**When the Government Becomes Destructive**

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As the Christmas season rapidly approaches, it is Ebenezer Scrooge and not Santa Claus, who may dominate the holiday! Consider what a mess we collectively are in-at home and abroad.

President Joe Biden declares the greatest ideological struggle today is between autocracies and democracies with the former in the ascent over the latter. Is he correct for the wrong reason? After all, more than a few Americans believe that Donald Trump represents the greatest threat to democracy since Adolph Hitler.

The war in Ukraine remains deadlocked. As Israel continues its offensive to destroy Hamas, no matter the precautions it takes to limit collateral damage, Gaza is being destroyed. How does this end?

To the degree polls matter, about 2/3 of Americans believe that the American Dream no longer is obtainable. 3/4 of us see the country on the wrong track and do not want 2024 to be a rerun of Biden v. Trump. Popular support for Congress is barely in double figures. The expulsion of George Santos led wags to hope one down, 433 more to go.

By any metric, the US government has become dysfunctional and, to some, destructive. That leads to a crucial question. When government becomes destructive, is it the right of the people to alter or abolish and establish a new one?

Some may think that this admonition comes from Marx or Lenin. Indeed, that sentence predates both by a century. It may surprise some. But the author was Thomas Jefferson. The document was the Declaration of Independence which that phrase became the basis for the revolution to end the rule of George III.

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Is government so destructive today that a future Thomas Jefferson might make that case for another revolution? That occurred in 1861 with the Civil War. The Confederate States could not tolerate the Federal government’s control over state’s rights. Slavery of course was the specific case.

What might be today’s cause celebre for abolishing, altering and establishing a new government? Or is that a flight of fancy? Amending the Constitution has no real chance of occurring given the super majorities that are needed and the political polarization that divides that nation precluding a compromise.

Those who fear a Trump presidency believe, if elected, he will put in place a campaign of retribution and revenge. Trump has said he would try his former Attorney General and has accused his former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of treason. Trump has declared he would use his government to attack his enemies and deconstruct the “deep state.”

Given Trump had four years to learn how to manipulate the US government, in a second term, he would be far better prepared to execute his policies than four years ago. And Trump would know who to appoint to high office to support him. To Trump’s enemies and critics, this is frightening in the extreme.

Whether or not a majority of Americans share this apocalyptic view or express concerns that Trump may actually carry out the most outrageous of his statements is unclear. However, Trump is another symptom of a political process that could spin out of control. It seems that the more indictments brought against him, the more popular he becomes.

Many Americans will not vote for Biden believing his age and physical capacity limit his ability to serve; a vice president who is perceived as incapable of taking the top spot; and a son whose reckless behaviour has endangered his father’s presidency by, thus far, are unproven criminal activities

So what is America’s condition today? It is far from united. Obviously, this is not 1776. Nor has the nation held another Boston Tea Party. Whether the support of Generation Z for the Palestinian cause and not Israel reflects a mini-revolution, it is baffling how the murderous strategy of Hamas has disappeared without seeming trace from the minds of America’s young.

For a quarter of a millennia, America has emerged from each crisis and destructive period stronger-so far. Never in the past has the US and its allies faced as adversaries both an economic and nuclear superpower and a nuclear one. Never before has a former president, indicted on 91 counts, run for office explicitly calling for a regime of retribution and revenge.

All this sounds like a destructive government. But who or where are the people who will alter or abolish it and establish a new, more effective one? It ain’t Don and many doubt Joe. George, Tom, John, Ben and Alex where are you?

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