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ENOUGH!

Rebellion
Apprehensive
Bureaucracy
A time for decision

Enough! Every time I turn on the news, the talking heads repeat the mantra "Americans are angry at the establishment and therefore voting for Donald Trump and/or Bernie Sanders." The second phase repeated ad infinitum is how "fearful we are."

When the voters attempt to alter an entrenched course, in this case, the direction America is heading, but repeatedly fail, the result is a quiet rebellion. If people riot in the streets and burn buildings, that is anger.

Rebellion

The genesis for our unhappy state occurred at the nexus of two disruptive, fractured continuums. It started in mid-1950 with the civil rights movement, and ended in 1975 with the

conclusion of the Vietnam War. Both generated true anger, scarring our political process. The civil rights issue continues to fester, but Vietnam cut a deep, still unabridged, political chasm.

On August 2, 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked the U.S. destroyer Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin, and repeated (reportedly) the attack two days later. It was the beginning of a long, undeclared war. Our government lied to the American people regarding the status of the conflict. Vietnam was the first war where people received a continuous feed of images showing the horrors, such as My Lai. Kill count replaced meaningful metrics of progress. College campuses erupted in protest, and on May 4, 1970, 28 National guardsmen fired into a crowd of protesters at Kent State University in Ohio, killing four and wounding nine. Vietnam marked the loss of American innocence and civility. Worse, 58,220 of our military died, and for those returning home, injured or whole, fellow Americans unfairly vilified them all as baby-killers.

Starting in 1969, the Social Security Trust Fund was included in the unified budget, allowing the Federal government to deplete the SS trust fund to pay for the undeclared and unbudgeted war by using "IOUs." The Vietnam conflict and the raid on SS occurred on the democrats watch, under Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. President Richard Nixon, a republican, escalated the conflict until events like Kent State University turned most of the country against the war, then he unceremoniously withdrew all American military, as North Vietnamese troops occupied Saigon.

On the upper shelf in my study is a dusty book titled "The Watergate Papers." It chronicles the 1972 escapades of a Republican team breaking into the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Voters knew about the break-in before the election, but Republicans and independents ignored the problem, electing President Nixon.

Reviewing the chain of presidents is enlightening.

Lyndon B Johnson, after depleting Social Security and micro managing the Vietnam War, chose not to run for re-election. The Watergate cover-up eventually led to Nixon's resignation. The people refused to re-elect George H W Bush because he committed to a no-tax policy, and broke his promise. President Bill Clinton, while not convicted, went through an embarrassing impeachment process and the government was grid locked. George W Bush presided over a people divided and angry about wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2008, the voters elected Barack Obama, who promised fundamental change in the American system. For the most part, he has achieved that commitment. Americans, now understanding the mismatch between his objectives and theirs, are not all pleased.

Like Nixon, Obama pulled out of the wars, but the consequences were very different. Leaving Vietnam hurt our pride, while the withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan created a void filled by radical Islamist groups, a threat to the United States. President Bush invaded Iraq, overthrowing Saddam Hussein without an exit strategy. Although it has received little press attention, President Obama and Hillary Clinton precipitated the overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya, leaving that country in chaos. It was the perfect setup for the radicals to burn the American consulate, resulting in four deaths, including J Christopher Stevens, the American ambassador.

The President apparently believes the United States is a world economic and political bully, and must learn to play nicely with others by conceding hard-earned fortune, power, and territory. Meanwhile, he opened the door for ruthless bullies like Iran, ISIS, Russia, and North Korea, who

want to take us out in a street fight. Like all bullies, they will gang up to get the job done, and then again, fight among themselves.

Citizens opposed the President's policies and executive orders, but when they voted the Republicans into majority status in both houses, nothing changed - an absolute continuum.

The parallel to the Nixon Watergate is still in process as the FBI investigates Hillary Clinton. Today, most Democrats ignore the massive amounts of public data about her mishandling of secret information. Additionally, she shut off her telephone and went to bed while her ambassador and three others died in Benghazi. Whom do you want in control when the call comes at 3:00AM? Think of it in real terms. If a member of your family was in danger, would you trust Hillary Clinton to be responsible for their safety?

Apprehensive

Fear is both a noun and a verb, but in either form, it implies dangers and threats to personal or family health or resources. It can be extreme, where we run, hide, or fight back. It may also be apprehension, where we are aware of the dangers, and willing to take steps to avoid worst-case scenarios. Americans are apprehensive of their future and the future of their children.

The economy is virtually stagnant. The national debt is 18.9 trillion dollars. The stock market has been in steady decline since the first of the year. The Social Security liability has reached 14.7 trillion dollars while the retired population grows, and the number of worker's declines. People paying into SS today have little confidence the program will be there for them. Meanwhile, governmental employees are guaranteed lucrative retirement benefits. For 2016, Federal employees, theoretically using the same COLA formula as the one for Social Security, will get a raise, while SS recipients will not. How did this happen? Congress turned their heads and pretended not to see the situation, and did nothing. Congress voted for the Affordable Health Care Act, and the President exempted them from compliance. When it was time to correct the situation, by Congress voting to apply the law equally to federal employees, Rand Paul led a coalition to kill the effort and head off the embarrassment of a vote. The act of making Congress and its employees above the law was clearly a double standard.

Americans are apprehensive about the hypocrisy of government, its lack of response to the complex problems, the effect of its actions on liberty, the economy, and safety. The intended purpose of the Federal government is keeping the people safe. Somewhere along the way, that purpose was twisted to perpetuating a growing bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy

The pendulum swings back and forth from Democrat to Republican, but nothing changes. Given the turnover in government, a person would think that somewhere we would find civility and a government doing the right thing for the right reasons.

However, it seems that nothing really gets better. There is a reasonable but troubling explanation. The dirty word is bureaucracy. Government systems, clogged with special interests, cronyism, and CYA, share power among the members, but there is little room for executing the will of the people. That would mean disrupting the lives of those comfortably occupying the bureaucracy.

Over time, every human system becomes corrupted and unable to perform the intended purpose, existing for self-perpetuation until it eventually collapses or the people revolt and replace it.

An example is the two-tiered legal system; one of the first signs of a government too corrupted to self-correct. The rule of law punishes people who sell cigarettes on the street, yet allows politicians who expose national secrets to run for office. The government releases criminals into the populace, and through the Fast and Furious program, gave thirty-four powerful .50 caliber rifles to the Mexican drug cartel. The government releases terrorists from Guantanamo, and spends millions to target them with drones. The government disrespects law enforcement, and then attempts to repeal the second amendment by executive action, making gun ownership and self-protection difficult to impossible.

America has all the assets needed to build an opportunity society for every citizen, but government does not even have a plan to fix the problem. The disadvantaged in our society, including much of the black community, are promised help by every administration, but there are fewer opportunities and more poverty than before. Meanwhile, government opens the doors for illegal immigrants who compete for the same resources. In our net sum society, most groups lose, except those in government or other entrenched bureaucracies.

Americans are not insane, angry, or fearful. They are frustrated, apprehensive, and looking for a solution to nagging economic and international problems. They are tired of the hypocrisy and the politicians who perpetuate a corrupted system. That often-used quote credited to Einstein is appropriate. "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

A time for decision

I have a book in process titled "Decision Making in a Disruptive Reordering." Decisions are based on a mix of emotion and knowledge, and a fact-driven process increases the ability to choose between multiple options. All options have variables, and the more complex the subject, the greater the number of variables. That translates into working harder to get the appropriate facts needed to make a good decision.

The Presidential election is in November. Emotions decided the last two elections, and this time voters need to get the facts.

There are different sets of questions that every voter needs to ask and answer. The first are personal attributes regarding the candidates.

- Will they listen to the will of the people or act through executive authority?
- Are they fit to be the commander in chief?
- Have they demonstrated the qualities of leadership?
- Will they uphold the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States of America?
- Will they enforce the laws of the land?
- Are they passionate about America and our future?
- Are they honest and can the electorate trust them to take positive actions to enable prosperity?
- Do they have a record of real accomplishments?
- Will they put words into action?

- Can they deal with the complicated issues of our advanced, technological society?
- Are they strong enough to stand up for America in the global economy?

The second set of questions relates to policy.

- Do they have a vision for a prosperous American future for all citizens?
- How will they grow the economy while protecting the environment?
- What is their posture on national defense?
- What will they do about immigration?

The Constitution is clear, and the following are factors of equality, not electability. None affects the intellect or leadership capability of the individuals. Disqualify any candidate using them. Our president and other political leaders are responsible to all the people. Period.

- Race
- Sex
- Religion

Sadly, if I base the future on the past, Americans will not overcome bias, nor get the facts, and may well make a decision they later regret. Four years from now, we will again say "enough," look in the mirror to find the reason, and see Einstein's smiling image, "don't you ever learn?"

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***Freedom
And
Opportunity***

**Stop
Redistributing
and Downsizing**

America

***Focused Fire Newsletter
Essays***

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