

The Left's DOGE Tantrum

By Victor Davis Hanson

There's been a lot of commotion lately about the Elon Musk cuts and the [Donald Trump](#) rebranding of the entire administrative state and bureaucracy. It's very strange that it's almost, the narrative from the Left is almost as if the chemotherapy to cure this problem, that we are running multitrillion-dollar deficits and we owe \$37 trillion, but the efforts to stop that financial bleeding, the chemotherapy, is worse than the cancer itself.

And we're starting to see kind of an outrage where people are threatening the life even of [Elon Musk](#). And they're going hysterical and defending all sorts of indefensible expenditures. And so, we should keep clear of what's going on.



It's much easier to let in 12 million illegal aliens and to destroy the border than it is the hard work of reconstructing a defensible, secure border and trying to find 12 million people—500,000 of which, we think, pretty sure, have had criminal records. And another million-and-a-half have already gone through the process and were facing deportation.

It's much, much easier to spread money around and gain constituency and print it than it is to say that you cannot do that. We have to be fiscally sound and say, "We can't give money to this group or Stacey Abrams over—we can't have her oversee \$2 billion." That offends people. Giving them free money doesn't for some reason because it's an abstract, the taxpayer.

We don't care about the taxpayer, who the average household pays about \$20,000. Again, it's much easier to give money out than to save it.

It's much easier to put oil off-limit, to declare 650,000 acres of federal land immune from development, to shut down ANWR [the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge], to shut down Keystone, to shut down liquid natural gas transports than it is the hard work of opening them up, getting rigs in, trying to develop fuel reserves and fuel production for the American people to have affordable energy.

What am I getting at with all of this explanation is that the Trump administration inherited a revolution. They are trying to remedy it and bring America back, not hard to the right, right back where it was before the madness started.

But we have to keep in context that these revolutionaries destroyed institutions. They destroyed physical sobriety. They [destroyed the border](#). They tried to destroy the fossil fuel industry. They destroyed deterrence abroad.

It's much easier just to say, "I'm done with Afghanistan. Take a billion-dollar embassy. I don't really care. Take a \$300 million Bagram Air Base; \$10, \$15, \$20, \$50 billion of valuable military assets and infrastructure and hardware, just give it to the Taliban," than it is to restore deterrence.

That is to take the hard work and say, "You better not do that, Iran. You better not do that, Russia," and restore deterrence than it is to break it. One thing I think is lost

in this messaging, this tough love, this effort to restrain the government is that I think the Trump administration and Musk must convey that.

They must say, "We don't enjoy putting people out of work. We don't enjoy rounding people up but we have to because these people—[the Left](#), the Biden people, the Jacobins—they put us in that position. They were the ones that destroyed institutions. They were the ones that broke the law. They were the ones that are bankrupting us. We're the restorers. And restorers, just like people who give tough medicine and pharmaceuticals and chemotherapy to people struck with cancer or congestive heart failure, it's a tough love. The medicine is very, very difficult. But we gotta remember that the medicine is different than the malady and the disease."

Someone else caused these problems, and now somebody, for the first time in our history, is trying to fix it.

I'll leave you with this historical note. When Woodrow Wilson created the entire progressive project, basically from 1913 to 1920, there were efforts to repeal the growth of government, the introduction of an income tax, but none of the Republicans, not even Calvin Coolidge, could stop it.

When Franklin Roosevelt nationalized many of the private pursuits and operations in this country with the New Deal, there were efforts after he left to repeal the New Deal and specifically, the eight years of the Eisenhower administration. He couldn't do it. When Lyndon Johnson, in a third iteration, created this huge Great Society and these huge Cabinet seats, Richard Nixon could not undo it. Neither could [Ronald Reagan](#).

Now we're on the fourth iteration. This was the Biden effort to make us, essentially, a European socialist country. But guess what? Unlike previous Republican administrations, for the first time, a Republican administration says, "This will

not stand. I'm going to try to stop this and undo it and take it back." And that is hard work.

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