

The West dominates. Don't believe lies to the contrary

By Conrad Black

It has become something of a cliché to assert as an evident fact accepted resignedly, that the West is in decline. But it isn't. The West is essentially the Americas, Central and Western Europe, Israel, Australasia, and Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, arguably the Philippines and beleaguered elements in South Africa. Obviously, some of these places are in better condition

than others. A degenerating society is one that has lost the will to defend itself from both external and internal enemies and where



Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney and President of the United States Donald Trump take part in the family photo at the 2025 G7 summit in Kananaskis on Monday, June 16, 2025. PHOTO BY GAVIN YOUNG/POSTMEDIA

belief in the value of the society or civilization and loyalty and pride in the country have eroded to the point where there is legitimate doubt that they can be sustained under any pressure. No part of the Western world has achieved such a condition.

Canadians are vaguely aware that in the last decade we've been uncompetitive with peer countries in economic growth and the

rise of our standard of living, and although most Canadians have been dissatisfied with many aspects of public policy, almost nobody believes this has ceased to be a worthwhile country and a relatively agreeable place to live with excellent prospects if we have improved standards of political leadership. The burning question is whether the new prime minister, Mark Carney, will follow the authoritarian and socialistic, environmentally-obsessed course indicated by his book, *Values*, a turgid recitation of an unpromising political agenda, or succumbs to the traditional tenacious enticements of incumbency of a federal Liberal leader. It must be said that, so far, he has shown gravitas in his distinguished office, and although there is a weakness for Pearsonian waffling, that is a merciful relief compared to the green fanaticism and mindless globalism that afflicted him when he was governor of the Bank of England. The appointment of the very capable Michael Sabia as clerk of the privy council is reassuring.

In the United States, on whose strategic direction and political and economic health the condition of the entire West chiefly depends, President Trump, no matter how appalled many may be by his lack of gentility, is moving decisively to stimulate economic growth, reduce the trade deficit, reduce inflation, increase job creation, and has effectively closed the borders to illegal immigration, and is asserting the authority of the federal government throughout the country and requiring the apprehension and deportation of convicted criminals who entered the United States illegally. These are elemental steps in national self-preservation and if they had not been taken, a rising concern about what the late British critic and humorist Malcolm Muggeridge called "the great liberal death wish" in the United States would have been justified. The joint Israeli-American destruction of the Iranian nuclear program and of Iran's capacity to finance international terror on the scale that it has through most of the history of the Islamic Republic has been a decisive and absolutely essential step in raising the prospects for peace and prosperity in the whole world.

Western Europe is naturally more complicated. For all of history from the rise of the Roman Republic to the 20th century it was the leading and most influential political and

economic region in the world. It is naturally heavily burdened by its responsibility for the evils of totalitarian communism, Nazism, and fascism and the terrible hecatombs of the world wars. For notorious historic reasons, it lumbers its economy with extravagant Danegeld for the working classes and the small farmers. Much of Europe went perilously far in abdicating democratic political authority to the undemocratic commissioners of the European Union. They are all committed to the "ever closer union" which is the founding objective of the EU, but which has not been specifically ratified by many of the adherent populations, and as the European commissioners are not elected and are not answerable to the talking shop European Parliament in Strasbourg, this is not democracy. That was the great problem in the United Kingdom, which Mark Carney failed to recognize as he tried in his supposedly nonpolitical position of central banker to terrorize the British into voting against Brexit. Britain had voted to join a common market not a federal union. The institutions of government that had developed over 800 years of British history would be subsumed into the well-intentioned but unfledged institutions of Brussels, and its relations with the United States and its senior Commonwealth kindred countries, relationships that have made an incomparable contribution to Western civilization, would be handed over to the Davos-minded foreign placemen of Brussels.

The European Union will have to be rethought and probably will proceed on a two-tiered basis where those countries which wish federation should certainly have it and those that wish to retain national sovereignty but in affiliation with European central government are accommodated. The whole enterprise will have to adopt a tax and benefit system more stimulative to economic growth and more respectful of the market economy. Europeans cannot ignore the implications of the fact that 20 years ago their collective GDP was almost identical to that of the United States and today the American economy is almost twice as large as that of the EU. This is despite the mediocre American leadership between the Reagan and current Trump eras, because European political leadership has been even poorer. For the only time in British history, U.K. Conservatives

provided five consecutive failed prime ministers in eight years. The quality of French leadership in the Fifth Republic has declined from the great General de Gaulle in tottering downward increments to the completely incompetent François Hollande, and Emmanuel Macron has been only a very partial improvement. Four-term German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who could have been a female Bismarck, was ultimately a failure, as was her successor. Both the new chancellor and the new opposition show signs of hope. The Italian Premier, Giorgia Meloni, is a very considerable statesman and the most capable Italian leader since Alcide de Gasperi. The Spanish premier is a socialist imbecile, and the present British government is off to a terrible start.

But there are unmistakable signs that the old continent is recovering: the German Christian Democrats like the equivalent Italian parties, are much bolder and more ideologically robust than in the recent past. The French Rassemblement National has respectabilized itself and appears ready for victory. In the United Kingdom, either the Conservative Party will regain a reasonable quality of leadership and political judgment or it will be shunted into the wilderness like the old Liberals by the Reform Party. The most encouraging litmus test of the recovery of Europe is that Vladimir Putin had assumed that it would be wallowing in moralistic platitudes while he reabsorbed Ukraine. Not only has Ukraine repulsed him with great courage, but he succeeded in reawakening Europe from its long torpor and arming it with the resolve of self-respect and determination of olden time, and is doubling its defence budget. The westernized countries of the Far Pacific are responding commendably to the Chinese challenge, encouraged by the pivot of Trump's America towards them. This is not a civilization in decline.

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