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“Resolving the Great Separation: If Unity is What You Seek”

In the same way that the so-called American “founding fathers” abhorred and sought freedom from King George III, Americans today should seek freedom from the tyranny of the executive and legislative branches of government that now rule the country to their own advantage and largely to the disadvantage of the majority of the citizenry. How can rulers rule to the pleasure of the ruled when the former have little-to-no connection with the latter? This is a recipe for disunity.

The gulf between those in the executive and legislative branches of government and ordinary citizens is trending toward the wide and deep chasm that separates Fortune 500 chief executive officers (CEOs) and their front-line workers. This analogy highlights the role that ordinary citizens play in the current American governance structure. Like workers, citizens produce tax revenue. Like CEOs, government leaders decide how that revenue is expended—all the time seeing to their own benefit.

The median (half above and half below) net worth of American households is about \$122 thousand according to the most recent Federal Reserve Board’s *Survey of Consumer Finances*.¹ However, the median net worth of US Congressional members is over \$1.0 million.² The difference exceeds a factor of eight. Keep in mind, that the latter figure represents the net worth of just the congress person, not necessarily his/her entire household. It is this type of wealth difference (rulers versus ruled) that the “founding fathers” sought to eliminate when they broke away from King George.

Americans on the ground, who toil every day to eek out a living, should recognize that there is a great separation between themselves and those that govern. If we generalize broadly and consider the US Government spending for 2020 (\$6.9 trillion), remember that our 535 legislators (US House and Senate) have the power of the purse, then we could conclude that each legislator is responsible for spending nearly \$13.0 billion.³ With that kind of spending power at his/her discretion, it is easy to see how these congressional members lose touch with the ordinary citizen’s reality and can become corrupt. We all know about the proverbial backscratching and logrolling that occurs in the

¹ See Bhutta et al (2020), *Changes in U.S. Family Finances for 2016 to 2019: Evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances*; <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/scf20.pdf>. Retrieved on February 1, 2021.

² See Karl Evers-Hillstrom (2020), *Majority of Lawmakers in 116th Congress are Millionaires*; <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/04/majority-of-lawmakers-millionaires/>. Retrieved February 1, 2021.

³ The total US Government spending figure of \$6.9 trillion is a preliminary estimate from the US Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Income and Product Table 3.1, Line 43; <https://www.bea.gov>. Retrieved February 1, 2021.

US Congress between business and representatives/senators, which revolves, solidifies, and sustains the *status quo*. Business and politicians grow richer, while ordinary citizens remain poor—even destitute.

Of course, the legislators will argue that they are well-trained and skilled to perform their duties, which are beyond the reach of the common man. A rebuttal is that the most complex of systems can be reduced to zeros and ones and Xs and Os. Besides, did not the “founding fathers” intend an open government where all could understand the issues and have views about them? If what goes on in congress is too complicated for the common man, who is mandated to attend 12 years of school, then why does the nation’s education system produce citizens who are unable to understand the workings of their own congress? It is a “Catch 22.” Either the “complexity of congressional proceedings” argument is a smoke screen, or the educational system is actually designed to prevent the common person from rising to the point of understanding the governing process. If either situation exists and persists, then it is time for a system revamp.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that the “complexity of congressional proceedings” argument is a smoke screen. In such a case, then what should the common person do to restore fairness to the governing process?

Before suggesting a solution, there is an additional barrier that must be analyzed and dismissed summarily. Can we all agree that American technology is supreme or nearly so in the world today? The nation spends nearly a trillion dollars on defense each year to preserve and protect the country and to keep the entire globe safe. The military’s defense and information technology systems are superb and are usually only breached when someone on the inside turns rogue. Also, the nation conquered space, went to Earth’s Moon 50 years ago, and has sent missions/probes to Mars and to the far reaches of our solar system and beyond. Clear and secure information technology systems have been developed that make all of this possible. Yet, the government continues to argue that, while it has designed and operates such systems that are safe and secure 24-7 and year around, it is incapable of designing and operating an information technology system that can facilitate periodic, secure, and accurate elections in cyberspace. This argument appears to be fallacious. Moreover, if no such system exists, then why cannot the nation invest in developing such a system?

Why are cyberspace elections important? In April 2011, we published a commentary entitled, [“Google May Hold a Key,”](#) in which we sketched out a foundation for cyber governance. The system would work as follows. At all levels of government, citizens would raise concerns for action by submitting “requests” to appropriate drop boxes in cyberspace. Once a “request” is submitted a sufficient number of times that it reaches a pre-defined threshold, then it is evaluated by an appropriate government administrative bureau. The administrative bureau then identifies “solutions” and related costs that address the “request.” A comment period would ensue during which interested parties could propose expansions or reductions in identified “solutions.” Thereafter, the “request” and associated “solutions” would be rendered for a plebiscite in cyberspace. Each citizen at the relevant level of government would have an opportunity to vote on the “request” and “solutions.” The “solution” that receives a simple- or supra- majority—as the case might warrant—would then be adopted by government as the course of action for the “request.” No legislators would be involved in this process. No middlemen. Every citizen would have an opportunity to vote on the “request.” Would this not represent a form of ultra-participatory

democracy? Would it not be well aligned with the “founding fathers” ultimate intent for governance?

Note that cyber governance could permit the election of presidents, who would serve mainly in a ceremonial role.

Therefore, our suggestion is that Americans seize the opportunity to use the power of the US Constitution and to do as the “founding fathers” did by removing from governance those for whom a great gulf separates them from the people.

Do you not have a right to a real say in how the nation is governed? Why should your vote and voice count less than the voice and vote of a super wealthy member of congress?

Fortunately, the U.S. Constitution provides a mechanism for change. Times have changed. Now the technology is available or can be made available that will allow each American to have an **equal** voice in the governance of the nation. It is time to remove the wedge between governors and the governed by, once and for all, resolving the great separation about which we speak.

Such a system of cyber governance where each vote counts equally creates an equality like no other. In effect, there will no longer be a need for Democrats, Republicans, or Independents; just the vote of each citizen. It is this type of equality that can generate unity in the nation.

Therefore, if unity is what the nation seeks, then it can be realized by resolving the great separation using cyber governance.

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02/01/2021

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