



Wall of shame

Posted at: 12/01/2019

The shutdown over the Mexico wall demand will long define Donald Trump's presidency

- It began as a populist campaign promise that brought President Donald Trump's supporters cheering to their feet and paved the way for his election.
- Now, the border wall with Mexico has become a morass of partisan bickering that has stalemated the U.S. federal government into a three-week-long shutdown, leaving nearly 800,000 public sector workers furloughed without pay.
- At the heart of this political crisis is the increasingly bitter polarisation of public opinion over immigration.
- On the one hand, Mr. Trump has steadily contributed to the strident and crude anti-migrant rhetoric, characterising prospective migrants from Latin America as drug-dealers, rapists and violent criminals and shutting down the U.S. border to travellers from certain Muslim-majority countries.
- On the other, his insistence that he will not sign any appropriations bill to break the funding logjam in Congress and end what could soon become the longest shutdown in U.S. history, unless that bill includes \$5.7 billion in financing for a border wall, has gone down badly with Democrats, who control the House.
- Matters took a darker turn as Mr. Trump doubled down on his refusal to negotiate over funding for the wall and said may declare a state of national emergency over this uncomfortable status quo.

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