

Our Vulnerable American Democracy



The widespread professions of concern about American democracy are justified. The executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, the military leadership, as well as the media, the academy, Hollywood, professional sports and

entertainment, Wall Street, Silicon Valley, and the corporate leadership are all disparaged, mistrusted, or despised by the majority of Americans—and unfortunately, they have earned that status.

The ranks of the military remain respected; it is the overstuffed, bungling senior officers, exemplified by the pompous, insubordinate hypocrite General Mark Milley, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, who are not. After the imposition on the armed forces of Critical Race Theory, the shameful Afghanistan debacle, the revelation that the United States Navy would likely be defeated in Chinese waters, the failure to lead development of the hypersonic missile, contempt for American military leadership—and especially the woke Fifth Column inserted by President Obama—that disrespect for the senior military ranks is not misplaced.

The health of American democracy began its decline when Ronald Reagan successfully restored American morale with a booming economy and bloodless victory in the Cold War, and was then succeeded by George H.W. Bush, a reasonably capable president but not a good political leader—he allowed the political charlatan Ross Perot to steal 20 million mainly Republican votes and bring on the Clintons.

Because Bush was the first president since Theodore Roosevelt to have politically ambitious sons and Bill Clinton the first president to have an electorally ambitious wife, these families and Barack Obama ruled for 28 years, and it was not a time of good government. Endless, fruitless Middle Eastern wars; the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression; the ill-considered appeasement of China and Iran as China ransacked the United States with industrial espionage and the dumping of cheap goods; and three consecutive presidents who were swindled by North Korea were the results of this period—but only Donald Trump seemed to recognize this. The national political media was as complacent as the OBushinton political class.

When Trump loomed, and then won the 2016 presidential election, the endangered political class and their offended media partners held that Donald Trump was a mortal threat to American democracy. They attacked him relentlessly: Many journalists who should have known better and frequently did know better, promoted and added credence to the monstrous falsehood that Trump had wrongfully connived with the Russian government to rig the 2016 election. Hillary Clinton, in her book about the election, stated that "Trump's treason" was one of the principal reasons for her defeat and former National Intelligence Director James Clapper publicly stated his belief that Trump was "a Russian intelligence asset." Former CIA Director John Brennan repeatedly accused Trump of treasonable activity. By their hysterical claims that Trump was threatening democracy, they understandably incited Trump and his vast army of followers to believe that the political establishment that Trump had previously thought of as only incompetent, was, in fact, the *real* threat to democracy.

When the coronavirus pandemic descended upon the country, this gave the Democrats and their media allies the ability to assault Trump very effectively in ways that merely accused him (falsely) of ignorance of science, monetization of human life, and incompetent organization of the response to the pandemic, not of trying to usurp constitutional powers or overthrow the system of government. Meanwhile, a number of swing states altered their voting and vote counting rules, supposedly to facilitate voting during the pandemic, with the chief consequence of producing more than 40 million ballots that were not cast by the voters identified with them in a process called "ballot harvesting" that is impossible to verify. In these circumstances there was plenty of room to question the validity of the election result as a flip of only about 53,000 votes spread between Pennsylvania and any two of Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin, would have given the election to Trump.

Trump again disserved himself by a somewhat helter-skelter series of legal challenges over individual complaints. But the media effectively suppressed the fact that all 19 challenges to the legality of the alteration of the voting and vote counting rules (because they violated the constitutional disposition of that authority to the state legislatures and failed in the duty to assure fair elections) were rejected on process grounds. Led by the Supreme Court, the entire judiciary abdicated its role as a coequal branch, judged none of these cases on its merits, and gave every appearance of being intimidated by the already audible demands of the Democrats that the Supreme Court be expanded to shed its conservative majority.

Both sides felt confirmed in their views by the invasion of the Capitol on January 6. To Trump's enemies, he had attempted an "insurrection." To Trump and his followers, his enemies had failed to listen to warnings that hooligans would attach themselves to the Trump meeting on the Ellipse on January 6, and attack the Capitol. Legislators assumed a posture indicative of their courage and hid under their desks wearing ridiculous gas masks when the warning was sounded, and have responded with this new malicious fiction of "insurrection." Of course, the "insurrection" is utter nonsense, and even after detaining hundreds of the trespassers and sweating them in the usual abuse of the plea bargain system, extorting false inculpatory testimony with dire threats and interrogation but a promise of immunity from perjury charges if the "evidence" extorted is useful, no hint of insurrection has emerged. The last thing Trump wanted was any illegalities at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, and the only person who died violently in the incident was an unarmed Trump supporter, mysteriously shot dead by Capitol Police.

At a time of such acute national division, there's a case to be made for courts avoiding the potentially huge controversy of judging the validity of a presidential election. But in

this instance the tripartite Madisonian system of checks and balances temporarily collapsed and judges and justices, who are installed and paid to judge and not to equivocate or hide from controversy, failed to do their duty. The anger of Trump and his 75 million followers was, in the circumstances, understandable. Approximately half the country thought the election was stolen, and the other half believes that it was fairly decided and that the losers attempted to overturn the result by assaulting the Capitol. The House of Representatives' investigation, in which the Republican side is composed of nothing but anti-Trump zealots probably on their way out of politics as the Republicans nominated by the House minority leader were cavalierly rejected by the speaker—is clearly another rabidly partisan anti-Trump assassination squad.

The result of all this accumulated misgovernment and abuse of office is that no prominent public institution is sustained by an adequate level of public confidence. The political media are morally bankrupt, and the universities and schools are—to a substantial extent—promoting hatred of America. All of this is happening amidst rising public irritation. History teaches that when the public does not respect or appreciate any of the institutions of its government including the media, the system is vulnerable.

If the Democrats do not purge the radical BLM and the atrophied teachers' unions, and other extremist support, no normal de-escalation will be possible, and there will be no alternative except a bone-crushing Republican defeat of the current version of the Democrats. The current administration has evidently failed and this should tip the balance back towards the pro-Trump advocates of sweeping the Washington political apparatus clean, whether they are led by Trump himself or someone supported by him.

Political conditions are more dangerous than at any time since the bottom of the Great Depression 90 years ago, and there is

no FDR at hand. It should still be repairable but the relentless advance of China with the connivance and complicity of Russia, Iran, and North Korea will almost certainly cause a further deterioration in America's strategic security while the country and the world await a more successful quadrennial election than last year's.

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