**The Disunited State of Amerca (DUSA)**

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How did the United States of America become the Dis-United State of Amerca, the “I” purposely deleted? One answer is both part cause and partial solution. Along the way, ideas, imagination and innovation (I3) have disappeared from view, replaced by ideology, fake and alternative news, slogans and a disregard for truth and fact metastasizing into the DUSA. Whether the proper use of I3 can return the DUSA to the USA should concentrate our thinking.

Alone, ideas, imagination and innovation are neutral. Some may be good. Others are not. But I3 without substance is fantasy or insanity.

Lord Ismay, one of Winston Churchill’s most trusted advisors during WWII, had this complaint. Of 100 of the PM’s ideas, Ismay believes three or four might be worthwhile. The rest, however, ranged from dangerous to useless. Yet, given the seemingly irreparable divisions in the US on virtually every political, cultural, societal and economic issue, what is Plan B? More chaos?

Is DUSA correctable short of a miracle or another revolution? Or, is DUSA out of control? Told that Britain was ruined after “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne lost the Battle of Saratoga to the Colonists in 1777, the great Scots economist Adam Smith replied to his baleful student: “There is a lot of ruin in a nation my boy!” Perhaps that applies today.

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How then might these three I3 be implemented? One approach is to ask the most basic questions to provoke answers bordering on the absurd to generate action. Then, having galvanized a reaction, the equally or even more difficult task of implementation must occur. How many revolutionary ideas foundered on a lack of follow-up?

First, why was the US government unable to deal with a Chinese “spy” balloon flying across America with competence, confidence and a sense of urgency?

Second, why is the US government incapable of balancing a budget while allowing the national debt to continue to soar to over $30 trillion or 150% of GDP?

Third, why if the 2024 presidential elections were held today, would the two most likely candidates be 82 and 76 years of age respectively and who a strong majority of Americans believe are too old for the demands of that office? Is that a sign of a healthy political society or a geriatric one? And recall what happened to the USSR when it was ruled by geriatrics.

How might I3 work? Consider three possible cases. In an age of Netflix, Amazon Prime and continuously streamed content, why not call on Hollywood, the best science fiction writers and the nation’s war colleges to develop possible crisis scenarios from an asteroid on a collision course with earth to a potentially existential zoonotic pandemic along with solutions and options? Then catalogue what could be thousands of possible catastrophes into a library provided to the White House for use in an emergency.

The White House can also be better organized for crisis management. Assuming that was done, the senior watch officer would refer to the catalogue and pick the appropriate scenario for an unidentified balloon and read on.

Regarding debt, the US is spending $5 trillion on fixing and modernizing its infrastructure. But instead of merely dispersing money, why not create a national infrastructure bank augmented with private funds to invest and to be repaid with interest? During the 2008 financial crash, the $800 billion Troubled Asset Relief Plan (TARP) bailed out the banks and was not only fully repaid. It made money.

Last, if the electoral process can be remedied, universal voting may be it, meaning every eligible citizen must go to the polls. Whether each vote is not mandatory. However unless or until a large majority of Americans exercise the right to vote, a minority will select a president. And that is how an 82-year-old faces an opponent six years younger.

Too often, it is asserted that the US is at an inflexion point or a hinge of history. But that observation may fit. Exacerbating the irreconcilable partisanship here never before has the US faced two competitors or adversaries simultaneously that were a near economic peer with nuclear weapons and an energy-rich, nuclear power that just invaded a neighbour shattering nearly eighty years of relative stability and peace in Europe.

Ideas, imagination and innovation will not address all or even most of the clear and present dangers that lie ahead. However, please let me know what might prove to be a better approach. Or are America and Americans prepared to accept a permanent DUSA?

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