

The Rout Continues, But Be Ready for the Counterattacks.

By Glenn Harlan Reynolds

Well. Things are certainly moving fast now. USAID basically shut down. (Except for the [shredding](#), apparently). Almost [half](#) of the Department of Education staff laid off by the end of the week. Reports of mass layoffs at the EPA [legal offices](#) and elsewhere. (The Trump Administration has ordered agencies to identify [hundreds of thousands of potential layoffs](#), due Thursday, March 13.)



It's all happening fast, as Trump, consistent with my pre-inauguration [advice](#), moves fast and comes on like a [wrecking ball](#).

So far he has the left on the run, and so far the left hasn't seemed able to coalesce around a plan to respond. Staking all their political capital on defending a pro-terrorist immigrant from deportation seems an odd choice, but that's the one they seem to be making. Some have [suggested](#) that they fear that his deportation will set a precedent that will deter others from coming here to play a similar role. Maybe so, but I don't think it will play well.

As I write this, Democrats in the Senate are also planning to block the continuing resolution and trigger a government shutdown. This also seems unwise. First, shutting down the government is kind of consistent with Trump's goals. Second, the "shutdown" that this sort of thing produces is pretty mild: We've been through several and nobody noticed, except for a few dumb attention-getting stunts like closing national parks or monuments. Third, a shutdown will give OMB head Russell Vought, a Democrat *bête noire*, extra power to close things and reallocate funds. It's easy to lay people off and establish that they're not essential, when they're not working anyway because the government is shut down and they're "nonessential employees."

Then there's the campaign to burn and vandalize both individual Tesla vehicles and Tesla dealerships. Democrats have had good luck with burning things in the past, but I don't think this will work out for them. First, Elon Musk stated just after the election that he expected to be targeted and subjected to "dirty tricks," and this is a pretty obvious one. Second, the Trump administration says it will treat these attacks as domestic terrorism – which, as acts of violence intended to produce a political result, they clearly are. Third and most important, Teslas (and I suspect the dealerships as well) are festooned with cameras and data-gathering and sharing equipment. I was talking to a guy in my yoga class whose Tesla was damaged by a man who fled, but his car, in "Sentry Mode" produced 5 clear photos of the man and of his car with its license number showing. Between Tesla's data, and law enforcement resources (giving the attackers the J6 cellphone tracking treatment) it should be quite easy to run a lot of these people down and charge them. (Even more so when a lot of their coordination seems to be taking place via Reddit.)

It will also be easy to go up the food chain and identify trainers, enablers, and funders, all of whom can be sued, and

possibly prosecuted, for their involvement under laws with a lot of teeth. (People threaten to deploy the RICO laws all the time, but this sort of thing is what they were actually designed for.) This means that even as leftist organizations are losing funding channeled through the federal government, they are likely to face expensive litigation that could end in catastrophic damages.

But, you know, there will be pushback. Right now it seems to be coming from random federal district judges, who are [doing their best](#) to undermine the reputation of the judiciary, with "[literally insane](#)" behavior. I think it's the *hauteur* of an establishment that can't admit to change. I think it will end badly, too.

Still, all those laid off people will have nothing to do, which will give them plenty of time to start trouble, file more lawsuits, or whatever. The Democrats and the leftist activist/media/lawfare *apparat* is rocked back on its heels, but it won't give up. It's psychologically – and financially – unable to walk away from this fight.

They'll be back, and Trump *et al.* had better be ready. History is full of campaigns that sent the enemy fleeing in rout only to overextend themselves and be routed in their turn by the counterattack.

But the performance to date makes me wonder about something. I mentioned Tesla cameras and data above, but that's a tiny fraction of what Musk brings to the table in terms of machine capabilities. People I know who follow AI closely seem to think that the big AI companies have higher-level versions of their machines than the ones that they've made public. I've been using the new versions of Grok and Chat GPT and I've found them much more capable than the ones before. Is Elon using higher-level versions to do network analysis among lefty activists, to trace financial flows, and maybe even to predict actions?

I don't know, and I don't know how to tell. (If you can think of some signs we can watch for that would indicate that that's going on, please respond in the comments.) But it wouldn't surprise me at all. It's easier to keep ahead of your opposition when you're smarter than them. It's easier still when you've got smarter machine intelligence and they do not.

In the meantime, hold on. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

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