

DO LEFTISTS NOW BELIEVE LEFTISM DOESN'T WORK?

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[VDH at his insightful best]

It is hard to destroy a naturally beautiful city like San Francisco, with ideal weather and stunning infrastructure inherited from far better earlier generations. Yet, San Francisco continues its much-publicized and self-inflicted doom loop.

The productive classes still flee the increasingly crime-ridden city and its self-induced pathologies. The city is eroding not because of the doomsayers and not because of what people say about San Francisco, but because of what San Franciscans have done to San Francisco.

In 2023, more than 40,000 crimes were reportedly committed in San Francisco. The great majority of the perpetrators were either not arrested or never jailed, indicted, or convicted.

Downtown office vacancy rates exceed 35 percent—and are climbing. Tourists have ostracized the city, given the thousands of homeless that occupy sidewalks and downtown. San Francisco claimed to be on the cutting-edge of the woke green movement, proud that it had enacted the most stringent environmental laws and regulations in the world

Except when it came to defecation, injection, and urination on the sidewalks, doorways, and parks, and during storms, when the toxic, effluviant human waste escapes sewage treatment and flows into the once-cherished bay.

In a mere five years, the city went from being one of the most envied and wealthy in the world with a vibrant nightlife and new high-tech start-ups to a West-Cost Detroit.

Now billionaires are trying to heal San Francisco by returning it to the old normality in the era before the progressive city councils, the boards of supervisors, and mayors defunded the police, allowed the homeless to absorb the downtown, and promoted prosecutors who refused to enforce the laws.

The rich are rallying to undo the damage wrought by the very officials whom they and the majority of the city voted into office. Their principles seem simple—start doing the very opposite of the progressive agenda: enforce laws; arrest, convict, and incarcerate criminals; balance city budgets; and insist that the homeless leave the streets, follow the laws of the city, and relocate to shelters.

Across the bay, Oakland is in even worse shape. The city is on life support as a predictable result of progressive nihilism: Do not enforce the law; do not arrest or jail criminals; raise taxes and overregulate businesses; pay exorbitant salaries to unionize public workers and bloated city staff; create toxic racial animosity.

And the result is Oakland 2024, a mix between 19th-century Tombstone and contemporary Haiti's Port-au-Prince.

The city is becoming a veritable ghost town as more overtaxed employers leave and more taxes rise on those who cannot leave. Cities like Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and New York follow the same trajectory.

They suffer the symptoms of a collective madness triggered by a combination of the destructive national COVID quarantine that birthed the Zoom culture, the systematic attack on police after the George Floyd death, and a nihilist woke epidemic that postulated a binary of stereotyped oppressors and oppressed that saw the so-called punching bag victimizers shrug and move far away from blue states and cities.

In all these doom-loop cities, progressive reformers in the eleventh hour are now trying to undo the very policies of those they elected, as if they are slowly waking up from a collective madness—in an election year.

A similar confessional and re-examination among the left is occurring over the border catastrophe. Upon ascension, the Biden administration discarded, and ridiculed as illiberal, the security measures it had inherited from the prior administration.

Like the end of catch-and-release, the demand that would-be refugees apply for entry in their home countries, the continuation of the wall, and Mexico's responsibility to stop the transit of millions northward through its country.

Much of the sudden left-wing panic over the border is, of course, opportunistic because it is an election year and the left fears losing power for what it has done to the middle class. The optics of 10+ million people swarming the border with impunity over the last few years have alienated the public. And the infusion of illegal migrants into inner-city and border communities threatens to hemorrhage the Democrat base.

So suddenly, no one takes credit for the once wonderful, porous Biden border. Abruptly, the crossings are blamed on Trump—as if no one remembers Joe Biden's 2019 performance-art boast for illegal aliens to “surge”

the border and how he facilitated that advice over the next three years.

Abruptly, the Democrats insist that after three years and over 10 million illegal aliens into the Biden administration, something must be done—perhaps even a rebranding of what worked in 2020 as their own.

The same rethinking of energy is occurring, as well, among the left—in an election year.

The more they talk of banning natural gas, mandating electric vehicles, and ending internal combustion engines, the more they quietly reverse course, draining the strategic petroleum reserve, quietly allowing more federal oil leases, and encouraging national production to return to pre-COVID levels present during the Trump administration.

Frackers and drillers are working at near-full production. Production in 2023 ended up at 13.5 million barrels a day. In short, halfway through the Biden administration, as it desperately drained the strategic petroleum reserve on the eve of the midterms to lower the high gasoline prices it had spawned, the left kept up the green rhetoric as it greenlighted oil production.

In early 2024, the U.S. is once again the largest oil producer in the world. Monthly production now matches or exceeds the high record months during the pre-COVID Trump administration.

Why the turnabout? Once again, reality strikes. In an election year, the return to reasonable energy prices is helping to moderate the inflation that the Biden administration fueled.

Energy self-sufficiency is a valuable foreign exchange earner. It allows the U.S. to be independent abroad, free from foreign leverage, whether from the Middle East, Russia, or Iran. American petroleum autarchy keeps the world price low and reduces the income of belligerent states.

Again, the green rhetoric continues as the oil flows more than ever. Understood is that the left quietly agrees that oil and gas are necessary for the now slow transition to alternate fuels—in an election year.

Are any of our major cities, the vast majority blue and progressively run, still hammering away at the police, eager to cut more from the police? Are they rallying around another Soros-funded critical legal theory wannabe district attorney?

Or are they more likely desperately trying to offer bonuses to recruit officers whom, in just two or three years, they libeled and drove out?

Why the shift? Perhaps because they got their utopian wish that asserted that blameless criminals break the law only because of society's biases and unfairness, not because they calculate perceived benefits of criminality offset by its dangers.

And now they rue the result—in an election year. In other words, leftists don't like getting mugged, car-jacked, assaulted, and beaten, and fear their own policies are endangering their own safety.

Why are corporations no longer lavishing money on Black Lives Matter? Why are donations to Ivy League schools down? Is Professor Kendi still a hot ticket on the lecture circuit? Is the reparations movement picking up steam?

Or does the left now fear that its promotion of tribalism and guilt-ridden racial essentialism is leading to a race-obsessed, fractious society, headlong on its way to a Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, or Iraq—in an election year?

The Biden administration, staffed by Obama-era foreign policy apparatchiks and functionaries, sought to remake what National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan once bragged was a quiet inherited Middle East.

The progressive therapeutic approach was supposed to lead to an ecumenical Middle East. A tolerant, passive, turn-the-other cheek enlightened foreign policy for the 21st century would lead to a new, better Iran without nukes, a two-state solution of Hamas living peacefully with Israelis.

While the occasionally raucous Houthis calmed down, Hezbollah would become more a partner than mere terrorists, Israel would be lectured and sermonized to as an overdog punching too much above its weight, and the childish Abrams Accords nonsense would end the work of Trump's conniving son-in-law, and the pariah Saudi Arabia.

Or so they thought.

So everything was rebooted to kinder and gentler premises—and thus the Biden administration blew up the once calm Middle East.

And now? Two carriers were dispatched to the Mediterranean. The U.S. is belatedly bombing and launching missiles to respond to some 170 attacks on American installations. In an election year, Biden seems baffled that distancing himself from Israel still earns him the moniker of “Genocide Joe” from once loyalist Democrat Arab-American communities.

The woke, Jacobin revolution was promoted by progressives, mostly out of guilt and insecurity, as an overdue remake of America based on therapeutic principles. For three years, it found a rare pathway to power, enacted much of what it had long wished, and discovered the result was not just a catastrophe but dangerous to the very architects themselves.

So now in 2024—an election year—the left is trying to undo what it created without explaining why and what they did to us and themselves as well.

Victor Davis Hanson is an American military historian, author, classics professor emeritus, and scholar of ancient warfare. He is currently the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution.

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