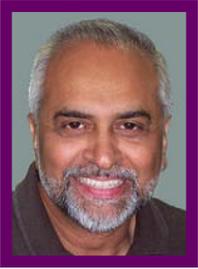


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## Irrational and Irresponsible – Extremism in America



Since the first term election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, the Republican Party has vowed to oppose his Administration's every initiative to the point of shameful and destructive partisanship. 'Shameful' because they are acting like immature juveniles, and 'destructive' because they are undermining stability in a very unstable global political and economic environment. If a country sets itself up as a 'World Leader', which the United States certainly does, then it must act like one, especially at home where its credibility is initially earned.

Last Monday night at midnight (September 30th, 2013), due to the irresponsible behavior of a particular few in the Republican Party, the polarizing extremists dropped any pretense towards responsible political behavior, admittedly not far from where the Republican Party had been the past four plus years, and triggered the partial shut-down of the dysfunctional U.S. Government. By all accounts, the 'Tea Party' extremists have hijacked the disruptive Republican Party, and brought the functioning of U.S. Government to a partial stop. And now, they are threatening to bring it to a full stop.

The American and global economic recovery is almost non-existent (*fragile at best*). This is in spite of Trillions of dollars spent by the U.S. and other governments of major countries, trying vainly to lift their sagging economies, put into freefall by the past Republican policies, when the Republicans were last in power. This current

round of brinkmanship being indulged in by the Republican leadership is irrational, ill-considered and ill-timed, in terms of what is good for America and the World. But as the Republican agenda above all, stated openly by them, is to incapacitate Barack Obama's initiatives, and is not concerned with responsible governance, they are building the crisis towards a more potent show-down that is coming later this month, the raising of the debt ceiling, which allows the U.S. Government to borrow what it needs to continue to function according to the incumbent Administration's proposed policies. If Republicans and the Democrats do not come to some agreement and the debt ceiling is not raised this month, the U.S. Government will run out of money to function and pay its dues, putting it into default. That to the American and the global economy will be a near fatal blow.

The Republican Party has fought President Obama, in a 'no-holds-barred' fight ever since his first term, as a lot of them could not stand the idea of losing to the Democrats, let alone to a 'black' Democrat.

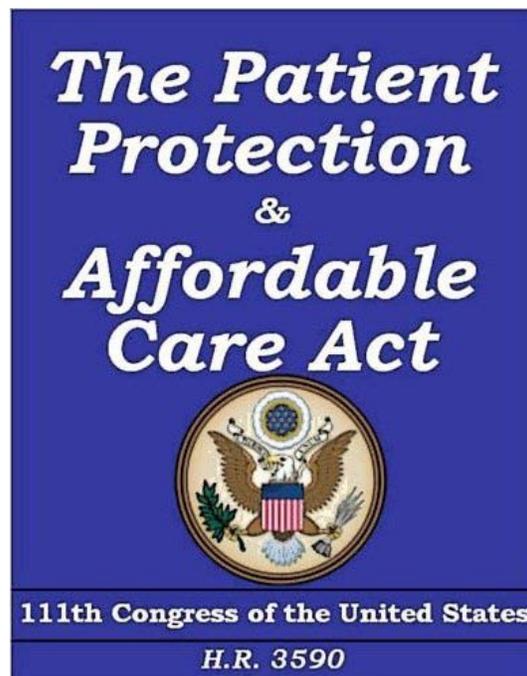


The inherent racism in their virulent and constant attacks against everything his Administration tried to accomplish is blatantly obvious to some Americans and to most of the World, and in many reported instances was openly expressed by the Republicans themselves. The overwhelming majority of American public (*approximately 80%*), while generally disgusted with the behavior of their Representatives, regardless of the side they

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choose to support, are by and large, mute in their acceptance of the severe damage that their elected officials have been doing their country in these past years of endless and insane partisan bickering and brinkmanship, while their country and the global economy struggles to recover in so many critical areas.



This time the political impasse and the resulting shut down (*it has happened before*) is supposedly the fight to stop the 'Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act' ("PPACA"), generally known as the 'Affordable Care Act' ("ACA"), or now called 'Obamacare' (*or, as is known in the other developed countries as 'Universal Health Care'*) from being implemented now. The United States has been one of the only major developed 'First World' countries that does not have an inclusive 'Universal Health Care' program for all its citizens, in spite of an excellent example of one that works (*not perfectly, but pretty darn well*) in a capitalist country right next door: Canada, which ranks most favorably with the United States in per capita income and quality of life of its citizens. But most Americans, when they are aware of Canada, which is not often, think of Canada as a socialist country, not a true capitalist one, because of its government's tighter

regulatory framework, and supposed greater general involvement in the lives of its people. Regardless of the inane name calling, the fact is that some of Canada's key institutions, multi-party politics, general education, finance and banking, law and order, and especially its health care, work far better than their American counterparts. Canadians generally are considered to have a better quality of life, greater security and stability, while matching or exceeding per capita income and general prosperity of the Americans.



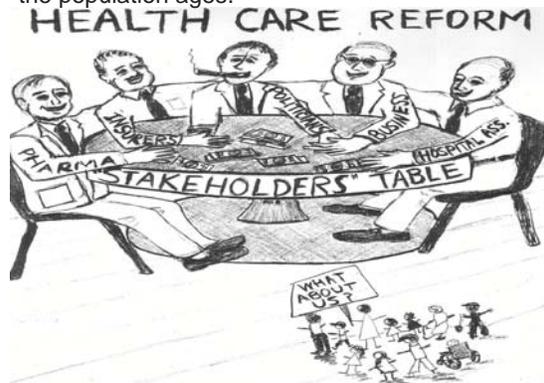
The ACA was signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, and went into effect this month. The Republicans have been dead set against it, and have fought tooth and nail for years to have it repealed. Their passion and commitment to kill it, delay it, or modify it to the point of it becoming ineffective, now encompasses the acceptability of doing the entire country and its economy harm. And, they have not been above using sheer blackmail tactics to ensure that the Obama Administration does not succeed in its key policies. In pursuing that agenda, the Republicans are willing, at least for now, to take America and the global financial system, once again to the brink of economic crisis.

Under the banner of 'individual rights and freedoms', as interpreted by them, of saving the American people's right to choose their own medical insurance from private companies, and in stopping the U.S. Government from generally spending more money (*the Republicans themselves spent like drunken sailors when in power*), the Republicans have pitched a relentless battle to stop President Obama from leveling the playing field for all. In the background are the special interest groups that are dear to the hearts

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and wallets of the Republican Party, namely insurance, medical and pharmaceutical industries, as well as other big businesses related to health care services, which is getting bigger as the population ages.

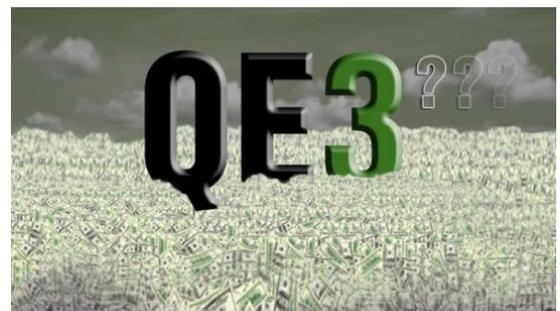


To all of these groups, it is imperative they defeat 'Obamacare', so that they can maintain their ludicrously high price structure and profitability for health care in the U.S. An initiative to bring greater inclusion, affordability, accountability of universal health care to the less privileged public is just not in their best interest.

Additionally, President Obama's initiatives on social security, education, tighter financial and banking regulations, higher taxes and fewer loopholes for the rich, peace initiatives in the Middle East, generally shutting down of wars instead of starting them, are all an anathema to the far right members of the Republican Party and its supporters, and for the special interest groups that traditionally fund the Republicans which thrive on deregulation leading to impunity from exploitation of the environment, business practices, (especially in the financial and banking industry), and constant war at all times, somewhere on the planet, for the very powerful defense industry.



Their scaremongering by labeling all supportive programs of the middle class and the poor as 'socialism and communism' ignores the fact that under the past Republican governments the financial stewardship of America became the model of **how-not-to** manage the finances of a country. To the point, that other governments felt compelled, as now, to lecture the U.S. Government to behave more responsibly. But the facts regarding their own greater financial misdemeanors are not something the Republicans have ever been too concerned about when lecturing the Democrats and the World. In fact their fast and loose treatment of the truth, the consistent and blatantly false stating of the facts, and the party propaganda, would put the most corrupt and manipulating governments of the 'Third World' to shame.



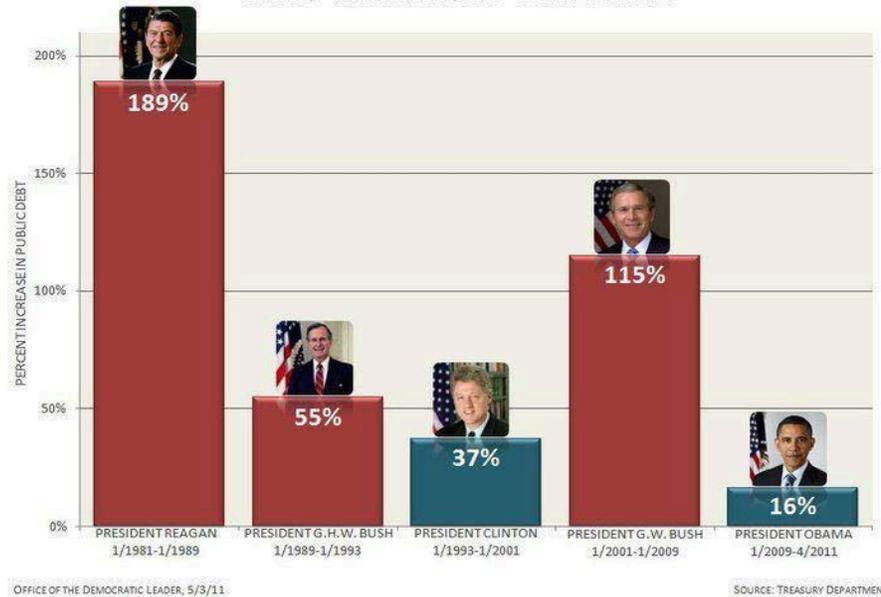
The Republican's sense of entitlement may not include social and health care programs for middle class and the poor, but definitely include publicly funded financial bailouts - and handouts in the Trillions (*what else is Q3?*), for their own: big banks, investment banks, insurance companies, and big business – with tax payer monies – which apparently is not socialism, but just the right thing to do!

Their idea of true capitalism also happens to include government protection from competitive imports, lax financial-securities and business regulations, price fixing and insider trading, inside track to lucrative government contracts, high powered lobbyists influencing domestic and foreign governments, tax loopholes, subsidies, wars, and the multi-trillions in stimulus spending that has primarily benefited the financial industry players and the rich, and any talk of tapering of which sends the financial markets into a tizzy, as the moneyed find it perfectly acceptable, after

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WHO INCREASED THE DEBT?



five years, to continue to gorge on this government sponsored largess by the Federal Reserve.

The Republicans, when in power, have consistently taken undue and unseemly advantage of the system and left the economy usually worse off than the Democrats, and burdened with larger deficits. The Republican Party and its current batch of 'hawks' in the Tea Party rail against big government and big spending, but never acknowledge that the current global economic mess and the attendant and unprecedented stimulus spending, benefitting primarily the wealthy, is directly due to their past irresponsible economic and financial policies, and the generally unwarranted, expensive and wasteful wars that they started and never finished. Blowing up things is lucrative business to the vast American military industrial complex.

The Republican Party gives the rest of us 'capitalists-with-a-conscience' a really bad name, and elevates blatant hypocrisy to shameless new levels.

All those that consider the conscienceless scramble for personal gain, at the cost of others, being 'individual rights and freedoms', and survival of the fittest being a God ordained law, the 'get rich by any means' being the fittest (*except it is an evolutionary concept and they*

scramble for personal gain, at the cost of others, being 'individual rights and freedoms', and survival of the fittest being a God ordained law, the 'get rich by any means' being the fittest (*except it is an evolutionary concept and they don't believe in evolution*), and those that consider the public, the regular working folks and the poor, 'sheep made for shearing', do not like a fair and level playing field. Nor do they like too many laws, especially those that impede their unmitigated greed and ambitions, and try to keep them honest and in line. But they do like all the government monies, and all the advantages and favours they can get by whatever means for their own gain, just not for anybody else's.



While this attitude of the right-of-center, and the privileged and powerful, is at full display in America, most other countries have their own version of equally self-centered powerful people that consider any benefits to the 'normal or poor people' as a huge government waste, and massive preferential treatment towards them in taxes, subsidies, insider dealings, sweetheart deals in government contracts etc. merely 'a God given right'.

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The fact that there is an element in the Republican Party (*maybe most of the Party*) that is willing to seriously damage their own Country, to thwart and defeat the agenda of a duly elected American President, put their country at risk and gravely undermine and make mockery of the so called 'American Values' that the Americans, especially the Republicans so love to preach to the rest of the World – political democracy, peace, human equality, justice and fairness, honesty and integrity, and the rule of law, is quite disturbing. The Republicans can certainly preach, but as has been amply evident in the past, and now, when it does not suit their purposes, greed or ambitions, they do not believe in practicing what they preach, even in their own country. It is this absurd and blatant hypocrisy that is so hard for all the rest to fathom and accept.

Unfortunately, this is a common phenomena universally, where an aggressive fanatical few, usually representing an illogical minority, usurp the power of the reasonable and more rational silent majority, to inflict damage and suffering to all, in the pursuit of their unsound ideology. The general decency of the average citizen and the unfortunate complacency and tolerance that seems to come with it, allows the few to hijack the national and at times the international agenda, and cause havoc and chaos that is then left for the majority to suffer from, and fix after.

Even in its current phase of general overall decline, the United States is the most powerful nation on Earth, both economically and militarily, and while the World may no longer look to it for sound leadership given its track record of the last few decades and the past few years, it still greatly influences global conditions, economic and political, because of its sheer power and size. It is the '800 pound gorilla' in the room, and lately it may not be doing a lot of good but it sure can cause a lot of damage when it comes under the control of "hawks", as under the 'George W. Bush Era' (*shudder!*), or the fringe 'Tea Party' lunatics in the Republican Party now, as they shed all requirement of truth, responsible and rational behavior, people centered political leadership, law and due process, honest civil discourse, and just plain common sense.



Now, very learned and saner heads are saying that the Republicans surely cannot be that insane as to actually push America into its first default. That they must surely back-off before that, after exacting some concessions from President Obama on 'Obamacare'. We would have said the same thing, and still prefer to believe that some element of sanity will prevail before the unthinkable and entirely unnecessary global financial catastrophe is triggered by America defaulting on its financial obligations. But lately, after watching the juvenile antics and the downright stupid and insanely irrational stance of the radical elements of the Republicans, we can't be sure if there is enough sanity and intelligence in the current crop of extremists to make that a safe bet.

So once again, as if the 'George W. Bush Era' was not enough, the reasonable American and global silent majority may suffer the economic and financial disruption and damage caused by an extremist, fanatical, hypocritical, irrational and irresponsible few, who are hell-bent on having it their way for their personal and ideological satisfaction, regardless of duly elected governments, laws, due process, rationality and recent history.

This surely is today's America, an empire being gutted from the inside, consistently, by its most selfish and powerful. And they are exacting a heavy toll on the rest of the World. Perhaps this is the way all former empires have gone.