

The evidence against autocracies continues to mount around globe

It's a bad time to be an autocrat, whether of the real or wannabe variety.

The evidence is clear and compelling, and is being played out on stages in Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and, lest we forget, the princely estate at Mar-a-Lago.

In terms of a geo-political circus, it is the ultimate clown act, a five-part tragic comedy starring Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Kim Jong-un, Ali Khamenei, and election-denier Donald Trump.

For good measure, bit parts are being played by two other American blowhards, Stewart Rhodes and Alex Jones, an unlikely pair destined for enshrinement in the World Hall of Shame.

Putin began his deadly theatrics last February when he tried to run roughshod over neighboring Ukraine, launching an ill-fated invasion that he expected would last but a few weeks, capped by a victory parade through the streets of Kyiv where he would be hailed as the "great liberator."

Instead, he has been unmasked as a bungling fool whose military forces have suffered a series of stunning battlefield setbacks despite his repeated attempts to break the will of Ukrainians by committing untold atrocities and terror acts. In recent months, he even has resorted to calling up tens of thousands of ill-prepared Russian conscripts, utilizing them as mere fodder to help delay Ukrainian military advances.

To Putin's east, stands Xi Jinping, whose heavy-handed crackdown against widespread protests of his zero-COVID policies have sparked global condemnation. His comeuppance is

reflected by the sight of thousands of blank pieces of paper that protesters have held up in coordinated acts of defiance, plainly spelling out their determination to bring yet another dictator to his knees.

Not to be outdone, North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, whom the BBC has regularly described as "rounded" in appearance, continues to send his form of holiday greetings, firing a barrage of missiles into the nearby waters of South Korea and Japan, flexing his military muscle at the expense of an imprisoned citizenry suffering from chronic food shortages.

The dictatorial gamesmanship is even more overboard in Iran, where the country's supreme leader has decided that the best way to squelch public dissent over its draconian "morality police" is to order the wholesale slaughter of women and children. All such mayhem in the name of religion.

And then there's a disgraced former president, the man full of empty promises to "Make America Great Again." Just a week after announcing yet another bid for the presidency, he was seen breaking bread at his grandiose Florida home with two antisemites, the former Kanye West and white supremacist Nick Fuentes, granting them a place of honor at his dinner table.

The only surprise at the dinner gathering was that he didn't invite conspiracy theorist Alex Jones and Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes to join the party. Jones undoubtedly was busy, figuring out ways to avoid paying \$1.4 billion in damages to families of the



2012 Sandy Hook shooting massacre that claimed the lives of 26 victims, including 20 first-graders. Rhodes was similarly tied up in legal knots, standing trial for sedition in the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, a crime for which he was found guilty by a federal court jury in Washington on November 29.

Interestingly enough, the separate legal odysseys of Jones and Rhodes serve as prime examples of the enduring strength of our system of justice, which they have attempted to make a mockery of since beginning their march into the world of infamy.

In both cases, one civil and the other criminal, each party was accorded the benefit of the doubt, afforded the opportunity to a trial before a jury of their peers to weigh evidence of guilt or liability. In effect, each court proceeding was part of a tried-and-true attempt to bring a sense of order to cases complicated by the disorder of their own making.

That would not be the case in the world of the autocrats, where the

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concepts of freedom, fairness, and liberty are nowhere to be found in their ruling playbook. American voters took a stand for the fundamental concepts in the recent midterm races, repeatedly rejecting autocratic candidates backed by Trump who deny election results and peddle conspiracy theories.

The global threat posed by autocratic regimes is an affront to human dignity itself, and serves as one of the primary reasons behind the creation of the Primerus Foundation. Launched earlier this year, the Foundation is another beacon of hope for those who believe in the value of our democratic institutions, a vanguard for the cause of freedom and liberty around the globe.

Our work, of course, is just beginning, but we intend to bring a sense of urgency to the mission due to the ongoing unrest caused by a series of bad actors in every region of the world. We welcome your support in mounting a major counter-offensive for the common good, sending a loud and clear message to the forces of evil that imperil our way of life.

Best regards,

Jack Buchanan, President