REPUBLIC PLAGUED

The United States violence conundrum

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Ever since 1972, when I first set foot on American soil, I've been watching, in unbroken admiration, a country full of unique vitality, economic prowess, admirable personal freedoms, and the gifts of a true "land of opportunity" in which anyone with fresh innovative ideas, and the persistence to pursue them, can prosper, often in unprecedented ways.

Yet, it was obvious even back then that there was a dark side to this idyllic picture.

The early 1970s was the time when the Vietnam War was going from bad to worse, with no obvious (and victorious) way out. The swelling antiwar movement was getting violent and, even, terrorist. Huge demonstrations rocked American cities—and American society, bitterly divided and confused, searched in vain for direction.

As if this was not enough, the immediately preceding years of the 1960s had witnessed devastating race riots in cities like Los Angeles, Newark, and Detroit topped by nation-wide vandal violence in 125 cities in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

Fast forward to Trump-and-pandemic USA, and the current wave of ferocious criminal violence sweeping through American cities following the death of George Floyd, an African-American, in the hands of the Minneapolis police.

This time around, "justified protest" is breaking every previous violent record as unchecked mayhem spreads in dozens of cities across the country (see map). Such is the intensity of this grisly outburst that the Secret Service briefly took President Trump and his family to the White House underground bunker, designed to protect the country's top leadership during a terrorist attack, after a "peaceful" mob dangerously approached the White House fence.

How did we get to this unprecedented crisis possibly demonstrating that "America's immune system is failing?" Let's consider the following.

In the years since the 1970s, America experienced a colossal shift in social and political attitudes. The perennial conflict between liberals and conservatives ballooned into a withering war of words and demands on both sides for legislation favoring pet "issues" of each side. Political discourse, under the overwhelming, and often damaging, influence of the so-called "social media," *was derailed into a mega cacophony machine drowning temperate voices and common sense.* The social and political landscape (never a prep school of decency and reason to begin with) grew into a Circus Maximus dominated by contagious, and often subversive, online "activism," thinly-veiled terroristic "demands for justice," and the catapulting into prominence of dime-a-dozen political and social "influencers," usually odd borderline individuals, who often fill the criteria of the Dunning-Kruger Effect to a tee.

Against this dreadful backdrop, one of America's most brutal and divisive issues, race relations, has gotten a terrifying renewed boost. Old ghosts reappeared receiving a powerful lift from the universal spread of amateur digital "investigative reporters" and "justice warriors." In this tumultuous storm of daily "evidence," emerging from cellphone cameras taping as if there is no tomorrow, whatever feeble reason was left for properly investigating and judging each individual digital case of "violation" has gone out the window.[i]

Cameras in hand, instant online "people's courts of justice," encompassing large swaths of Tweeter-ing and Facebook-ing nincompoop crusaders, rise up to demand "action" against "injustice"—on top of dramatic calls for broad social, educational, and monetary reparations to victims, real and imagined.

To boot, in the wake of the current devastating riots by the "aggrieved," we witnesses a ***wave of mutual support*** *between those who find burning, looting, and destroying to be legitimate forms of "protest"*

and those ever-present media apologists of the vandals, who term criminal destruction of property "not unruly"—as in this, rather eye-popping, case of a major TV network reporter ruminating with a looted and burning building clearly visible behind him.

The chaos that ignited in Minneapolis, and is spreading uncontrolled throughout the country, shows how well trained the various apologists of wanton destruction, vandalism, mayhem, and crime have become. In the words of one commentator:

> *QUOTE: People in the media know the script by heart. Idiot worthies get a kick out of inciting violence while pretending to appeal for justice. 'How long will we go for Blue on Black Crime before we strike back?' asked Ice Cube, the rapper. Other celebrities put out videos about overcoming racist oppression. Channels insist on calling rioters 'protesters', as if looting serves some noble cause. Authorities start to talk in platitudes. 'Being black in America should not be a death sentence,' said [Minneapolis] Mayor Jacob Frey, as if that were a bold and controversial statement. END QUOTE*

How did we arrive at this sudden and rapidly spreading malignancy? Answering the question would take far more than a brief commentary, yet we may start by contemplating the following points.

➢ Post-Vietnam US saw a rising liberal progressivist tendency fueled by the enormous sociopolitical dislocation caused by opposition to the war in SE Asia. Liberal progressivists took it upon themselves to correct what they saw as dangerous lapses and "injustices" by pursuing *command legislation,* i.e. gargantuan new laws seeking to regulate the very essence of human relations and impose "correct attitudes" on all and sundry— an effort that eventually gave rise to what many identify today as the **tyranny of "political correctness" (PC for short).**

➢ While the very use of the PC concept leads to complicated debate and analysis pathways, when debating the organization and conduct of politics and society, PC's trickle-down effect has generated *virulent absurdities* that influence not only the use of language but, also, key decisions on many crucial issues that challenge basic human intelligence (see, for example, here and here).

➢ In turn, PC-demanded "necessary adjustments" are causing absurd, and often dangerous, misinterpretation of public standards and normal understanding of the facts of life. PC

has penetrated all levels of public and private life causing confusion, disorientation, delinquency, not to mention disastrous "methods" of teaching the young that emerge out of mindless partisanship and false trivialities.

- ➤ PC efforts to impose tyrannical rules of self-expression, and make individual instant gratification the rule of the day, continue to have catastrophic results: scoundrels and delinquents become "martyrs;" criminals, vandals, felons, and sociopaths become "heroes of the Cause" and "brave trailblazers;" and those who dare point to the absurdity of accepting wanton and irrational methods of "eliminating discrimination and intolerance" risk their careers, the wellbeing of their families, and, even, their own personal safety.

- ➤ Last but not least, the massive onslaught to impose blanket "diversity and inclusiveness" practices as the true gold standard of social and human relations *demolishes* logic based on irrefutable philosophical discourse; *relegates* basic social and moral concepts, developed and tested over millennia, to the status of cheap "consumer goods" to be accepted or rejected as just another purchase from a dime store; and *trivializes* the very essence of society based on historical continuity, rules of kinship, and inherited culture. In short, the Man and the Woman –and all other emergent "genders" in between—are free to belittle, reject, cancel, and dissolve values and moralities that have withstood the longest test of time with remarkable resilience and effective practical application.

Throughout the ages, social change resembles a massive train rolling at suffocating slow speed. While violent revolutions often produce instant catastrophic results for incumbent regimes, their claimed "principles" usually deflate quickly or, simply, fall by the wayside as soon as the "revolutionaries" become entrenched "leaders" caught in the struggle for prominence in the shadow of political realities. Those who are familiar with world history know that for each "revolution" that succeeds dozens of others wither and fizzle out when they inevitably lose traction among the people or fall victims of "in house" struggles involving the revolutionary protagonists themselves.

The current "revolution" in American streets, awe-inspiring as it is because of its almost unprecedented ferocity and the vandalism perpetrated by its "justified protesters," cannot escape this historical precedent. Already, there are opinions from centrist media openly condemning

wanton violence and looting, and warning those perpetrating "anarchic antics" that, at the end of the day, most people will choose law and order over their anarchy and destruction.

It is thus time for the US government to move decisively, and at all possible speed, to restore law and order by use of its full powers. Right now, the country needs to focus on restoring the calamitous social, economic, and organizational devastation caused by the pandemic. All other "priorities," including "injustices" of the past, are lesser objectives to be dealt with when, and if, it becomes possible.

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[i] On the broader issue of digital evidence and criminal prosecution see Sean E. Goodison, Robert C. Davis, and Brian A. Jackson, "Digital Evidence and the US Criminal Justice System" at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/248770.pdf