

# “Diseases of Faction”: Real Democracy on its Deathbed

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*“(Liberty) is indeed little less than a name, where the Government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction.” George Washington*

*Governments do not exist for the benefit of common people, those people referred to in the Constitution as “We the people.” Regardless of what officials claim, common man exists merely as a means to fulfill the ends the factions in control wish to attain. Madison’s “diseases of faction” have put democracy, here and everywhere, on its deathbed. In Washington and Cairo you can see its death throes. The one possible cure seems impossible to administer. Human beings must be treated as ends in themselves, not as means. Human beings will either work to promote the welfare of humanity or they will ultimately exterminate each other. Einstein is reported to have said that he did not know what weapons would be used to fight World War III but that World War IV would be fought with sticks and stones. That anyone who would make such a statement is, in itself, absolute proof of how far humanity has descended into the depths of degradation. People, we are not making the world better! Soon, even Satan will blanch at the sight of human brutality.*

As a young university student I experienced an empowering shock when I learned how much better educated and thoughtful some of the people who helped found the American nation were than those who followed them have been. Those founders were acquainted with the writings of Montesquieu, Gibbon, Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke, Smith, and many more. How many of our federal officials today could boast of such acquaintance? Washington knew that treaties with foreign nations were entanglements which not only reduced a nation’s sovereignty but were hard to be extricated from and warned the young American nation against them. John Adams knew that “Banks have done more injury to the religion, morality, tranquility, prosperity, and even wealth of the nation than they can have done or ever will do good.” Jefferson knew that merchants have no patriotic attachments, and James Madison knew of the “diseases of faction” and that “A standing army is one of the greatest mischief that can possibly happen.”

Despite all of this salient advice from our founders, America has now ensnared itself in all of these horrors. Treaties comprise the nation’s foreign policy, too big to fail banks have taken control of the government, merchants of great wealth stash it overseas in tax havens, a military-industrial complex devours the nation’s resources without winning wars, and the government has been paralyzed by factions.

In America, Republicans and Democrats are at loggerheads. Why, people ask, are Republicans ignoring the last election’s results that clearly demonstrate that a majority of Americans have rejected Republican proposals? In a democracy, the majority’s views are expected to prevail. But not in today’s Congress. The Republicans still hold strongly to the

views that the American voters soundly repudiated. How can this be democratic?

Well, it can't. What now passes for democracy has changed. The United States broadcast this change, although few recognized it, in 2006 when, after promoting the fair election in Gaza, it rejected the result because Hamas and not Fatah emerged victorious. From that point on, the world knew that democratic elections become valid only when the *status quo* factions win. Since then, throughout the world, factions that lose routinely reject electoral results. America, the nation that prided itself in being the country that fought to make the world safe for democracy, now quashes it. Almost two years ago, I posted a piece about this change titled, [\*Demented Democracy\*](#). Democracy has changed because the nature of factions has changed.

Although once factions might have consisted of people who disagreed about this or that, now a faction is comprised of a group with a fixed aim, that aim being the creation of a society that embodies the deeply held beliefs about the world and man's place in it that the members of the faction hold. The aim is never the common good.

The Republicans in Congress oppose the policies of Obama not because their views have the support of the people; they oppose those policies because of the belief that conservative policies are fundamentally right regardless of how the common people feel or fare. Boehner has offered a Plan B to resolve the government's fiscal crisis in an effort to make the President to "bear the responsibility for imposing the greatest tax increase ever on the American people." Boehner clearly is merely interested in assigning blame, caring nothing for the fate of the nation or its people.

Muslim fundamentalists want to establish societies governed by sharia law, the moral code and religious law of Islam. Christian fundamentalists act as if they would like to establish a society based on what they would define as Christian principles. But both Islamic and Christian factions are alike. Neither is concerned with the common good. Whether people fare well in Islamic or Christian states is irrelevant. All that matters is the nature of the society.

All factions now operate in this way. The pro-gun lobby wants a society with unfettered access to guns regardless of how many people get killed by them; the gun-control lobby wants a society with few if any guns regardless of how that would affect traditional American practices and lifestyles.

Because of this attitudinal change in what constitutes a faction, democracy has disintegrated into meaninglessness. Yet factions have now taken two even more sinister turns. They have become global and absolutely intolerant.

Consider al-Qa'ida, for instance, which merely means "the base." It is an informal, global alliance of militant jihadist groups that seeks to eliminate foreign influences from Muslim countries, destroy Israel, and create a new Islamic caliphate. It wants to build a new society based on sharia law and to do so whether the common people prosper or perish. Although Americans tend to speak about it as an organization with chosen leaders and commanders, it is not. Except for being global, it is like America's tea party—people united by a set of beliefs and goals. It is such a loose-knit group that writers are unsure of how to refer to it. Some call various groups al-Qa'ida "inspired," some "linked," and some even "franchised." But they are none of these. They are merely "like-minded," and like all such groups, al-

Qa'ida cannot be eliminated militarily, no more than conservatism can.

The intolerance of such factions can be seen from what is going on in Washington and in Egypt. The refrain of the opposition is, "All or nothing at all." Take a look at Egypt.

In early 2011, the Arab Spring began in Egypt aimed at deposing the Mubarak government. Mubarak resigned in February, and the Egyptian military took control of the nation. The military command dissolved both the constitution and the parliament. A constitutional referendum was held in March, and in November, the first parliamentary election since the previous regime had been in power was held. Turnout was high and there were no reports of irregularities or violence. The military dissolved this parliament, and Egypt's new president, Mohamed Morsi, overrode the military edict and called lawmakers back into session. Shortly thereafter, the Supreme Constitutional Court negated the President's calling of the parliament back into session. In November, President Morsi sought to protect the work of the constitutional assembly by issuing a declaration immunizing his decrees from challenge and authorizing himself to take any measures necessary to protect the revolution. Liberal and secular groups which had previously walked out of the constituent assembly because they believed that it would impose strict Islamic practices accused Morsi of usurping all state powers and appointing himself Egypt's new pharaoh. These acts by the non-Islamic factions led to more protests.

President Morsi offered a "national dialogue" with opposition leaders but refused to cancel the Dec. 15 vote on a draft constitution. But even before the votes of the referendum were counted, the opposed factions began to question the validity of the vote. Twenty-six million voters were eligible to vote, but only 32 percent of them did. Besides the low turnout, the constitution was approved by "a slim margin" of 56 percent. Opponents have said a "low" turnout and a final majority in favor of the constitution of less than 70 percent "would raise damaging questions about how representative the document is of the nation." All of which proves that deposing a sitting government is much easier than creating a new one. Elections, even fair ones, carried out by self-styled proponents of democracy no longer have any meaning. If a faction loses, it merely keeps opposing by creating continuing turmoil and civil disorder. Nothing matters until one faction manages to dominate all others. Democracy becomes authority!

The Egyptian people, just like Americans, are disillusioned. [In one Cairo neighborhood, the draft charter is seen as a struggle between elites.](#) "All the struggles you see are for positions, just for power," said Mohamed Mohamud, 56. . . . I blame both sides. While they are protesting, eating and drinking, they are ruining my business. There is no security, no jobs. Even if we agree with the constitution or don't agree, the problems will happen, and I don't know the end of this." "Who are these people?" said Ala Abdi, 36, who is unemployed. He said he was not fond of Morsi but disliked Morsi's opponents, who include former Mubarak figures, even more. "I believe these people are just for special interests and don't want the country to move forward. These people say 'no' to all of Morsi's decisions. Could every decision be wrong? That's not possible." Most Americans could be saying the same things!

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