

Trump bulldozes the leftist nonsense of the last four years

By Conrad Black

Never in living memory – and probably not since the most tempestuous times of the Second World War when the world was dominated by such extraordinary personalities as Churchill, Roosevelt, de Gaulle, and in their way, Stalin and Hitler – has anyone had such an impact on the ambience of international relations and the prevailing trends in public policy as U.S. President Donald Trump has had, at time of writing, only 10 days into his second term. His appearance by video conference last week at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the dismal little Swiss town of Davos was an astonishing change from his



Attendees listen to a virtual speech delivered by U.S. President Donald Trump at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 23. PHOTO BY MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP/THE CANADIAN PRESS

appearance there five years ago. At that time, the only ripple of applause that he received was when he said that the United States would participate in the United Nations

tree-planting program. The Euro-federalist elites looked upon

him then, in emulation of the shellshocked bipartisan Washington political establishment, as a dangerous mountebank, an interloper, a dreadful meteor briefly altering the pink socialistic skies of an "ever-closer Europe," especially when viewed from one of the Spartan hotels of Davos.

Last week, the WEF audience listened politely as Trump expressed his affection for Europe and his desire for Europe and America to co-operate. There was not a groan or a smirk as he denounced excessive taxation and regulation, inadequate safeguards to assure constructive immigration, gullible attitudes towards countries that did not wish the West well and excessive state meddling in the free market. The uneasy silence prevailed even when Trump denounced "the Green New Deal (as) the Green New Scam," and the "insane and costly electric vehicle mandate." There was not a peep or a hint of implicit disapproval when he disparaged "discriminatory diversity, equity and inclusion nonsense," environmental regulation, social tinkering and the fixation on corporate governance. The audience was respectful, not because they had undergone the grace of conversion to the charms of Trump's ineffable personality, or even because they recognize the proportions of his political triumph and the strength of his hold over public policy in the world's most important country, but because most of them had an uncomfortable feeling that he was right, and had been right all along. And all were relieved that he returned (virtually) to Davos suffused with goodwill toward those who had mocked and dismissed him as a buffoon on his previous visit.

It is not only in Davos that there is now an agonizing reappraisal of wokeness, political correctness, affirmative-action, net zero and all the instruments of torture that have been deployed in the mighty self-flagellation of the great liberal death wish of the last 20 years. Just three months ago, the former American political establishment was still trying to bankrupt and imprison Donald Trump, and the Biden kleptocracy was still hoping to inflict the completely

unfeasible combination of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz on America. That establishment has been rejected and evicted and is huddling under the ragged protection of former president Joe Biden's departing deluge of pre-emptive pardons. The rounding up and expulsion of around 1,000 criminals who entered the United States illegally each day, the enactment of a policy of early retirement for scores of thousands of civil servants, the shutdown of all U.S. government diversity, equity and inclusion activities, and the reversal of insane gender policies, especially in relation to women's sports and juvenile sex changes, have been accepted with only defeatist whimpering from those who until a few weeks ago had an almost totalitarian monopoly on the national political media in the United States.

In Canada, these events are made more complicated by the context of the Liberal leadership race, the imminence of a federal election, President Trump's threat of 25 per cent tariffs on Canada and his cavalier remarks about this country becoming the 51st state. Unless former foreign and finance minister Chrystia Freeland can put herself at the head of whatever forces of common sense remain in the federal Liberal party and bar the way to former central banker and fervent decarbonization advocate Mark Carney, Canada will crown all of the failures of the Justin Trudeau era by embarking on a total official commitment to climate change alarmism, just as that foolishness finally evaporates elsewhere in the world, having inflicted great economic hardship on its victims in the western democracies. This will come as Carney's Net Zero Banking Alliance and Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, both of whose members pledge to align their lending, investment and other commercial activities with net-zero emission goals, are crumbling. Four of the five large Canadian banks (all but Royal Bank) and six of the largest American banks have announced that they are defecting from those absurd organizations. The starting gun for the abandonment of these battlements appears to have been the U.S. House judiciary committee's accusation that the imposition of these net-zero policies constitutes a fraud against shareholders and that they have contributed to the rise in energy prices since 2020 through recourse to "anti-competitive collusion."

This is exquisite: precisely those elements who specialized in

the politicization of the American prosecution system to torment their opponents and criminalize policy differences are now facing, rather than commanding, the official firing squad. This reassignment of corporate objectives was always a fatuous exercise: the duty of corporations is to maximize profitability for the shareholders while behaving with social responsibility, compliance with the laws and sharing profits reasonably with their employees. These attempts to straight-jacket capitalist commerce in pursuit of the faddish fantasies of authoritarian socialism have been a disaster. Trump is just playing poker. It will not be difficult to negotiate a reasonable compromise on tariffs and there is no difference between Canada and the U.S. on immigration matters. Trump's jokes about Canada becoming the 51st state were mainly a response to what he considered (with some reason) to be the impertinences of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during his first term as president. Ontario Premier Doug Ford is going for an early election as "Captain Canada" in defence of the Canadian interest opposite the U.S., pending the resolution of the vacuum of authority in Ottawa. If we end up with Mark Carney as prime minister and masquerading as the defender of the Canadian national interest, we will fulfill Karl Marx's aphorism of history repeating itself, "first as tragedy and then as farce." The tragedy is our competitive economic decline of the last decade. Mark Carney is the farceur. Surely, we are not doomed to such self-inflicted ignominy; Canada has suffered much misgovernment but it can't have descended to this.

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