many Trump-era China tariffs.

Industrial policy returned.

> Semiconductors became a national-security issue.
> Critical minerals became a national-security issue.
> Domestic manufacturing became a national-security issue.

Why?

> Because the argument had changed.

Now President Trump is back.

And Americans are understandably looking at:

> Gas.
> Groceries.
> Rent.
> Insurance.
> Interest rates.
> Mortgage payments.

Those bills matter TODAY.

But underneath that noise, America is attempting something much bigger:

Rebuilding domestic manufacturing.
Rebuilding supply chains.
Expanding semiconductor production.
Expanding pharmaceuticals.
Expanding steel.
Expanding energy.
Expanding advanced manufacturing.

Companies including TSMC, Micron, Apple, NVIDIA, Hyundai, GM, Ford, Eli Lilly, Roche and Johnson & Johnson have announced major U.S. investments.

But understand this:

An announcement is not a factory.

Factories take YEARS.
Semiconductor fabs take YEARS.
Mines take YEARS.
Supply chains take YEARS.
Workforces take YEARS to rebuild.

So here's the contradiction.

America spent roughly 40 YEARS building this economic model...

Then expects President Trump to reverse it in roughly 20 MONTHS.

Read that again.

FORTY YEARS IN.

TWENTY MONTHS OUT.

You should criticize President Trump when policies fail.

Demand lower prices.
Demand results.
Demand accountability.

But also understand what is happening beneath the daily headlines.

America spent decades telling capital:

GO WHERE PRODUCTION IS CHEAPEST.

Now America is trying to tell capital:

BUILD IT HERE.

That transition was never going to happen overnight.

The real question isn't whether every Trump policy works.

Some won't.

The question is:

Twenty years from now, will Americans look back at this period as the moment the country finally understood that the CHEAPEST economy isn't always the STRONGEST economy?

Because millions of Americans already lived through what happened the last time Washington made that gamble.

> They watched the factory close.
> They watched the jobs leave.
> They sent their children to college.
> They watched the debt pile up.

And now America is trying to build some of it back.

That is the story underneath the noise.

2:19 AM · Sep 5, 2026 **33.8K** Views