

The Vassalization of Ukraine and the Fall of Western Civilization



by Conrad Black

Having been overseas last week, it is my task to cover in this column both the postmortem on the truckers movement and events in Ukraine. As I wrote two weeks ago, the truckers were right to be outraged at the escalated requirement for the 10 per cent or so who are unvaccinated to quarantine for two weeks when returning from the United States. That provision is oppressive and malicious. The truckers also acted for millions of other Canadians in rising up against the compulsive and imperishable authoritarianism of the substantially failed Canadian COVID regime and the smug acceptance of it by much of the media. The truckers have an absolute right to protest. But as I warned two weeks ago, neither they nor anyone else has a right to strike against the public interest, and especially to shut down or impair traffic between Canada and the United States, nor any right to inflict unnecessary inconvenience on

the residents of the nation's capital.

The prime minister's characterization of all the truckers as they approached Ottawa, on the basis of no knowledge or reliable information, as racists, sexual bigots and misogynists was inexcusable and disgraceful. The recourse to the Emergencies Act was unnecessary, oppressive and unless the highest echelon of our judiciary has disintegrated completely, it was likely also illegal. The truckers should have gone to greater lengths to protect themselves against imputations of holding fascist or other extreme views and somewhere around Winnipeg they should have elected a leadership committee and formulated a reasonable list of demands. The prime minister should have offered to meet them. The government's response to an uneven outpouring of populist energy was a dismal and pompous failure.

As the trucking crisis was abating in Canada and the Ukrainian crisis arose, a friend emailed to a number of us who follow these things that we were "considering a 'nuclear option' in cutting off some exports to Russia, and 460 of our meagre Armed Forces are being deployed to do nothing at all in Latvia except to send a signal – can you hear? Where is the sense of proportion here? Where is the assessment ... especially by the media, of how well we do that or how inane it is in substance, and thus corrosive in effect? Where is the sense of the absurd expressed about this anywhere in Canada? Nowhere. It is part of our duty to show where we stand, as though it tipped an ounce on any scale. We've shown almost no critical judgment about these events in Ukraine anywhere in Canadian society; it is amazing."

Not really. The response of much of the world has been contemptible. Everyone saw what was coming and sat as inert as suet puddings as the macabre opera slowly unfolded. Ukraine was not a reasonable candidate to become a member of the European Union or NATO, which is an entirely defensive alliance, and Russia had no business objecting to such

membership anyway. In fact, former U.S. presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton should have paid more attention to former Russian president Boris Yeltsin and the early Vladimir Putin when they sought to bring Russia into NATO. The widespread claims that NATO should have pre-emptively announced that Ukraine would never be allowed into NATO are bunk; it was a legitimate long-term ambition and remains so, and Russia's ambition to regain Ukraine has nothing to do with NATO. The widespread call for pre-emptive sanctions was also fatuous.

Odious though he is, Putin's desire to reabsorb Ukraine is well-documented, given its history as part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The West won the greatest and most bloodless strategic victory in the history of the world in the Cold War, and now we are well on the way to surrendering that victory by disgorging it in instalments.

The situation is like a Russian Matryoshka doll with successively smaller dolls within it. Ukraine struggles to become a real nation; Russia struggles to regain its former status as a superpower. And the great game is the expansion of the West: 80 years ago, the Western world almost ended at the English Channel, as Hitler and Stalin ruled Europe. During the Cold War, the eastern border of the West was at the border of East Germany, then it was at the eastern border of a united Germany, then at the Polish-Russian border, then, tantalizingly, at the eastern border of Ukraine. The solution is a Matryoshka one: The West needs a great Russia – the land of Tchaikovsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov and Dostoevsky and 11 time zones. The enlarged West must be bound in an enlarged and renamed NATO. And the Russian provinces of Ukraine – Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk – must be relaunched with Euro-American and Russian assistance as an autonomous intermediate state. It will all probably happen, but when we have more capable leaders than we have today.

U.S. President Joe Biden's leadership has been terrible, but

only a rank optimist would say it has bottomed out. Biden and other western leaders have complacently reinforced Ukraine, instead of pouring in anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. Months were wasted in portentous diplomatic waffling, when the 40,000-man NATO Response Force should, with national reinforcements, have been installed on Ukraine's western border. Between 500 and 1,000 warplanes should have been deployed in Ukraine's neighbouring NATO countries and substantial numbers of them should have been transferred temporarily to Ukraine, to be flown by Ukrainian air force pilots. Russia's GDP is smaller than Canada's and it could not sustain a conflict such as this for long. Instead, Biden has allowed Germany to prevent shutting down Russian access to money transfer SWIFT codes and to retain its submissive energy vassalage to Russia, even as Germany masquerades as a sanctioning power. Nothing is done to jettison the West's insane, self-destructive green policy, as Putin is rewarded for his barbarous aggression with the rich fruit of \$100-a-barrel oil. Biden prattles on about defending "every square inch of NATO territory." But not one square inch of it is now under threat. He might as well claim to be guarantying the integrity of Paraguay.

China's early decision not to inform the rest of the world about the novel coronavirus, the horrifying shambles in Afghanistan, the self-punitive green dismemberment, the now almost certain capitulation to Iran's nuclear ambitions, along with the indecent spectacle of self-hate America has made of its domestic affairs, and now the carefully arranged, bone-crushing defeat of the pro-western option in Ukraine, has swiftly accelerated the collapse of western civilization and our submission to our new Chinese masters and their chipper Russian sidekick. The only danger Russia posed was to accept the geopolitical embrace of China, and the U.S. Democrats managed to bring them together like Cupid. Our civilization has failed, crumbled in shame and humiliation just 30 years after we seemed to have won everything. I still believe we

will revive, but only with a change of leadership as radical as that of Herbert Hoover, Neville Chamberlain and Édouard Daladier to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle. We generally get inspired leaders when we really need them; the People's Republic of China is ultimately a fraud, and Putin's Russia is a gangster state.

The great illustrative event this week was U.S. climate change czar John Kerry, one of the most unwaveringly fatuous of America's many public officious fools, complained that the military subjugation of the autonomous nation of Ukraine was a distraction from the existential crisis of climate change. The existential crisis isn't posed by the climate, but by people like him. If we are determined as a civilization to commit suicide, we should try for death with dignity, and John Kerry is the last person capable of providing that.

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