



## The Cycles of Revolutions in Our Midst

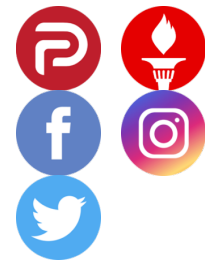
11 Comments / May 16, 2022

Victor Davis Hanson  
*American Greatness*

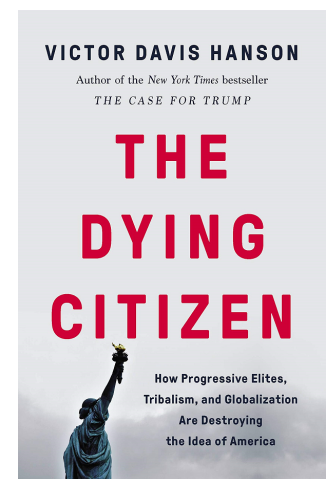
We are witnessing a number of radical military, social, and political revolutions that are changing the United States—and the world—in fundamental ways that we still have not appreciated.

The taboo about never mentioning the first-strike use of

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CITIZEN



Most of human history is full of the stories of peasants,

nuclear weapons in a major conventional war is now apparently over. Vladimir Putin routinely threatens their use. Communist China hints at its growing nuclear capability and is hell-bent on rushing into production a huge new nuclear missile force. The world is defining nuclear incineration down.

The more China and North Korea talk about nukes, the more necessary it is that uneasy democracies such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan will make adjustments. And the more the United States bows out of its prior role of extending its nuclear umbrella over Western democracies, the more likely these societies will consider going nuclear themselves. Should Iran acquire nuclear weapons—and its patrons Russia and China seem to be ensuring that it will—then the long feared but heretofore never reified nuclear Middle East arms race will finally break out, as the petro-rich Arab world tries to deter Iran's unhinged theocrats.

There is also a revolutionary vacuum occurring abroad. Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are trying to figure out whether there is still any old-style American deterrence, or whether the woke progressives now in power in Washington dislike the customs and traditions of the United States even more than they do.

Lots of disasters have contributed to the current perilous state of affairs, including the precipitous American retreat from and humiliation in Afghanistan. Add in voluntary cutbacks in oil and gas production by the West, and the subsequent embarrassment of a superpower beseeching thuggish regimes to send us their energy.

The politicized transformation of the U.S. military from a meritocratic force focused on wartime lethality into an extension of the social welfare state driven by diversity,

subjects, or tribes. The concept of the "citizen," an idea we take for granted, is historically quite rare – and was, until recently, amongst America's most profoundly cherished ideals. But without shock treatment....

The Dying Citizen

VICTOR  
DAVIS  
HANSON IS  
THE MARTIN  
AND ILLIE  
ANDERSON  
SENIOR  
FELLOW AT  
THE HOOVER  
INSTITUTION;  
HIS FOCUS IS  
CLASSICS  
AND  
MILITARY  
HISTORY.

equity and inclusion has encouraged our enemies to take risks they otherwise might not have taken.

Other contributors to the American power vacuum are the enormous federal debt, hyperinflation, and likely stagflation and recession this winter—along with the worldwide mania following COVID and the disastrous blanket lockdowns. All of the above has suggested to the world that a cognitively challenged 79-year-old Joe Biden is both an illustration and cause of American decline, rather than a temporary embarrassing aberration.

Certainly, a wrecked downtown Seattle, the homelessness debacle San Francisco, a Marxist legal regime in Los Angeles, a typical Saturday night of carnage in Chicago, screaming throngs at the homes of Supreme Court justices, and thuggery at the Oscars are now typical vignettes. They should not be the stuff of a supposedly democratic superpower.

Instead, the new woke United States—from the pride flag that flew atop the now abandoned U.S. embassy in Kabul to its former gender studies programs in now gender-segregated Afghanistan campuses—exudes both arrogance and weakness. That is a fatal combination for a major power. It suggests to those abroad that a once pragmatic, dependable, and competent America no longer exists. Soon it may reach the point that those whom America wishes to help would rather pass on such beneficence, given American propensities to offer sanctimonious and strident lectures coupled with an unreliable and ineffective military record.

So what should we expect in the next few years? Far greater cohesion between frightened Western democracies on the one hand, while on the other

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enormous pressures for many to become nuclear themselves. Expect Germany to become more obdurate, either going its own way or ordering the EU and NATO to follow along its path. The more Germany endangers itself and its neighbors with its crackpot policies, the more the world shrugs that 1870, 1914, and 1939 were archetypal, not the anomalous postwar decades.

NATO and the United States may finally invest in credible missile defenses, since they are starting to agree with once-demonized conservatives that in extremis Putin would have no moral problem leveling Florence or incinerating Stockholm—no more than North Korea or China on the brink would hesitate to ensure the cinders of Seattle or San Francisco glow.

Ukraine has been our Spanish Civil War for nearly three months, a laboratory of strategies, tactics, and weapons of wars to come. What are the lessons so far from that conflict?

Western military technology still remains the world's most lethal. Russian equipment is not just noncompetitive but reminds us that weapons are simply tools. Their operations hinge on skilled and zealous soldiers. The majority of Russian conscripts are neither.

Moreover, Ukrainians remind us that well-trained, motivated, and courageous small teams of combatants—mastering online, computerized, and sophisticated Westernized anti-tank, anti-aircraft, and anti-personnel drones and rockets—can nullify vast military investment and manpower. So far, the Ukrainian hit teams have rained death upon thousands of Russian soldiers while destroying millions of dollars of supposedly impregnable Russian traditional assets like artillery,

armored vehicles, tanks, and ground support helicopters and aircraft.

Given the recent humiliating U.S. defeat in and retreat from Afghanistan—after abandoning tens of billions of dollars' worth of sophisticated equipment to terrorists—and the ongoing destruction of the conventional Russian military and billions of dollars of its equipment, we are starting to revisit an earlier pattern of large and well-equipped expeditionary forces of big powers failing to achieve their strategic goals. They prove to be out of place and inept. China may learn the same lessons if it invades Taiwan.

In the American case, the culprits are both White House political ineptitude and the Pentagon's strategic confusion. In the Russian instance, there was a complete divorce of abstract strategy from reality on the ground, between demoralized conscripts versus motivated volunteers fighting for their families. There were systemic Russian failures to field competent and motivated soldiers and to maintain and wisely employ sophisticated equipment. Russia is showing the world that it is a global player only to the degree it can sell oil and periodically threaten any nation it likes with nuclear weapons—a fact no doubt privately conceded by Putin himself.

In the West in general, and in the United States particularly, we are seeing a final fruition of decades of woke self-loathing. The sight of a pride flag flying on the Kabul embassy as the most lavishly supplied and funded military force in history scrambled to fly home, abandoning allies and employees, was a bitter metaphor of the arrogance, ignorance, and impotence of woke ideology.

What was once an elite boutique parlor game confined

to university departments and the schools of education has now filtered throughout all campus courses to the point of being institutionalized. It is lapping into the engineering, math, and physics departments and the schools of medicine and business. The idea of meritocracy is disappearing, replaced by woke reparatory fixations on race, in the manner the ideologically correct Soviet commissariat destroyed Russian institutions or Mao's cultural revolutionary insanity destroyed millions of Chinese.

At a time of impending recession, runaway inflation, and climbing interest rates, universities are charging students thousands of dollars in increased tuition and fees to subsidize an unproductive diversity, equity, and inclusion industry. And like all good commissariats, the DEI apparatchiks produce no research, do no teaching, and bully and repress those who do.

Their chief legacy is the millions of opportunistic mediocrities emerging from the shadows to mouth wokester shibboleths about climate change, diversity, equity, and inclusion, identity politics, and transgenderism, while damning the customs, traditions, history, and values of a prior society that alone is responsible for their very affluence and leisure.

The stuff of life—water storage for agriculture, gas and oil production for transportation and home livability, building materials for shelter, deterrent police to ensure safe streets, and competent medical officials and scientists—is now subordinated to ideological censure and audit. All that is not a sustainable proposition for a sophisticated but vulnerable multiracial democracy of 330 million. Nihilist ideology finally trickles down to shelves empty of baby formula, idled diesel semis, and parked cars left open to thieves in hopes they will merely steal rather than also vandalize. Boutique

university theories turn deadly when any society is unhinged enough to adopt them.

So this cannibalistic woke revolution is no Wobbly mine take-over, no 1960s Woodstock, not even a Black Panther, Weatherman, or Symbionese Liberation Army violent spasm. Instead, wokeism is so institutionalized that, like the Soviet Party or the adherents of Mao's little red book, joining the virtue-signaling wokesters is seen as a smart career move. Going woke is a bully's paradise, an indemnity against a past ill-considered tweet or a future peccadillo. Indeed, it is quasi-religious groupthink proselytizing.

The world is fragmenting and changing in all different directions. Unfortunately, contemporary America is offering no guidance. To the extent it seeks to lead and inspire, its current elite wish to take other nations and cultures down a nihilist pathway of self-loathing that few wish to follow.

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## 11 thoughts on “The Cycles of Revolutions in Our Midst”



**MIKE MORGAN**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 8:13 AM

They are also carefully laying out the narrative of “white extremists violence” to get ahead of any disagreement with woke policies. They define peaceful protests as violent and violent protest as mostly peaceful; all the while, the silence is deafening!

Reply

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**WALTER PAZIK**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 8:58 AM

The survival of the fittest is the law of biology. The Woke will be crushed. That doesn’t mean that the cost won’t be high; it likely will be, but the least among us, the Woke of all races but especially those of “color”, will pay the highest price.

Reply

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**CHARLES ROMER**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 9:06 AM

It’s called “Fall of Sodom, The Final Version”  
Bigger, more exciting than the original. Unforgettable; It will change your life!  
Better though to watch it from a remote location.

Reply

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**CHAD KOEPKE**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 9:13 AM

Excellent article, Mr. Hanson.

Decades of prosperity and all our needs satisfied have



led to moral, intellectual and cultural decay in the US of A. Purging the lands of woke mania likely involves a significant economic crisis to reset the country's direction away from frivolous virtue signaling of pundits and corporations towards substantive discussion of how the nation can rebuild and restructure the massive social and financial issues.

Unfortunately, such an economic crisis is going to be very painful as the Fed and US Gov't have pursued the wrong policies for decades, kicking the can down the road to other poor saps stuck holding the bag. Well, the end of the kicking of the can has arrived with the Fed's inability to fight inflation due to massive government, corporate and household debt, so the economic crisis is here.

Do we collectively respond with more insanity, such as print more money to fight inflation (BBB, Newsom's gas gift cards, etc...) or buckle down and accept hard truths in order to have a better future?

Reply

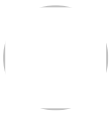


**WALTER PAZIK**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 11:37 AM

We had exactly the same problem with Jimmy Carter. "Well, the end of the kicking of the can has arrived with the Fed's inability to fight inflation due to massive government, corporate and household debt, so the economic crisis is here." The only solution is the same as we faced in 1776 and 1861 – War.

Reply



**DICK WINTER**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 9:24 AM

BRILLIANT, AS USUAL.

NO WORRIES, VICTOR—YOUR RECENT COVID BOUT HAS NOT IN ANY WAY, SHAPE OR FORM DIMINISHED YOUR COGNITIVE CAPACITIES.

AND AS A PREVIEW TO YOUR UPCOMING VISIT TO ISRAEL, WERE YOU AWARE IN THIS PIECE WHEN YOU MADE METAPHORICAL USE OF THE WORD "SHIBBOLETH," THAT IT'S A HEBREW WORD? (AS A FORMER KIBBUTZ FARMER I KNOW THAT IT ALSO REFERS TO A BUNDLE OF CORN COBS)...

SAFE JOURNEY AND LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU.

Reply



**STEPHEN WILLIAM MC DOUGALL**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 9:47 AM

Hi VDH,

You have the pulse of so much that is wrong with America and the West. However, I find your analysis and conclusions on Russia and Ukraine at odds with other pundits (The Duran). Where are you getting your data on the conflict? Are you sure you are right on this one? Another two months will tell for sure. If you are wrong then you are in for a big surprise!

Reply



**SHIRLEY GOHNER**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 1:53 PM

Hello Stephen,

Which “data on the conflict” are you questioning?

Reply



**SDLEONARD@GMAIL.COM**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 10:02 AM

Devastating, horrific, and absolutely accurate critique! The polls suggest that much of the public is belatedly waking up to the true nature of this “woke” revolution, and is repulsed by it. We will get a better feel for our prospects of survival as a civilization on November 8.

Reply



**SCOTT SHEVEY**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 10:29 AM

Trump’s staff estimated 7 million fraudulent votes cast for biden, that means 74 or so million legitimate votes for biden.

What does this say for the American voter and what does it say for the future of the republic?

A very sad requiem for a once great nation and people.

Reply



**SHIRLEY GOHNER**

MAY 16, 2022 AT 1:30 PM

VDH calls ‘em as he sees ‘em. It ain’t pretty :Q

Reply

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