

One Disagreement, Total Revolt? Victor Davis Hanson Calls Out MAGA's New 'Defectors'

By Victor Davis Hanson

The Left is making quite a deal of attention to what they call the anti-MAGA Right, that is former staunch supporters of [President] Donald Trump that have now parted ways with him. And the names that they fixate on, the Left, [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#), who resigned from Congress after a big fight with Donald Trump over the Epstein files and the [Iran] war.



[Tucker Carlson](#), the former Fox host, news host, and now has become a fierce Trump critic. Megyn Kelly, who had a very successful Fox show herself and then went to NBC and now has a very successful podcast, and she seems to have parted ways with Donald Trump over the same issues as Marjorie Taylor Greene and Tucker Carlson.

Then, of course, Joe Rogan has expressed disappointment. Perhaps he is now not in the MAGA fold. Candace Owens has been a virulent critic. Steve Bannon, I don't know what his status is, but there's a group of people. And then further to the right, of course, there's the Groypers and Nick Fuentes and all those people.

But what was their beef? The first thing that seems to really bother them is the [current war](#). I shouldn't say the first thing. The first thing that bothered some of them was the summer 2025 attack by the United States for about 25 hours on the nuclear facilities in Iran. It was a one-off. Tucker Carlson said this was unnecessary.

It could lead to World War III. It didn't. It did retard the progression of nuclear acquisition. Then new information came in that they had much more ballistic missiles than had been anticipated. And there may have been other areas where they had stored nuclear material. So, then, that reopened negotiations this year to remove those peacefully.

They didn't work. And so, then the United States began, at the end of February, bombing, and now we're in the sixth week and they feel that is a forever war and an endless war.

But it's a very funny forever war, isn't it? I mean, if you look at it, there's been tragically 13 Americans killed, but it's not 4,000 or 5,000, as we've seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, 7,000 total, perhaps another 20,000 casualties.

It's an air war, almost exclusively an air war except for the rescue of the pilot, and it's completely asymmetrical. We have destroyed, as people have said, their navy, except for their patrol boats, which I think will be destroyed shortly if they try to interrupt traffic any further in the [Strait \[of Hormuz\]](#).

We've destroyed their air force. We've destroyed their missile

defense. We've taken out the first and second tier of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the regular army, the theocrats, and even some of the politicians. So, their command and control is in disarray, and we have suffered really no major downfall other than politics.

The future of that war is entirely political. I mean, the United States is at liberty to do what it wants, whatever the military feels is necessary to disarm Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to stop its ballistic missile potential.

But it's a political question. Just a question of what's the effect on the world economy?

What's the effect on the American economy, and more importantly, how does that affect the midterms and the future of the Trump presidency? But people are conflating those and suggest that militarily it's a defeat. That's absurd.

What else did this new group of critics, this new old group of critics, get angry about? Trump tweeted that if, Iran had not met these conditions, and were not going to negotiate then he would, [destroy their civilization](#).

It was pretty poorly worded. And they felt that this was beneath him, beneath the United States. They joined the Left in saying that this was outrageous. The Left took him literally, not figuratively, but I don't think anybody believed he meant all of the Iranian people.

And we know that because, of course, as I had said earlier, no president has avoided dual-use civilian targets as much as Trump. We didn't do it in World War II. We hit every civilian target we could, from power plants to highways to water facilities to oil production in Germany and Japan.

We did it again in Korea. We did it certainly in Vietnam. We took out all the bridges in the Danube in the 1999 bombing under [Bill] Clinton. And of course, we knocked out the power

grid of Belgrade, a million and a half people several times. We did the same thing in Libya. We denied we did it, but we hit civilian ships, we hit port facilities, we hit TV stations.

Trump hasn't done that except for one bridge, so he didn't really, I mean, his record shows that he doesn't believe he wants to destroy the civilization. In fact, it's just the opposite, and I think his critics know that, or he wouldn't have said, help is on the way. Help is on the way.

The whole subtext of this entire campaign is while regime change is not the primary agenda, he hopes that by weakening and humiliating this theocracy, then the people will rise up. And that is why he's selected targets that would allow them to rise up and not hurt the people.

So, was it an overstatement? Yes, but they should know better what he meant. Of course he did, because his deeds prove what he meant.

So, what's going on here? I think part of the problem is in the intimacy that some people on the Right have cultivated and developed with Trump. In other words. If you're going to campaign with Trump, if you're gonna be a regular visitor at Mar-a-Lago with Trump, if you're gonna be an intimate of the family and if you're gonna work with him and you're a news person, then you feel... It's apparently Steve Bannon felt that way.

Maybe Tucker feels that way. Maybe Megyn feels that way. Maybe Marjorie Taylor Greene felt that way. But if you feel that you have a special relationship, then you feel downcast or betrayed because not only your president, but your friend and associate that you'd helped, didn't quite agree with you, but that it's always better to have some distance so you can be empirical

And if you're empirical, then the question is: What's the alternative to Donald Trump's MAGA agenda? Because if you look at the border, it's closed. If you look at illegal immigration, he has deported 500,000 criminals. Another million have self-deported, and he is in the process of probably finishing another 500,000 deportees.

We should have two million. We've never done that before.

If you look at energy right now, the United States has never produced so much oil and gas, and we're right on the verge of a nuclear energy renaissance, and we're going in Alaska. We're going offshore. We're trying to get more oil and gas in California. For all practical purposes, at least for now, DEI is dead.

No other president would've done that, this reverse racism or this tribal chauvinism that has so plagued the nation. Donald Trump ended that. He has put the universities on notice that they cannot continually defy civil rights laws and Supreme Court decisions. No one did that before.

As far as [transgenderism](#), they're on the defensive now. The idea that biological men will dominate female sports and men with biological male characteristics will dress among women is over.

So, what I'm getting at is this: All of these critics agree with what Donald Trump has done on 80% of the issues. At least their record says they do. So, why on one particular issue, in which you disagree, and it's very doubtful that you can categorize this a forever or endless war.

It's much more in the flavor of the Venezuela, the [Qasem] Soleimani, the [Abu Bakr] al-Baghdadi, the ISIS bombing. It is not anything near fighting house to house in Fallujah or going into hostile villages in Helmand province.

We're not on the ground. We're not fighting on the jihadist

turf. We're using our strength, air power and a distance from to mitigate casualties and inflict greater damage on the theocracy.

It's not a forever, endless war, and they know that.

So, if you are apostates from the whole Trump agenda because of your disagreement about this one particular issue, and you feel that he betrayed you because you categorize it a forever or endless war, which he promised to avoid, then you're nullifying the entire agenda.

And what is the alternative? A Kamala Harris agenda? I don't know, an Eric Swalwell agenda? A Gavin Newsom agenda that's antithetical to everything these people have stood for and lobbied for and advanced for?

And so, if you sit out the midterms, or you oppose Trump de facto, whether you know it or not, you are favoring the alternate agenda.

And that agenda is something that, at least in your recent positions, you have adamantly opposed.

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