

## THE DISMAL STATE OF AMERICA'S POLITICAL PARTIES AND AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY

### Abstract

We present the translation of the author's report, which he delivered at the online conference "The future of parties in the political systems of the modern world". The online conference was held on December 15, 2020 at the Faculty of Political Science Moscow State University of M.V. Lomonosov.

**Keywords:** US party system, democracy, parties, Democratic Party, Republican Party.

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American politics are currently in shambles. It's a far cry from the days in 1630 when John Winthrop<sup>1</sup> could declare that America shall be "as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."<sup>2</sup> Or 1919, after Versailles, when

Woodrow Wilson<sup>3</sup> could proclaim "at last the world knows America as the savior of the world!"<sup>4</sup> Or 1999, when Secretary of State Madeline Albright<sup>5</sup> could say, "If we have to use force it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation." Joe Biden<sup>6</sup>, Anthony Blinken<sup>7</sup>, and Jake Sullivan<sup>8</sup> may still cling to American excep-

<sup>1</sup> Winthrop John (1588–1649) is a congregationalist theologian, religious and political figure. He came from an English family of wealthy landowners. He was educated in Cambridge and practiced law. He acted as a member of parliamentary opposition. Winthrop was a zealous Puritan, who considered it his duty before God to oppose Catholic expansion in North America. He organized a large Protestant resettlement expedition to New England. The Massachusetts Colony was founded here, Winthrop became the governor (see: Winthrop. — URL: [http://summa.rhga.ru/edin/pers/detail.php?rraz=&ELEMENT\\_ID=5356](http://summa.rhga.ru/edin/pers/detail.php?rraz=&ELEMENT_ID=5356)).

<sup>2</sup> Crossing the Atlantic in 1630, Winthrop delivered a sermon "A Model of Christian Charity", which became a kind of program for building a God-chosen society on American soil. The key concept of the sermon is "A City on a Hill" (Is. 2:2–3, Mt. 5:14 — English versions of the Bible use the word translated as "hill", in the Russian Synodal translation — "mountain"). This will be an perfect embodiment of the chosen by the will of God. It will become a stronghold of saving faith, where all the "blessed in spirit" will find refuge (see: Winthrop. — URL: [http://summa.rhga.ru/edin/pers/detail.php?rraz=&ELEMENT\\_ID=5356](http://summa.rhga.ru/edin/pers/detail.php?rraz=&ELEMENT_ID=5356)).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Woodrow Wilson is the 28th President of the United States (1913–1921).

<sup>4</sup> After the Paris Conference, Wilson exclaimed enthusiastically: "At last the world has recognized America as its savior!" When Wilson returned to the United States, opponents of the Treaty of Versailles did not welcome him as a savior: he was fiercely criticized from both the left and the right (see: [1]).

<sup>5</sup> Madeleine Albright was US Secretary of State (1997–2001), US Permanent Representative to the UN (1993–1997).

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. is the 46th President of the United States since January 20, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony John Blinken is an American statesman, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States in 2015–2017. During Barack Obama's first presidential term since 2009 to 2013 Blinken was Biden's national security adviser. During the 2020 election campaign, Blinken became Biden's foreign policy adviser and unofficial speaker.

<sup>8</sup> Jacob Jeremiah Sullivan — National Security Adviser to the Vice President of the United States in 2013–2014, National Security Adviser to the President of the United States since 2021.

tionalism—the idea that the United States is god’s gift to humanity—and announce that the U.S. is ready to resume global leadership, but no one takes that seriously given the United States’ absolutely pathetic response to the pandemic, which has only highlighted America’s glaring economic and racial disparities, and the blatant attempt by one of its two major political parties to defy the will of the American people and openly and illegally steal an election.

The two major political parties in the U.S. both trace back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Neither would be recognizable to citizens 80 years ago. Today’s Republican Party, which was once proudly the party of Abraham Lincoln<sup>1</sup>, has been transformed into a fascistic death cult. This began in the 1950s when President Eisenhower<sup>2</sup> oversaw the growth of the military-industrial complex that he later warned about. Under Republican Eisenhower the U.S. went from having a little more than 1,000 nuclear weapons when he entered office to having more than 22,000 when he left office and 30,000 when his budgeting cycle was finished. The process continued under Republican Richard Nixon<sup>3</sup>, who ran on the Southern strategy<sup>4</sup> in 1968, deliberately appealing to white racists in the South who were opposed to civil rights for black Americans, while he bombed Vietnam back into the Stone Age. It gained substantial momentum under Republican Ronald Reagan<sup>5</sup>, who reignited the Cold

War and the arms race, unleashed death squads in Central America, normalized lying for partisan advantage, cut taxes for the rich and social programs for the poor, weakened organized labor, and ushered in a reign of 40 years of neoliberal economic policies based on the belief that government was not the solution to people’s problems; it was the cause of those problems. The decline in real wages that had begun in 1972 accelerated and has never really recovered. Now the richest three Americans have more wealth than the bottom half of the population. The richest 1 percent have more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. Republican George W. Bush<sup>6</sup>, the self-proclaimed compassionate conservative, glorified the warfare/surveillance state and Republican Donald Trump<sup>7</sup> has attempted to drive the final stake into the heart of American democracy.

The great American writer and social critic Gore Vidal<sup>8</sup> was asked by a British interviewer why President Obama<sup>9</sup> responded so feebly when the Republicans launched such vicious attacks against him. Vidal explained, “Obama believes the Republican Party is a political party when in fact it’s a mindset, like Hitler Youth, based on hatred—religious hatred, racial hatred. When you foreigners hear the word conservative you think of kindly old men hunting foxes. They’re not, they’re fascists.” Vidal was sadly right. The final descent into fascism began with the rise of Donald Trump whose campaign was shrouded in a level of mendacity never before witnessed in the U.S. It began with birtherism—his totally false attack on Barack Obama for not having been born in

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham Lincoln is the 16th President of the United States (1861–1865) and the first from the Republican Party.

<sup>2</sup> Dwight David Eisenhower is 34th President of the United States (1953–1961).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Milhouse Nixon is 37th President of the United States (1969–1974). He resigned early in 1974, stepping down his powers as a result of the Watergate scandal. This was the first time in the history of the resignation of the President of the United States.

<sup>4</sup> The Southern Strategy is an electoral strategy of the Republican Party aimed at strengthening political support among whites voters in the South of the USA.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Wilson Reagan is the 40th President of the United States (1981–1989).

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<sup>6</sup> George W. Bush was 43rd President of the United States in 2001–2009, Governor of Texas from 1995 to 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Donald John Trump is the 45th President of the United States from 2017 to 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Eugene Luther Gore Vidal is an American writer, essayist, film and theater playwright, a recognized classic of American literature of the second half of the 20 century.

<sup>9</sup> Barack Hussein Obama II was the 44th President of the United States from 2009 to 2017.

the United States. Trump's unabashed and unapologetic lying continued throughout his presidency. According to the Washington Post, he reached the 20,000 lie plateau earlier this year on July 9. He began the day he was elected, lying about his margin of victory (He lost the popular vote by 3 million), his crowd size, the millions of people who supposedly voted illegally, and on and on. He branded news that he didn't like "fake news" and vilified and threatened the mainstream media. Most Republicans, having found the leader they always wanted—the superman they could worship and blindly follow, willingly, even gleefully and shamelessly—jumped on the Trump bandwagon. Trump's press briefings, under Sean Spicer<sup>1</sup>, Sarah Huckabee<sup>2</sup>, and Kayleigh McEnany<sup>3</sup>, would have astonished even Goebbels. Trump dismissed climate change as a "Chinese hoax," repeating Exxon Mobil and Koch Brothers<sup>4</sup> propaganda, and withdrew from the Paris Climate Accords. Like lemmings following one another over the cliff, the entire Republican Party has not only denied the existential threat of human-caused climate change, it has entirely rejected science. Republicans have become a party of flat earthers, who talk about nonsense like "alternate facts," while they fleece the American people with a trillion-dollar tax cut for the obscenely rich. They cut social programs—education, welfare, food stamps, health care—and only expand the military and the police. They extol white supremacy as their base seethes with

<sup>1</sup> Sean Michael Spicer was from January 20, 2017 to July 21, 2017, White House Press Secretary in the administration of US President Donald Trump.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Elizabeth Huckabee Sanders was the White House press Secretary from July 21, 2017 to July 1, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Kaylee McEnany was the White House press secretary from April 7, 2020 to January 20, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Charles and David Koch (Charles Koch and David Koch) are co-owners of the world's largest private company Koch Industries. The Koch brothers are among the main donors to the conservative wing of the Republican Party. The Koch brothers' field of activity is oil refining, production and maintenance of equipment for the oil refining industry.

anger and resentment toward minority groups and immigrants. Trump has egged on militias and neo-Nazi groups, who he said contain "good people," urging some of the more vicious to "Stand back and stand by" and applauding the behavior of violent marauding street thugs roaming the nation's cities as happened in Germany in the lead-up to Naziism.

But what cements the Republicans as a fascistic death cult is their most recent behavior, beginning with their response to the pandemic. They have done nothing to stop the spread of the deadly virus. First, they denied it. Then they downplayed its seriousness. Then they offered spurious and absurd treatments. They mocked people for wearing masks in public and distancing and failed to distribute necessary preventive equipment or conduct testing and tracing. The resulting 300,000 plus deaths, which some experts say is a fraction of the real number, is more than five times as many Americans as died during the U.S. invasion of Vietnam, more than one hundred times as many as died on 9/11, and almost the exact number who died in combat in WWII. And Trump and the Republicans do nothing to curb or control the pandemic or to relieve the suffering. Trump doesn't even mention it anymore except to take undeserved credit for the vaccine as more than 3,000 Americans die each day. If that is not a death cult, I don't know what is, except perhaps for going along with Trump's abrogation of nuclear treaties, cavalier talk about using nuclear weapons, welcoming a nuclear arms race, and refusing until it was too late to extend the New START Treaty. When the experts at the Bulletin of the Atomic<sup>5</sup> Scientists moved the hands

<sup>5</sup> Bulletin of Atomic Scientists is a magazine published in the United States that covers international security issues and threats caused by nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. It has been published since 1945 in Chicago, founded by former participants of the Manhattan Project after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki under the title "Bulletin of Chicago Atomic Scientists".

of the Doomsday Clock<sup>1</sup> to 100 seconds before midnight, the closest it's been since the clock was inaugurated in 1947, they weren't kidding.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the Republican Party's behavior over the past six weeks is something we've never witnessed before in U.S. history. Trump and the Republicans have attempted to stage a coup in order to seize power. They denied the veracity of the presidential elections, repeatedly alleging widespread fraud without presenting one scintilla of credible evidence. After their allegations of voter fraud were rejected in 59 legal suits by almost 90 judges, many of whom were appointed by Trump, they tried to get state electoral officials, legislators, and governors to overturn the election. When that failed, they tried to get the Supreme Court to intervene. This has not just been Trump, Giuliani, the two Trump idiot sons, and other family members; it has been practically the entire Republican Party. Before the Electoral College yesterday made Biden's victory official, only 27 elected Republican legislators were willing to acknowledge that Biden was the president-elect. 126 Republican House members and 17 Republican state attorneys general signed on to a palpably absurd lawsuit to overturn the results and disenfranchise 20 million voters, which the Republican-dominated members of the Supreme Court, including the Trump appointees, summarily dismissed. And Trump voters are as delusional as Trump himself. 77 percent of them still believe there was massive vote fraud and the election was stolen. Half believe the totally insane QAnon allegation that the Democrats are a pedophilic, child-eating, satanic cult. So when I say that the Republican Party, whose members are falling ill with Covid and still refuse to take basic

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<sup>1</sup> Experts of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists magazine have been conducting the Doomsday Clock project since 1947, allegorically representing the level of nuclear threat in the world. The proximity of the minute hand to midnight reflects the likelihood of a nuclear war.

precautions, is a fascistic death cult that rejects science, replaces truth with lies, cuts social programs, deliberately widens the gap between rich and poor, tries to win elections by suppressing voters and then throwing out votes, worships military symbolism and pageantry, denies science and misleads the public along with its Fox News and talk radio enablers, supports a wide array of repressive measures, openly endorses white supremacy and racism in all its ugly manifestations, embraces America First nationalism and xenophobia, fans hatred toward immigrants, and tries to stage a political coup, I am not being hyperbolic. I mean it quite literally.

The Democrats may not be a bunch of pedophilic Satanists, but they have certainly lost their way. They have been on a downward course ever since the party bosses engineered an intraparty coup in 1944 and replaced the enormously popular Vice President Henry Wallace<sup>2</sup> (who had 65 percent voter support according to Gallup) with Missouri Senator Harry Truman<sup>3</sup> (who had 2 percent). Truman went on to use atomic bombs, which were in no way necessary or justifiable, as attested to by seven of America's eight five-star officers in 1945, and provoked the humanity-threatening Cold War, leading the Democratic Party away from the pro-labor, progressive, redistributionist, and internationally collaborative policies of Franklin Roosevelt<sup>4</sup> down a path of mili-

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Egard Wallace was Minister of Agriculture in 1933–1940, Vice President of the United States in the Government of F. Roosevelt in 1941–1945, Minister of Trade in 1945–1946. It is argued that the ideal of H. Wallace was a "convergent community combining the best sides of "American capitalism," "European socialism," and "Russian communism" (*Минасян Г.Е. Левые силы США против «холодной войны» (1945–1948) // Американское общество на пороге XXI века: итоги, проблемы, перспективы: Материалы международной научной конференции. М.: Изд-во МГУ, 1996. — С. 72–75.*)

<sup>3</sup> Harry S. Truman was the 33rd President of the United States in 1945–1953 from the Democratic Party.

<sup>4</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt is the 32nd President of the United States, led the United States during the Great Depression and World War II.

tarism and interventionism that has barely differentiated it from the Republicans over the course of the past 75 years. With the labor movement that had constituted the party's progressive New Deal base in decline, the Democrats turned increasingly to some of the same corporate and Wall Street-allied interests and defense contractors that also bankrolled the Republicans. They drew the wrong lessons from Reagan's ability to attract former blue-collar Democrats into the Republican fold and, under Bill Clinton<sup>1</sup>, cleaved toward the center, becoming a less reactionary version of the Republicans rather than an avowedly progressive, pro-labor party that had something to offer workers and the middle class. Hopes that Obama would put them back on a more democratic and egalitarian course were quickly dashed as Obama's drone-focused militarism, security and surveillance obsessions, Russophobic inclinations, and spineless centrism made him little more than a kinder and gentler proponent of American empire than his Republican counterparts.

This leaves the future of America's political parties in a pretty bleak position.

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<sup>1</sup> William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton is the 42nd President of the United States (1993–2001) from the Democratic Party.

Traditional conservatives who still believe in science and democracy have left the Republican Party in droves. The Democratic establishment does everything it can to marginalize the party's Bernie Sanders<sup>2</sup>, Elizabeth Warren<sup>3</sup>, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez<sup>4</sup> progressive wing. Given a choice between over-climate-change-denying fascistic Republicans, who disdained governing and callously watched hundreds of thousands of Americans needlessly die on the one hand, and visionless centrist Democrats committed to restoring some semblance of competence on the other, the American people wisely chose the latter. But the future for Americans right now at this dismal juncture in American history is no brighter than the future for the other 7.5 billion people on this leaderless, floundering, and increasingly desperate planet.

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard (Bernie) Sanders has been a U.S. senator from Vermont since 2007. He defines himself as a democratic socialist (the only one of the US senators) and a representative of the American progressivism of the "New Deal".

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Ann Warren has been a U.S. senator from Massachusetts since 2013. He is a member of the Democratic Party.

<sup>4</sup> Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has been a member of the U.S. House of Representatives since 2019. She is a member of the Democratic Party and is a supporter of democratic socialism.

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4. President Trump has made more than 20,000 false or misleading claims. — URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/13/president-trump-has-made-more-than-20000-false-or-misleading-claims/>.