

Our Revolutionary Times

By Victor Davis Hanson

Sometimes unexpected but dramatic events tear off the thin veneer of respectability and convention. What follows is the exposure and repudiation of long-existing but previously covered-up pathologies.



Events like the destruction of the southern border over the last three years, the October 7 massacre and ensuing Gaza war, the campus protests, the COVID-19 epidemic and lockdown, and the systematic efforts to weaponize our bureaucracies and courts have all led to radical reappraisals of American culture and civilization.

Since the 1960s, universities have always been hotbeds of left-wing protests, sometimes violently so.

Masked left-wing protestors were unashamedly and virulently anti-Semitic. Students on elite campuses especially showed contempt for both middle-class police officers tasked with preventing their violence and vandalism and the maintenance workers who had to clean up their garbage.

Mobs took over buildings, assaulted Jewish students, called for the destruction of Israel, and defaced American monuments and commentaries.

When pressed by journalists to explain their protests, most students knew nothing of the politics or geography of Palestine, for which they were protesting.

The public concluded that the more elite the campus, the more ignorant, arrogant, and hateful the students seemed.

The Biden administration destroyed the southern border. Ten million illegal aliens swarmed into the U.S. without audit. Almost daily, news accounts detail violent acts committed by illegal aliens or their surreal demands for more free lodging and support.

Simultaneously, thousands of Middle Eastern students, invited by universities on student visas, block traffic, occupy bridges, disrupt graduations, and generally show contempt for the laws of their American hosts.

The net result is that Americans are reappraising their entire attitude toward immigration. Expect the border to be closed soon and immigration to become mostly meritocratic, smaller, and legal, with zero tolerance for immigrants and resident visitors who break the laws of their hosts.

Americans are also reappraising their attitudes toward time-honored bureaucracies, the courts, and government agencies.

The public still cannot digest the truth that the once respected FBI partnered with social media to suppress news stories, to surveil parents at school board meetings, and to conduct performance art SWAT raids on the homes of supposed political opponents.

After the attempts of the Department of Justice to go easy on the miscreant Hunter Biden but to hound ex-president Donald Trump for supposedly removing files illegally in the same fashion as current President Biden, the public lost confidence not just in Attorney General Merrick Garland but in American jurisprudence itself.

The shenanigans of prosecutors like Fani Willis, Letitia James, and Alvin Bragg, along with overtly biased judges like Juan Merchant and Arthur Engoron, only reinforced the reality that the American legal system has descended into third-world-like tit-for-tat vendettas.

The same politicization has nearly discredited the Pentagon. Its investigations of "white" rage and white supremacy found no such organized cabals in the ranks. But these unicorn hunts likely helped cause a 45,000-recruitment shortfall among precisely the demographic that died at twice their numbers in the general population in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Add in the humiliating flight from Kabul, the abandonment of \$50 billion in weapons to the Taliban terrorists, the recent embarrassment of the failed Gaza pier, and the litany of political invective from retired generals and admirals. The result is that the armed forces have an enormous task to restore public faith. They will have to return to meritocracy and emphasize battle efficacy, enforce the uniform code of military justice, and start either winning wars or avoiding those that cannot be won.

Finally, we are witnessing a radical inversion in our two political parties. The old populist Democratic Party that championed lunch-bucket workers has turned into a shrill union of the very rich and subsidized poor. Its support of open borders, illegal immigration, the war on fossil fuels, transgenderism, critical legal and race theories, and the woke agenda are causing the party to lose support.

The Republican Party is likewise rebranding itself from a once-stereotyped brand of aristocratic and corporate grandees to one anchored in the middle class.

Even more radically, the new populist Republicans are beginning to appeal to voters on shared class and cultural concerns rather than on racial and tribal interests.

The results of all these revolutions will shake up the U.S. for decades to come.

Soon we may see a Georgia Tech or Purdue degree as far better proof of an educated and civic-minded citizen than a Harvard or Stanford brand.

We will likely jettison the failed salad bowl approach to immigration and return to the melting pot as immigration becomes exclusively legal, meritocratic, and manageable.

To avoid further loss of public confidence, institutions like the FBI, the CIA, the Pentagon, and the DOJ will have to re-earn rather than just assume the public's confidence.

And we may soon accept the reality that Democrats reflect the values of Silicon Valley plutocrats, university presidents, and blue-city mayors, while Republicans become the home of an ecumenical black, Hispanic, Asian, and white middle class.

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