

The West Is in Disarray, and It Will Get Worse

by Federico Pieraccini via jess - SCF Sunday, Dec 30 2018, 11:32pm

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We are witnessing the withdrawal from Syria of the American military contingent, protests in France, the prospect of a British hard Brexit, the political decline of Angela Merkel in Germany, Netanyahu in crisis, and Mohammad bin Salman of Saudi Arabia suddenly becoming an international pariah. The contemporary crisis of leadership in Europe, the United States and among their main allies has thrown the West into chaos, leading it to one of its most critical junctures in recent decades. It is a situation brought on by the United States and its contradictory politics, which results in diminishing the sovereignty and decision-making power of Washington's allies.

Well before the election of Donald Trump, European Union leaders Merkel, Cameron and Hollande were already faltering and evidencing signs of failure.

Hollande fell in the polls because of policies favoring the interests of the elites at the expense of the increasingly poor and indebted French population. Cameron, to stave off a Labour victory under Jeremy Corbyn, promised a vote on Brexit, a decision that would eventually end up costing him his political career. Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party, the undisputed master of the German political scene, suffered for the first time in fifteen years heavy electoral defeats stemming from recent migration policies. The Chancellor, harshly criticized for these results, resigned from the position of president of the party, leaving the CDU split into two factions. The situation worsened in the UK and France over the next twelve months, with Cameron resigning following the Brexit vote and Hollande forced to give up on the idea of running for reelection given his unpopularity.

Theresa May and Emmanuel Macron then replaced Cameron and Hollande. Macron immediately committed to revolutionizing French politics, promising a French renaissance. May (with a view to sabotaging it) promised to negotiate vigorously with the EU to obtain the best possible conditions for the UK's Brexit, scheduled for March 2019. Both have acted contrary to their promises, sealing their political fates.

Meanwhile in the United States there has been strong jostling between the political-financial-war elites for the dominance of Trump's foreign policy. The President, either out of inexperience, ineptitude or intentionally, soon succumbed to the foreign-policy establishment, with its usual offerings of neoliberalism and brutal imperialism. Trump's weaponized use of the dollar thereby ended up in an unintended blue-on-blue attack, with Trump's money bags, Saudi Arabia and Israel, receiving some friendly fire in addition to the intended targets, Iran, Russia and China. An understanding between Trump and the foreign-policy establishment has therefore been reached, sealed with the appointments of Bolton and Pompeo, establishing a *modus vivendi* between competing interests.

This dogma of neoliberalism and brutal imperialism espoused by the foreign-policy establishment is at the heart of the problems between the United States and the rest of the world, Europe especially, only serving to accelerate the transition to a multipolar world order, about which I wrote the day after Trump's victory. Neoliberalism and American exceptionalism are now entrenched in an

“America First” policy, combining the worst elements of US imperialism and the interests of the financier oligarchy.

Washington’s adoption of aggressive economic policies, aimed at draining resources from allies while simultaneously isolating its enemies, has further accentuated the differences between Europe and the US. The use of tariffs and customs duties, combined with sanctions against Moscow and Tehran, have ended up distancing Macron from Trump, placing the French president firmly in the liberal-globalist camp, standing shoulder to shoulder with Merkel. May is isolated, criticized by virtually everyone -- Brussels, Trump, Merkel -- and especially by Corbyn in Parliament.

May finds herself managing a situation beyond her, with a total failure of the British negotiating position with the EU. The closer we get to March 29, the more the British media like the BBC will holler about the catastrophe of a no-deal Brexit, the prospect of which is very likely given that May has done everything possible to sabotage the negotiation process with the EU. The aim is to convince the population that it is not only legitimate but above all else necessary to revoke the request for implementation of Article 50 of the EU in order to avoid the catastrophe of a hard Brexit. It is a perfect example of how the elite create a problem (intentionally failing the negotiations for Brexit) to justify acting in a certain direction, contrary to what the population has voted for.

Macron, in addition to a repeated series of internal political disasters, further demonstrated his abiding fidelity to the financier globalist elites by conceiving a new tax on petrol in the interests of greater environmental sustainability, a heedless provocation to the French people, already weighed down by taxes and an incommensurate lack of government services. This move was enough to unleash major protests in France, the biggest in over twenty years, which will not stop until the resignation of the puppet Macron.

In Germany, Angela Merkel's migrant policies over the last few years have ended up consuming her credit in terms of popularity. She was recently replaced by her protégé, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, as head of the CDU. Merkel has already affirmed that she will withdraw from political life at the end of her term as chancellor. With Merkel as with May and Macron, dancing to the tune of the globalist elites ends up being politically costly.

What has fueled the erosion of the political consensus amongst European leaders has much to do with their countries bearing the costs of being mere executors of US interests. The ripping up of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran created significant frictions between Washington and EU countries. The sanctions on Russia, the tariffs on the European countries and the trade war with Beijing have done the rest, pushing Macron, and even May, to positions directly in opposition to Donald Trump, the latter increasingly attempting a rapprochement with Angela Merkel as her position progressively worsens. May, Macron and Merkel are hanging on by a thinning thread. The attempt to divert attention to other countries like Russia, in the case of the British (the Skripal affair), or Syria, in the case of the French (bombing the country), only widens the rift between Europeans and the likes of Russia and Iran, hurting EU companies and workers in the process.

The risk is that the precarious situation in which European leaders find themselves could lead them into an open provocation against Iran or Russia in Syria (a false-flag chemical attack in Idlib?) or in Ukraine (a false-flag attack in Mariupol?). This is a very real danger. The elites in Kiev seem to be willing to offer their country as a staging area from which to launch a final provocation against Moscow. Yet neither Merkel, May nor Macron seem to be particularly attracted to the prospect of turning Europe into a pile of rubble just to please the Euro-American financial and military elites. Besides, none of them (fortunately) has the political capital that would allow them to engage in such

demented moves.

In this generalized chaos characterizing the West, Trump has perhaps made the first sensible move of his presidency in announcing the withdrawal of American troops from Syria, in the face of howls of protests from the globalist imperialists. Washington is being ushered out of the Middle East as a result of its repeated failures. Moscow is the new destination for all negotiations concerning the Middle East and beyond. Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar and Turkey seem to have already got the message, with various levels of negotiations launched directly or indirectly with Moscow to salvage the little influence still held in Syria by Doha, Tel Aviv and Riyadh. The case is a little different with Ankara, which, through Idlib, still maintains some influence in Syria.

Meanwhile, the US Congress has voted to condemn Saudi actions in Yemen and withdraw US support for Riyadh's war effort. This is motivated less by a concern for the plight of Yemeni civilians, suffering under the onslaught of American-supplied bombs, than it is by the desire by the deep state to further lay into Trump by undermining his ally Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), who has been pronounced anathema by the Euro-American political and financial elites.

In Israel, Netanyahu finds himself in tricky situation, with his wife being investigated for corruption and his majority in government becoming increasingly precarious. Israel's recent capitulation in Gaza, that precipitated the resignation of Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, together with the recent incident with the Russians in Syria as well as the unrealistic prospect of a war with Hezbollah, has reduced Bibi to a joke within Israel. His time is almost up.

As if the situation for Western leaders were not compromised enough, their few joint actions are decided in Washington and aimed at antagonizing China, Russia and Iran. After 24 months of the Trump presidency, European countries have ended up giving up even whatever little semblance of autonomy and sovereignty they retained. Trump demands absolute loyalty, without giving anything in return.

Blind obedience to a neoliberal globalist ideology, combined with Trump's damage to friends and enemies alike, has led to European leaders and Middle Eastern allies finding themselves in a precarious situation that risks throwing Europe into chaos in the coming years or even months, with a financial debt crisis also looming more than ever.

Macron, May, Merkel, Netanyahu and MBS will continue to offer resistance and try to hang on; but the writing is evidently on the wall.

We close, ironically by throwing back at the Western imperialists, like a boomerang, the mantra that they frequently levelled at the likes of Bashar al Assad: May, Merkel, Macron, MBS and Netanyahu must go!

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