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Do You, Like Me, Feel Politically Unrepresented

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For some time now, through the U.S. Presidential elections last year, and watching the spectacle of Trump Presidency, I have felt we are losing our way as a country. No one is providing a strategic vision of where we ought to be going that I find convincing. Neither Democrats or Republicans, so far as I can tell, see things the way I see them. It makes me wonder if there are others out there, that share my view and if so, what should we do about it?

Since President Bush's speech right after 9/11 announcing the **War on Terrorism**, we have pursued a strategy that is not only failing, but has cost us trillions and made us more vulnerable. I don't feel safer than I did 15 years ago, do you? The strategy of using violence to solve the problem is not working. Every kill seems to create 5 more terrorists! When you have people willing to be suicide bombers, you have to at least understand what's motivating them. Why after a terrorist is killed, do we never see his suicide note? Why are we only given implausible explanations like they just "hate us" or "their religion has promised them virgins in heaven"? Do they perhaps have legitimate criticism of our actions and policies we need to reconsider? Why do we live under the illusion that we are the "good guys" and they are "unredeemable bad guys" and the only solution is their eradication? So when President Trump's first budget action is to increase the defense budget by 10%, does the song "When will they ever learn?" come to your mind?

A second failed strategy supported by every Republican and Democratic government since Nixon's is the **War on Drugs**. No politician seems to want to talk about this war and no thinking person I know is under the illusion that this war is being won. All the evidence compiled by blue ribbon Commissions shows that the problems of drug abuse are bigger today than when war was declared. What the war has achieved is billion of dollar of profits in the hands of criminals being used to finance gang violence, the corruption of police forces and the political establishment. Hypocritically we pretend it is a supply problem and don't punish consumption. The war has filled our prisons with addicts and minor criminals while never seeming to touch their bosses (unless they are foreign drug lords). The War on Drugs is akin to a fire truck arriving at a blazing house and using gasoline to put out the fire.

Sadly, people attempting to discuss this failed strategy are inevitably attacked "Are you advocating legalizing drugs?" Hasn't the time come to admit that pursuing a clearly failed strategy is lunacy! There have got to be better ways of dealing with the problem;

one we might identify if we look at history, the experience of other countries, or get our best minds imagining alternatives.

Finally, let me raise the major problem looming in our future. We are living in a time in which **Technology** can and is solving a huge number of problems but also destroying jobs. It is creating great wealth for a few but declining wages for many. Those of us who have benefited from the growing income inequality have been given a rude awakening by President Trump's election and Brexit. A significant minority (if not majority) of our citizens no longer believe the liberal economic and political system created after WWII is working in their favor. They want change. They are encouraged to blame free trade and immigration; but the analysis I've seen suggests that technological change is the main driver of these uncomfortable changes.

The first waves of the tsunami bearing down on us has already arrived. The approaching rising waters, to change the metaphor, have the potential to lift everyone on the planet out of poverty and solve many of our most pressing problems of energy, climate, water and waste. But there is no guarantee that the technological promise will be realized, will benefit all, and not lead to destructive social conflict. How do we give everyone a meaningful productive role in society as well as a share of the benefits of the potential bonanza? This, I suspect, will require a significant redesign of our economic and political systems. Yet so far as I can tell neither of the main political parties are intelligently discussing this problem, much less proposing the sort of radical solutions that might be needed.

So I ask "Do you share my concerns?" If so, how would you suggest we go about focusing the government on what is really important?