



Good Proposals for Saving Humanity

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"A healthy and wholesome cheerfulness is not necessarily impossible to any occupation."

--- Mark Twain

We humans today face the most consequential global challenges ever in history right now, at a moment when billions of people worldwide are being afflicted by the coronavirus contagion and its economic impacts. It is crystal clear that the need is growing ever more urgent for us to take smart steps to responsibly address these epic problems. And comprehensive understanding is required to properly achieve this.

One of the best and most providential ways of seeing clearly is to cultivate comprehensive big picture perspectives, ones that are expansive, insightful, inclusive, holistic, open-minded, farsighted and enlightened by understandings of consequential ethics. Yet our collective vision has become distorted by special interests propagating Big Lies and deceitful spin, and it is crucial that we try to correct our vision to 20/20. Let's demand big structural changes!

The great playwright William Shakespeare would agree, for he poetically encapsulated this sentiment in his most famous soliloquy, *To Be or Not To Be*. In *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, the Bard provided humanity with the kernel of a marvelous suggestion, giving voice to Prince Hamlet to philosophize:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them.

Today, democratic fairness and greater equality and justice in governance are under concerted assault. At this moment when we face existentially serious challenges at home and abroad, locally and globally, we should seek win-win solutions to big problems -- ones that are commendably consistent with the common good.

With all the daunting challenges in the world right now, it is vital that we deal with them well by transcending extreme partisanship and bitter conflicts and tribal triumphal supremacism, and come together in good faith to find the best consensus solutions to problems, never forgetting to take into account the consequences of our courses of action on all of our heirs in the future.

Powerfully positive guidance for true Right Action is provided in my proposed *Bill of Rights for Future Generations*. Excellent recommendations are also made in the Earth Manifesto compendium of ideas, *One Dozen Big Initiatives to Positively Transform Our Societies*. And a broad outline of revolutionarily smart plans for saving humanity is adduced in *A Progressive Agenda for a More Sane Humanity*.

Let's all help us save ourselves -- and life on Earth! The Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto show the way. Start here, by seeing clearly and striving to understand insightfully.

Rational Exuberance and Irrational Rationalizations

U.S. stock markets rallied powerfully upwards in early February 2020, despite fears of the spreading coronavirus pandemic and other concerns. There was good reason why investors were so exuberant. Scheming Republican politicians in the U.S. Senate had just acquitted Donald J. Trump of the impeachment charges against him for

having brazenly and corruptly abused power in the executive branch.

Understand what this means. The ruling profiteers and celebrating investors were being given the green light on their Wall Street profiteering schemes. The expanded opportunities seemed endless! The sky seemed to be the limit on their plans for maximizing profits by externalizing costs and getting their emissaries to cut taxes and eviscerate common good regulations. The green light showed like a laser beam flashing in a dark sky, giving the OK to stoke the depletion of resources, reject ecological responsibilities, evade accountability and ramp up efforts to treat planet Earth like a business in liquidation. This essay powerfully promotes opposing ideas that are consistent with responsibly treating Earth in ways that ensure it instead will be healthy and sustainable.

The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth, More or Less

Below, in *The Sad Truth of the Real Character of the Trump Republican Agenda*, I provide an unvarnished outline of the twelve main aspects of Republican political aims. And an exceptionally sensible contrasting to-do list is provided of twelve categories of good ideas for creating a healthier, safer and fairer future. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare advised admirable activism.

A big picture perspective confirms that the Republican agenda is antithetical to all the purposes for which our ancestors established a Constitution to guide our nation. REMEMBER! The Framers of the U.S. Constitution declared their commendable purpose in establishing this founding document. Hear these words anew, as if for the first time: "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Despite the growing critical need for good remedial actions, Republican politicians in the U.S. Senate are sitting on hundreds of pieces of legislation designed to make our republic healthier, more secure, more ecologically sane and more fairly representative, and likely happier, to boot. These many bills, fortuitously, have already been passed by the House of Representatives, in many instances with support from both sides of the partisan aisle. It is an egregious abuse of power by Republicans in the Senate to so arrogantly, unfairly and irresponsibly kill the prospects for even considering such remedial reforms, thereby defying the will of the people -- and broadly betraying their best interests.

Rather than dealing responsibly, reasonably, intelligently, and equitably with all the biggest problems we face, Republicans are fooling the American people and selling them down the river, along with all our descendants, by pursuing a rashly short-term-oriented agenda. This assertion may sound like a laugh-out-loud exaggeration, but a visceral awareness of its veracity can be gained by reviewing the incisively enlightening summary below, *The Sad Truth of the Real Character of the Trump Republican Agenda*.

Republicans have put in place a corrupt pay-to-play crony capitalist system that gives moneyed interests domineering power and control. Trumpism represents a "win-lose approach" to economics that facilitates the triumph of insiders over the common good. A top Trumpian priority is to try to make sure that the wealth-concentrating features of our government are not reformed in any meaningful way. To achieve this goal, they use demagogic tactics like lashing out vengefully against any person who criticizes their corruption and abuses of power. Donald Trump, for instance, angrily lashed out at Republican Senator Mitt Romney after Mitt took a principled stand on the impeachment vote. Trump is becoming more dangerous to our democracy and future well-being by the day.

It is wrong to allow domineering influence by corrupt politicians and giant businesses to rig our economy in ways that are unacceptably short-term oriented, rudely regressive, extremely anti-egalitarian, rashly wasteful of resources, harmfully polluting of waterways and skies, and woe-causing because they contribute to the dangerous destabilization of the global climate. They are compounding these harm-engendering schemes by subverting proper governance and deeply distorting our understandings and using dividing-to-conquer tactics to get away with their far-reaching malfeasance.

Trump regime actions are made worse by patronage politics and a spoils system in which the Republican Party gives government civil service jobs to its supporters, friends, relatives and ideological allies as a reward for their

support, instead of fairly choosing people who are qualified, competent, effective, honest and responsible. The Republican attitude seems to be "Since the house is on fire, let us warm ourselves," as an old Italian proverb advises. Translated to English, the proverb means: "Grab the loot and run."

The great political activist and revolutionary philosopher Thomas Paine provocatively pointed out, "A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody ought not to be trusted by anybody."

Republicans court revolutionary strife with their exceedingly divisive strategies and extreme partisanship. It is highly valuable to have a clear understanding of the manipulative measures they are employing to sabotage our democracy, for they come straight out of a dastardly democracy-sabotaging *Demagogue's Playbook*. These despotic tactics, as summarized in Wikipedia's "Methods of demagogues" include the top twelve main methods used by demagogues throughout history, in many times and places, to gain popularity, political support, loyal obedience and increased power and control. I have summarized the 12 main methods demagogues use to make democracies into authoritarian dictatorships in my essay *Demagoguery and the Dangers of the Demise of Democracy* (see the latest version at EarthManifesto.com).

The lessons of history show it is risky business to defy the will of the people in such rash ways. And it is wrong to succeed at this by hijacking people's emotions and brainwashing them in order to betray their best interests.

John Fowles wrote in *The Aristos*, back in 1970, about the universal nature of many types of anxieties people feel. He observed, "To be alone in an office, with dozens of telephones all ringing at the same time. Anxieties should make us all feel as one. We all feel them. But we let them isolate us, as if the citizens of a country would defend it by each barricading himself in his own house." It would be a better plan to throw the Dividers out of office, and embrace solidarity and national policies that promote social cohesion and the general welfare.

Authoritarian dictator wannabes worldwide are vying for increased control during the pandemic crisis. This mounting trend is colossally dangerous, for they are seizing ungodly new powers under the cloak of darkness and the cover of distractions afforded by the pandemic. These autocrats are conspiring together to help each other stay in power, and to get away with their outrage-provoking misdeeds. The outcome is pathetic: sustained assaults on people's liberties, the subversion of representative democracy and repressive actions against their peoples. Their baneful anti-social ambitions are to satisfy their greed for power, money, glory, celebrity and notoriety. One key to improved national security is improved mutual security, rather than a maniacal pursuit of supremacy and the ability to abuse power by means of inflammatory rhetoric and treacherous activities.

Ominously for the American people, who see Trump press appearances and rallies and the Demagogue-in-Chief strutting and fretting on the world stage, the most "tried and true" method of becoming a dictator in the 20th century was by "relying on extralegal methods, typically involving a mob of supporters who use violence to intimidate opponents, whether they are journalists, bureaucrats, judges, politicians, or ordinary citizens."

Conservatives seem to relish a schadenfreude satisfaction of "owning the libs", even though this comes at the great cost of cutting off their noses to spite their faces, so it is pathologically poor recompense for the harms they cause. Great? "It sucks", as Jerry Seinfeld says in his funny comedy routine, *23 Hours to Kill*.

The Fix is In. Let's Fix this Fix.

Some of the best investments we can make are in social insurance policies like a system of universal healthcare, and better and more affordable public education, and improved prospects for the general welfare. This even happens to be in the best interests of the ruling profiteers, for they are standing on very thin ice by ramping up inequalities, insecurities and stresses on the restive populace, and ruthlessly profiting off the labors of working people to abandon them whenever convenient. And they are working at cross purposes to wrangle ever bigger debt-financed tax cut swindles to primarily benefit the top 1%.

Their treacherous Trumpian Trojan Horse has gotten away with election cheating efforts in the Ukraine Plot to extort another country to solicit their interference in our elections to benefit Trump. He is also getting away with a litany of abuses of power, including having stonewalled Congress in a despotic refusal to provide the legislative branch with any documents or to comply with official subpoenas that would shed light on the depth of the treachery in which the Trump administration has been engaged. This is a despotic instance of violating the saving-

grace separation of power in the U.S Constitution, for the purpose of evading accountability. This violation shreds the liberty-defending system of check and balances that was designed to help prevent despotic acts.

Remedial Actions

Think about this. In the Declaration of Independence, our colonial ancestors stated that prudence dictates that "Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; ... But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

The American colonists declared Independence from Britain because they had suffered "repeated injuries and usurpations" at the hands of the British monarchy, "all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States." To prove this charge, our Founders "submitted to a candid world" a litany of Facts that made them so revolutionarily upset at British colonial rule.

Similarly, the American people today have been suffering "repeated injuries and usurpations" at the hands of the ruthless and deviously dishonest Trump regime, and its "long train of abuses and usurpations" are, in comparison, much worse. The long list of offenses against Right Action, ethical principles, honesty, responsible action, propriety and ecological sanity is too consequential to ignore.

The authors of the Declaration of Independence were quite aware that "all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed." Today, the evils are becoming insufferable. It is an *Amazing Disgrace* that the Trump regime has been so hubristic in abusing its authority as to compel the American people -- especially Blacks -- to rise up in struggle to combat our sea of troubles. And it is an outrage that *We the People* cannot count on the honesty and integrity of the president and the federal government to do the right thing. Instead, the majority of the people are being forced to accept the government being broadly corrupt, and to watch almost powerlessly all the divide-to-conquer political chicanery, electoral cheating, and terrible suppression of fair representation.

Trump told a rare truth when he said "you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again" if everyone is able to freely vote, without voter suppression and the many Republican measures that keep millions of American citizens from exercising their right to vote. Safe and expansive vote-by-mail is needed in all 50 states, and D.C.!

A Cogent Opinion Expressed in the New York Times

Jennifer Senior wrote in an April 6, 2020 opinion piece in the New York Times, "Narcissistic personalities love nothing more than engineering conflict and sowing division. It destabilizes everyone, and keeps them in control." She adduced a list of five main ways that "Trump's psychopathology manifests itself and is endangering human life and the institutions of society." Here are these 5 ruses:

"First: Narcissistic personalities like Trump harbor skyscraping delusions about their own capabilities. They exaggerate their accomplishments, focus obsessively on projecting power, and wish desperately to win."

"Second: The grandiosity of narcissist personalities belies an extreme fragility, their egos as delicate as foam. They live in terror of being upstaged. They're too thin skinned to be told they're wrong. What that means, during this pandemic: Narcissistic leaders never have, as Trump likes to say, the best people. They have galleries of sycophants. With the exceptions of Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx, Trump has surrounded himself with a Z-team of dangerously inexperienced toadies and flunkies -- the bargain-bin rejects from Filene's Basement -- at a time when we require the brightest and most imaginative minds in the country."

"Meanwhile, Fauci and Birx measure every word they say like old-time apothecaries, hoping not to humiliate the narcissist -- never humiliate a narcissist -- while discreetly correcting his false hopes and falsehoods."

"Third: Narcissistic personalities love nothing more than engineering conflict and sowing division. It destabilizes everyone, keeps them in control. Narcissistic personalities don't do comfort. They cannot fathom the needs of other hearts."

"Fourth: Narcissistic personalities are vindictive. On a clear day, you can see their grudges forever."

"And most relevant, as far as history is concerned: Narcissistic personalities are weak. What that means, during this pandemic: Trump is genuinely afraid to lead."

"But every aspect of Trump's crisis management has been annexed by his psychopathology. As Americans die, he boasts about his television ratings. As Americans die, he crows that he's No. 1 on Facebook, which isn't close to true. But it is true that all eyes are on him. He's got a captive audience, an attention-addict's dream come to life. It's just that he, like all narcissistic personalities, has no clue how disgracefully -- how shamefully, how deplorably - he'll be enshrined in memory."

A poignant visual proliferated on the Internet a few weeks before Easter 2020. A photo showed Anthony Fauci, the epidemic expert Doctor and honest, knowledgeable and trustworthy veteran infectious disease physician: he was standing on the stage of the White House briefing podium with both index fingers pointing emphatically in the air. Donald Trump is sheepishly standing behind him, sporting a blue medical mask covering only his MOUTH. The caption reads: DR. FAUCI ANNOUNCES A NEW MASK THAT WILL SAVE THOUSANDS OF LIVES.

That's funny, but also pathologically true. This should rightly become an oft-repeated campaign ad and/or poster, reflecting those days of White House briefings that resembled political rallies, with Trump boasting, deceiving and trying to skew public opinion as he vainly struts and frets his hour upon the stage. That my *Cornpone Opinion!*

Wrongdoing and Rightdoing Evaluated

"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field. I'll meet you there."

--- Rumi

The diabolical Mitch McConnell, self-described "grim reaper" of progressive reform, succeeded in impeachment trial wrongdoing by leading a party of obsequious co-conspiring Republican politicians in the Senate to acquit Donald Trump despite the extensive evidence of his misdeeds. Trump Republicans rallied around their Dear Leader and made the trial a historic sham by refusing to hear any witnesses, and by covering up relevant evidence. By this act of infamy, they abjectly violated their duty to exercise accountability over usurpations of power and abuses of authority by the executive branch.

The acquittal did not mean Trump was innocent of the well-proven allegations against him for having extorted Ukraine to gain personal political advantages, to the detriment of our national security. "That's not what I would have done," ventured Senator Lisa Murkowski, in one of the weakest expressions of criticism imaginable, but bolder than the vast majority of sycophantic and complicit Republican Senators. Even the retiring Tennessee senator Lamar Alexander had to contort proper understanding in unbelievable ways to rationalize not upsetting the anger-prone and loyalty-demanding despot. He basically said, "Well, of course the House proved beyond a reasonable doubt that Trump was guilty as charged in the Ukraine Plot, but it was more important to the American people to have Trump remain in power than to remove him from office for the most serious and consequential impeachable offenses ever committed in U.S. history."

The acquittal in the impeachment trial without witnesses marked a dark day in American history, for it is another instance of our institutions being insufficiently strong to withstand our country's march toward authoritarianism. We must honorably strengthen our democracy. The acquittal also didn't mean that Trump is innocent of abuses of power. Former National Security Advisor John Bolton's book, *The Room Where It Happened*, confirms this fact. Trump is, in actuality, guilty of the charges and many other offenses in serious ways. Irresponsible ways. Discriminatory ways. Excessively despotic ways. Unethical ways. Illegal ways. Immoral ways.

If the shoe had been on the other foot, and a Democrat like Barack Obama had engaged in even a small fraction of the intrigue and violations of law and propriety and decency that Trump has, Republicans would have pursued a scorched earth policy and torn the man to shreds -- and removed him from office already. Instead, Republicans stood by their tainted man, and violated their special oaths in the Senate impeachment proceedings that vowed they would impartially consider Trump's actions. This revealed desperate efforts to remain in power so that they can continue to abuse power in the long litany of mean-spirited ways that their agenda represents.

Make no mistake about it: our ancestors hated despotic rule for very good reasons. We are like proverbial frogs in a pot of water being brought to a boil, endangered by the insidious encroachment of Trumpian despotism and by its sneaky cheating propaganda-spinning misinforming emotion-manipulating character.

Almost Biblical Ravages

We find ourselves at an extraordinary focal point in human history when our burgeoning human numbers, soon to total 8 billion, are threatening our future and the sustainability of our predations, and even our own survival.

Our societies are experiencing almost biblical adversities on planet Earth these days. The contagious coronavirus that began in Wuhan, China rapidly spread from country to country, killing more than 700,000 people by early August, and cratering economies and threatening the lives and prospects of billions of people around the world. Swarms of desert locusts are ominously decimating crops in a number of poor countries in East Africa. Other almost biblical disasters are occurring, like terrible wildfires that burned tens of millions of acres in Australia in December and January, adding to the horrifying spate of climate change-exacerbated wildfires that have taken place in the last few years in California, Canada, the Arctic, the Amazon and many other places. And scary information is coming to light about a glacier in Antarctica, which scientists have dubbed the Doomsday Glacier.

These apocalyptic developments are far worse than the ten plagues that the God of the Israelites brought down on Egypt due to Pharaoh's ruthlessly hardhearted actions, according to the Exodus story in the Bible. This biblical story is one of the greatest tales ever told. According to this story, ten biblical disasters were inflicted on Egypt. God repeatedly hardened the heart of Pharaoh for some inexplicable reason, and made Pharaoh's hardheaded refusal to let the Israelites go ever more opprobrious.

Scientists are the visionary prophets of modern times, and they sharpen the acuity of their understanding by using their knowledge of physics, biology and ecology to improve the accuracy of their prophetic prognostications. They study the natural world and look at evidence in geologic history, and then extrapolate trends, and use the scientific method to test and verify predictions. This evolution of knowledge is crucially important to our future.

The Age of Reason isn't dead. Many scientists regard it to be their professional and moral responsibility to warn us of the probable consequences of failing to heed risks that "conservative" leaders are amplifying by denying climate change, undermining environmental protections and engaging in other existence-threatening follies.

Mother Nature is not some imaginary God, favoring the chosen faithful and wreaking retribution against enemies. She is mercilessly unconcerned about our particular fates, and may even regard both flourishing biological diversity and mass extinctions with the same detached equanimity. We anthropomorphize nature; it is our human evolutionary propensity to see human attributes and motives and spirits in animals and trees and even mountains and other physical aspects of the natural world.

The Antarctic glacier Thwaites is one of the largest glaciers in the world. "The trouble with Thwaites ... is that it's also what scientists call 'a threshold system.'" As it melts, it may be reaching an ecological tipping point. What this means is that, "instead of melting slowly like an ice cube on a summer day, it is more like a house of cards: It's stable until it is pushed too far, then it collapses. When a chunk of ice the size of Pennsylvania falls apart, that's a big problem. It won't happen overnight, but if we don't slow the warming of the planet, it could happen within decades. And its loss will destabilize the rest of the West Antarctic ice, and that will go too. Seas will rise about 10 feet in many parts of the world; in New York and Boston, because of the way gravity pushes water around the planet, the waters will rise even higher, as much as 13 feet. 'West Antarctica could do to the coastlines of the world what Hurricane Sandy did in a few hours to New York City,' explains Richard Alley, a geologist at Penn State University and arguably the most respected ice scientist in the world. "Except when the water comes in, it doesn't go away in a few hours -- it stays."

The Sad Truth of the Real Character of the Trump Republican Agenda

See clearly, honestly and insightfully. Here is an incisive synopsis of the main twelve characteristics of the real nature of the today's Republican agenda. This concise summary includes good ideas for how patriotic Americans should respond to the ruthless Republican domination of our society, and thereby deal providentially with each of these wrong-headed strategies.

1. The top Republican goal is to gain and maintain power, no matter how unethical the means used -- and no matter how contrary to the enlightened values set forth in the great Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Enact Democracy reforms that have already been passed by the House of Representatives to prevent politicians in every state from gerrymandering, suppressing the vote and misusing Big Money from system-corrupting big corporations and wealthy donors. Pass a Constitutional Amendment to constrain corporate corruption, as advocated by the Move to Amend coalition. And reinstate provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the John Roberts court eviscerated in a wrongly decided and malfeasance-encouraging ruling in 2013.

2. Republican politicians give big corporations increased influence in corrupting our elections, skewing our national priorities and deciding issues in their favor. They kowtow to polluters that have a vested interest in maximizing profits without regard to sacrificing public health, and they allow corporations to get their taxes reduced by the politicians they buy. At the same time, they work tirelessly to avoid being held to account, and cover-up their tribe's wrongdoing by torpedoing proper governance.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Enact a Constitutional Amendment to reverse the wrongly decided Supreme Court ruling in the *Citizens United* case that allows private interests to corrupt our elections and skew our national priorities and distort our decision-making. Also take effective steps to prevent the subversion of accountability and proper governance in our democratic republic. Reject unconstitutional violations of the separation of powers by the executive branch, and strengthen the checks and balances that help promote the common good and guarantee personal liberties to the people.

3. The GOP stokes the fires of unbridled profligate consumerism, and accelerates the conversion of planetary assets to cash at the fastest possible rate, making sure to channel most of the profits into the hands of the few.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Embrace ecologically sane conservation measures to tamp down profligate consumerism and prevent profiteers from irresponsibly converting planetary assets to cash at the fastest possible rate. This hyper-stimulated scheme to liquidate natural resources is too environmentally insane and socially treacherous.

4. Republicans pretend to care about hard-working Americans in the middle and lower classes, while slavishly doing the bidding of wealthy elites and influence-abusing corporate entities. They follow the deeply unprincipled ploys of demagogues by bullying people, hijacking their emotions, scapegoating immigrants, lying promiscuously, intimidating critics, attacking opponents, and trying to undermine investigative journalists and the free press, as incisively explained by the brilliant professor of law Eric A. Posner in *The Demagogue's Playbook*.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Demand that the U.S. Senate give consideration to the hundreds of laws already enacted by the House that are designed to make sure hard-working Americans in the middle and lower classes are treated more fairly, and thus respect the vast majority of the people rather than pandering to corporate entities and wealthy elites.

5. Republicans relax constraints on cost-externalizing schemes by allowing waterways and lakes to be polluted and contributing to the destabilization of the global climate by spurring activities that spew greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These costs are foisted onto the public, along with costs resulting from correlated health harms and amplified risks and mounting costs associated with floods, droughts, wildfires, intensifying weather extremes and other climate-related disasters.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Strengthen constraints on cost-externalizing schemes to prevent corporate entities from foisting these costs onto the public. Recognizing the effectiveness and desirability of strong incentives and disincentives to influence aggregate behaviors, let's demand that our representatives levy a Carbon Offset Assessment on all fossil fuels burned. Structure this carbon fee in highly progressive ways, so that the bottom half of the population is not adversely affected by higher energy costs. And let's hammer out a sensible bipartisan Green New Deal that strengthens protections of the environment, while significantly reducing economic inequality in the USA and mitigating both social and environmental injustices.

6. Republican politicians drive up public borrowing in a national debt burdening swindle that gives Tax Cuts that primarily benefit the richest 1%, further concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Reverse the 2017 Republican Tax Cuts and bring deficit spending under control by raising more federal revenues from profit distributions, capital gains and inheritances received by wealthy people. Do this in a smart and socially fair way that is structured to be much more highly graduated. Also, make certain that corporations pay a fairer share of the federal income tax burden. And consider a \$5 trillion wealth tax on the rich to reduce the national debt.

7. Republicans stack the Supreme Court and other federal courts with "conservatives" who have partisan biases and are most likely to help sell the people down the river by siding with those engaging in all these schemes and misdeeds and fiscal irresponsibility and existential malfeasance.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Balance the Supreme Court with more progressives rather than allowing conservatives to continue their illegitimately constituted 5-to-4 domination of the high court, and stop letting highly partisan conservatives get away with all their influence peddling, misdeeds and malfeasance.

Impeach and remove Clarence Thomas from the Supreme Court and replace him with President Obama's eminently well-qualified consensus candidate nominee, Merrick Garland, who currently serves as a Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. The rationale for this removal, in addition to his @MeToo dishonesty with the American people about his sexual harassment of Anita Hill, is that he has broadly betrayed the ethical principles and judgments of his predecessor Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice, who had so honorably represented the best interests of black people on the high court from 1967 to 1991, and was infinitely better than the extremely partisan ideologically anti-Black Clarence Thomas.

8. The GOP pushes hard-line foreign policies and conspires with autocrats in other countries to mutually advance their greedy authoritarian agendas, and help each other get away with oppressive, hubristic abuses of power.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Embrace responsible diplomacy and fair-minded peace building in all our foreign relations, and seek mutually beneficial compromises in all conflicts. And recommit to our allies who share our values, instead of siding with autocrats in Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and many other countries dominated by power-abusing authoritarians.

9. They dominate the media and propagate propaganda and deviously spin every development on outlets like Fox News, rationalizing their fundamentalist views and divisive, anti-democratic, equality undermining, anti-immigrant and ecologically insane agenda. In addition, they undermine the free press by treating it as "an enemy of the people", while acting in ways that makes Republicans themselves the real coldly calculating enemies of the people.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Strengthen protections of journalists and whistleblowers to make sure the media "Fourth Estate" remains a powerful positive influence in our society, and seek to create a media atmosphere that is more honest, scientifically true, inclusive, uniting, egalitarian and ecologically sane.

10. Trump Republicans abuse power to achieve the planks of this nefarious agenda, even if it involves activities that are unconstitutional like encouraging foreign countries to interfere in our elections and our domestic affairs. And they act as accomplices to cover up all the misdeeds to stay in power.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Prevent abuses of authority by any politician, and strengthen our national commitment to policies that truly benefit the majority of Americans, and that protect the well-being of all in future generations.

11. The GOP divisively hypes up reactionary sentiments to gain support for forcing millions of women around the world to have unwanted children. They achieve this male-domineering hegemony over women with a dominion-demanding zeal and a moralizing piety. They insist on absolute rights for human zygotes and embryos, while at the same time damning everyone to be born in the future to existences in an increasingly dystopian, resource depleted, polluted, climate destabilized, conflict-ridden and overpopulated world. This modern *Brave New World* will be characterized by diminishing supplies of clean fresh water, worsening weather extremes, rising sea levels, spiking insecurity and heightening strife. The moral right and wrong that Republicans try to claim are twisted all out of proportion, and their rationalizations are antithetical to true pro-life positions because they degrade the quality of life and threaten mass extinctions, all to reinforce their self-serving beliefs and repressive actions.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Invest in educating and empowering women worldwide, and protect their health and reproductive rights. Now that Virginia, a required 38th state, has voted to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, remove the bureaucratic barriers that are preventing it from becoming the latest ratified Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It is, after all, eminently sensible, for it simply stipulates, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex".

12. Republicans violate the Golden Rule of fair-minded reciprocity by treating others in ways they themselves would just HATE to be treated. George Orwell wrote in his intriguing novel *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others". The cruelty-prone ruling pigs on the Trump Republican *Animal Farm* today are pursuing a rash agenda that gives them vastly superior rights and power than all the other less fortunate and more ethical and principled animals.

COUNTERPROPOSAL: Recommit ourselves to the providential good sense ethic of the Golden Rule, being mindful of how positive this ancient tenet will be in fostering social cohesion and peaceable coexistence in an increasingly crowded and ruthlessly competitive world.

"We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

--- Thomas Paine

How much longer will Trump Republicans be able to get away with their system rigging and engaging in public graft, law breaking, violations of the Constitution, betrayals of the public trust, and grotesquely irresponsible derelictions of duty?

Let's not despair. Here's the Good News! We need not wait until after we're dead for measures of salvation. We simply need to plug our ears against the dangerous voices of the devious promoters of this dastardly agenda, and ignore the lies they are telling us. We should emulate the hero Odysseus, who withstood the allure of seductive Sirens that tried to perfidiously lure him and his sailors with their enchanting music and singing voices, to cause them to be shipwrecked on the rocky coast of the Sirens' Greek island. Odysseus succeeded at this by having his crew stuff their ears with beeswax and lash him to his ship's mast to restrain him until danger was past.

Once *We the People* throw the co-conspiring scoundrels who are promoting and perpetuating their villainously backward agenda out of office, salvation will be at hand. We should expeditiously proceed to implement eminently salubrious and wholesomely providential remedial plans, coming together to create a stronger, fairer and more broadly inclusive society, and a more meaningfully healthy, flourishing and peaceable humanity.

Thomas Paine, the great American patriot and author of *Common Sense*, once thoughtfully wrote, "By a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight."

Let's adopt this visionary virtue of Right Perspective, and pay forward provisions for a more providential legacy to all of our heirs. Do this by demanding a global ratification of a *Bill of Rights for Future Generations* to commit all people to the guidance of Golden Rule reciprocity with regard to all persons in the future. Let's abide by the wisdom articulated in my essay *Intelligent Precautionary Principles Enunciated — Holy Cow!* And let's focus on *One Dozen Big Initiatives to Positively Transform Our Societies*, as spelled out in this manifesto.

A Thought Experiment

See clearly, Republicans! Imagine how outraged you would have been if Barack Obama had engaged in so many abuses of power and so much public corruption, scandalous behaviors, propagation of disingenuous spin and telling of outright lies as Donald Trump has. Imagine how you would feel if President Obama had indulged in so much obstruction of justice, stonewalling of Congress, cover-ups of wrongdoing, and other unconstitutional actions that seriously undermine the Checks and Balances and separation of powers established by the U.S. Constitution.

Conservatives: Imagine how outraged you would have been if Barack Obama had so rudely violated all of the founding principles of the U.S. Constitution, as spelled out in its great Preamble. If instead of striving to create a

more perfect union, he had used cunning emotion-hijacking divide-to-conquer tactics. If instead of trying to establish justice, he had pushed oppressive anti-Black injustices, discriminatory social policies and elitist corporate-kowtowing economic policies. If instead of working to create greater domestic tranquility, he had used demagogic fear mongering, exploited emotions and twitter attacks to cause social cohesion to fray. If instead of focusing on the general welfare, he had swindled all taxpayers in every future year with regressive debt-financed Tax Cuts, and undermined protections of the environment, and arrogantly opposed steps to prevent the destabilization of the global climate. If instead of providing for the real common defense, he had heightened risks of war with Iran and helped cause other countries to falter, and courted terrorist blowback. And if he had been weak on human rights and antagonistic to the health and reproductive rights and prerogatives of women, rather than honorably striving to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

Imagine if Barack Obama had engaged in so much bullying and maniacal tweetstorms, and tyrannical edicts. Imagine if he had suppressed criticism by wreaking harsh retribution against anyone who dared question him or denounce his corrupt whims. Imagine if the last President had told more than 20,000 falsehoods in his first three years and six months in office, and was now accelerating the frequency and intensity of his deceit (as documented by the Washington Post's FactChecker).

Imagine if Barack Obama had tried to exclude tens of millions of people from health insurance coverage because they have "pre-existing conditions", instead of having responsibly worked to help pass the Affordable Care Act.

Imagine how you would feel if Barack Obama had acted as a diabolically self-serving authoritarian who arrogantly criticized the teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg, Time Magazine's "Person of the Year", who visionarily committed herself and her generation to helping save humanity from future climate hell. And think about the bizarre contrast of a manipulative egomaniac who would fly to the elite billionaire's enclave in Davos, Switzerland to brag about supposedly salubrious economic effects of extreme short-termism in sabotaging environmental protections and cutting taxes on the wealthy and stoking the fires of materialistic consumerism, resource depletion, the burning of fossil fuels and the rashly irresponsible externalizing of costs and risks onto all persons in the future. And imagine if Barack Obama had arrogantly adopted all of the harshly Machiavellian techniques and tactics of *The Demagogue's Playbook*, as assessed by Eric A. Posner, the astute Professor of Law at the University of Chicago.

Imagine if Barack Obama had heaped scorn, derision and contempt on his opponents, and cheated, lied and taken crude advantage of people's emotions to grab power and desperately try to cling to it. What if Barack Obama had weaponized religion and used it against the virtuous precepts of Jesus' teachings to advance an agenda favorable to the few against the general welfare of the many? Imagine if Barack Obama had rashly assaulted public lands and Clean Water, and wantonly contributed to the natural disaster-intensifying instability of the global climate.

Imagine how you would feel if any future Democratic president were to use these precedents being set by Trump Republicans. Imagine if any future president tried to drive us on a doom-like trajectory by pandering to Big Oil and Big Coal, instead of responsibly heeding the increasingly urgent scientific warnings as to the strong advisability of leaving 80% of greenhouse gas-producing fossil fuel energy resources in the ground for the duration of the 21st century.

Imagine if Barack Obama had engaged in corrupt swindles like pushing the regressive 2017 Tax Cuts bill, financed by a dangerously mounting public debt burden, which is exacerbating disparities in income, wealth, health and security between the haves and the have-nots, and risking a calamitous debt crisis, and amping up pressure to impose harsh austerity budgets in the future.

Remembering the strong Republican opposition to remedial spending undertaken to reboot the economy in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, one can see clearly how diabolically hypocritical and coldly calculating Republicans are in the face of the current global pandemic. They manifest a sudden rash willingness to fling open the public treasury and the Federal Reserve to not only help the people whose lives are being catastrophically disrupted by the crisis, but also to wildly benefit corporate CEOs, investors and shareholders that are prospering because of the crisis or have encountered severe setbacks.

An Aside on Hospitals

One of the most important things in anyone's life is their physical and mental health. Since this is true, our leaders should help protect us by making salubrious investments in our healthcare system.

Unfortunately, scheming Republicans have broadly failed to invest in improved public health. This has contributed to the closure of about 50 hospitals in rural areas since Trump took office, putting people in rural areas (like many Trump supporters) at greater risk of suffering or dying from COVID-19 and other diseases or afflictions. And Republican governors have dragged their feet in responding responsibly to the coronavirus, and then pushed aggressively to abandon efforts to "flatten the curve" of the contagion's spread, and now are putting MANY more lives at risk by making mask wearing into a partisan divide rather than a respect for the health of others -- and oneself! And they are pushing to "re-open" before their own CDC guidelines are met.

Sadly, the United States ranks 175th out of 195 countries for access to health care, according to the Global Health Security Index. Seeing that Italy, which ranks 74th, had such grave problems with overcrowded hospitals, it should be clear how pathological it is to have leaders who staunchly oppose the Affordable Care Act and Medicare expansions. Some cities in the U.S. have, like Italy, been forced to prioritize patients for intensive care based on their likelihood of surviving. What this means, in effect, is that doctors are forced to decide who has a chance to live, and who will die. "Real-life death panels."

Another alarming statistic is that since 1975, as the U.S. population increased from 215 million people to over 330 million, the total number of hospital beds has declined from 1.5 million to 925,000. "This decline followed President Nixon's 1973 Health Maintenance Organization Act, which allowed the privatization of health care. The United States currently has only 2.8 hospital beds per 1,000 residents, just a little over half the average of 5.4 beds per 1,000 residents in other developed countries.

A Riff on the Perverse Usefulness of Enemies

Wikipedia explains that an enemy is an individual or group considered as forcefully adverse or threatening. The use of the term "enemy" serves the social function of designating a particular entity as a threat, thereby invoking an intense emotional response to that entity.

"Enemy" is a strong word, and "emotions associated with the enemy include anger, hatred, frustration, envy, jealousy, fear, distrust, and possibly grudging respect. As a political concept, an enemy is likely to be met with hate, violence, battle and war."

A government may seek to characterize a person or group as a threat to the public good by designating that person or group as an enemy of the people. Such characterization of individuals or groups as enemies is called demonization. Demonizing others is a major means used by demagogues to promote propaganda. An "enemy" may also be conceptual, as when it is used to describe impersonal phenomena such as diseases.

"The enemy," as the object of social anger or repulsion, has throughout history been utilized as a prototypical propaganda tool to focus fear and anxiety within a society toward a particular target. The target is often general, as with an ethnic group or race of people, or it can also be a conceptual target, as with an ideology that characterizes a given group. In some cases, a concept of the enemy morphs, as when *racial and ethnic* claims to support a call to war may later have changed to ideological and more abstract rationales.

During the Cold War, the terms "Communists" or "Reds" were believed by many in American society to mean "the enemy," and the meaning of the two terms could be extremely pejorative, depending on the political context, mood, or state of fear and agitation within the society at the time.

When the coronavirus pandemic began to spread in the United States, denial was pervasive among many in the Trump administration, and among Trump's supporters and followers. Then when Fox News and Trump did an astonishing pivot from downplaying the threat to exaggerating it, the whiplash was unbelievable, and they engaged in hyped-up fear-mongering about the disease as the crisis deepened. After daily reality TV show briefings for a month by Trump, Pence and some disease experts, Trump lost interest and shifted to a political calculation of

telling people to return to their jobs as if things are normal, despite heightened risks of on-going transmission of the coronavirus.

One expert evaluated these ploys as patterns in spreading misinformation that resemble a textbook propaganda campaign. As Dartagan explained in his online post, *By making the pandemic a battle of 'us and them', the pro-Trump media set their audience up to die*: "Modern conservatism and what we understand as the 'right', with its torch-bearer, the Republican Party, does not thrive in this country based on its inherent ideas or philosophy. The absolute dearth of legislation passed by the Republican-dominated Congress during the first two years of the Trump administration (beyond a singularly skewed tax cut for corporate America) is the best evidence of that. Republicanism and conservatism do not exist because of their 'ideas', because, frankly, their ideas are largely repugnant to most Americans. That is why they rely on inflaming division and prejudices in their base while seeking to suppress the votes of as many non-Republicans as possible. Their 'ideas', to the extent they have any, are toxic and unpopular."

"So the right wing always needs an enemy to blame, someone 'conspiring' against them, and they need a media apparatus to stoke fear of that enemy in their supporters. The enemy can be African American, Latinx, Muslim, or a member of the LGBTQ community; the villains can be teachers, government employees, or even college professors. More generically, that enemy can be the 'media,' 'liberals,' or 'Democrats'. And even more broadly, 'financial elites' -- which, roughly translated, usually means 'Jews'. It really doesn't matter."

"Tobin Smith, a former Fox News contributor and anchor, explained last year in an op-ed for the New York Times how the network deliberately creates enemies for its viewers, to bind them to the network by providing them a sense of grievance, of someone conspiring against their interests. He explains the psychology as activating the Fox viewer's 'fight or flight juices', making the viewer feel as if he is being attacked. He compares it to the administration of a highly addictive drug, prompting the viewer to come back again and again for another 'conspiracy fix.'"

Interim Conclusion

With all the global challenges going on in the world right now, and all the serious shortcomings in the way they are being addressed, people are well justified to feel like flinging open their windows and shouting like a half-demented Howard Beale in the film *Network*, "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore!"

The current dire situation reminds me of cartoonist Gary Larson's "The Far Side" cartoon that shows two guys in a rowboat on a lake watching as multiple nuclear mushroom clouds billow in the distance. "One fisherman gawks, cigarette dangling loosely from his lips, head cocked slightly back. He has obviously just blurted out the obvious question. His companion, far less interested in the imminent destruction of the planet than what it means for their outing, cuts right through all the nonessential parts. The caption reads: "I'll tell you what this means, Norm -- no size restrictions, and screw the limit."

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain

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