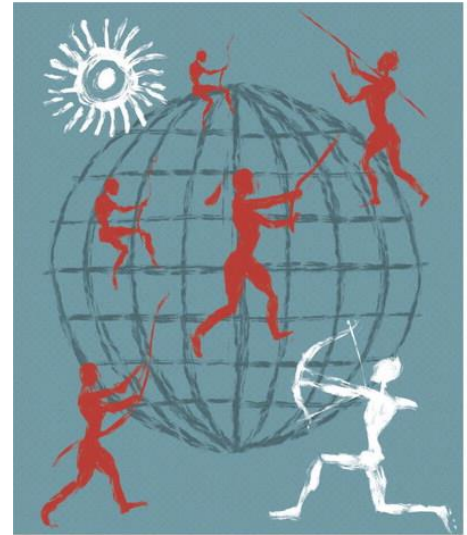


The war on civilization by other means

Global leftist elites are targeting conservative and populist leaders

Washington Ties, By Robert Knight, April 7, 2025

When Russian leader Vladimir Putin jails or poisons rivals or journalists or even invades a neighboring country, it's not all that shocking. After all, the Russian president was a high-ranking agent in the Soviet KGB and has shown little inclination to change his stripes while presiding over the kleptocracy that is modern Russia.



However, countries with actual self-governing systems are not supposed to resort to unsavory tactics. Leaders are not supposed to consolidate power by arresting opponents or crippling them with lawfare. That's communist or banana republic stuff.

However, in several so-called democracies, conservative and populist leaders are being targeted in ways that delight global leftist elites.

Exhibit A is how the Democrats, America's leftist party, mightily abused the legal system in multiple unsuccessful attempts to take out President Trump.

Meanwhile, the Democrats' socialist counterparts are waging aggressive lawfare against populist movements in several countries. In France, Marine Le Pen, who has long campaigned against that country's growing Islamic invasion from its former colonies in North Africa, was leading the polls for the upcoming presidential election. The French are fed up with excessive immigration and "no-go zones" in Paris. In the most recent election, they gave her National Rally party a majority in Parliament.

Last week, however, a court convicted her of embezzling European parliamentary funds for her campaign. She was banned from running for office for five years and was given a four-year prison sentence with two years suspended.

Presto, the leading populist candidate in President Emmanuel Macron's socialist-leaning France is out of the race. Ms. Le Pen said she has done nothing wrong, and the charges are politically motivated. She is appealing.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has aggressively defended his borders against the kind of mass migration that is overwhelming Germany and other nations, is

regularly pilloried by elites in the world press. On Friday, he came under more attacks for refusing to arrest Benjamin Netanyahu during the Israeli prime minister's visit Thursday to Budapest. The International Criminal Court had issued a warrant requiring member states to detain Mr. Netanyahu for "war crimes" in Gaza. Mr. Orban said the court is corrupt and announced that he would withdraw Hungary's membership.

In Romania, riots broke out early last month after populist Calin Georgescu protested the regime's move to erase his candidacy in a redone presidential election. He won the first round of the race in 2024, but a court annulled the election, citing Russian interference. Sound familiar?

The world media, which paints Mr. Georgescu as a "far right" figure, aren't all that upset about this development.

In Brazil, the Supreme Court ruled on March 26 that former President Jair Bolsonaro, a major ally of Mr. Trump, must stand trial on charges of trying to overturn his reelection loss in 2022 and stage a violent coup. As with America's 2020 election of Joseph R. Biden, which Mr. Trump still contends was aided by election irregularities, including vote fraud, Mr. Bolsonaro said his defeat by leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was marred by fraud. Do any of these cases against conservative leaders have merit? Possibly. But unless the lawfare in America, France, Romania and Brazil is just an amazing coincidence, the connected dots suggest a pushback by leftist ruling elites against rising populism.

Angelo Codevilla, professor of international relations at Boston University, often warned about the dangers of ceding power to insular elites. Describing the variety found in the United States, he wrote that their "first tenet is that 'we' are the best and brightest while the rest of Americans are retrograde, racist, and dysfunctional unless properly constrained." In his book "The Ruling Class: How They Corrupted America and What We Can Do About It" (2010), he made the case that elites who pursue anti-family, anti-capitalist and anti-nationalist agendas in America and Europe are not incompetent; they know exactly what they are doing: kicking the supports out from under Western civilization.

Codevilla, who died in an auto accident in 2021 at age 78, argued that government policies that weaken families also weaken nations, which suits globalist elites. One outspoken Western leader has not yet faced any dubious accusations, but it's only a matter of time.

When she became Italy's first female prime minister at age 45 in 2022, Giorgia Meloni was widely described by Europe's legacy media as a "far-right" zealot and a "fascist."

She said she believes in free markets but puts her country first, as when she criticized Mr. Trump last week for levying tariffs on Italian products.

Although she has had a daughter out of wedlock, she unabashedly defends conservative policies, including cultural norms.

In a June 2021 speech, she said: “Yes to the natural family, no to the LGBT lobby, yes to sexual identity, no to gender ideology ... no to Islamist violence, yes to secure borders, no to mass migration ... no to big international finance ... no to the bureaucrats of Brussels!” In 2019, she said: “I am Giorgia, I’m a woman, I’m a mother ... I’m Christian, and you can’t take that away from me.”

Sounds to me like a ripe target for some political scandal.