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The United States, from the "American Dream" to the crisis of "democracy" and the risk of civil war

Sources: Rebellion

What kind of democracy is reeling or endangered in the United States?

A year after the events of the Capitol that took place on January 6, 2021, it is a current question that can be explored to understand the present and the future of American society. The question is no less important if we start from the partial article written by former President James Carter and published in *The New York Times* on January 6 (<https://nyti.ms/3q5Qkr6>). It can be argued that, in principle, Carter's reductionist analysis focuses the gaze and the accusation on the political movement headed by Donald J. Trump, when the core of the problem is broader, complex and covers multiple edges and not strictly the electoral in that nation.

"The Founding Fathers of the United States" belonged to a wealthy and, in turn, enlightened elite. At all times this elite opposed the influence of majorities in the public affairs of the nation. At most they accepted indirect participation through local governments and municipalities. The vote and the exercise of direct democracy were not conceived for the common, but for citizens with money, school training and without being subject to slavery. These are restricted citizen rights, since it was believed that to leave the fate of a nascent nation to the free will of the majority would be to hand it over to

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demagogue leaders who would exploit the delusional streak of those majorities. The impoverished masses governed by ignorance only had to have a direct impact on the election of the members of the House of Representatives.

It was a question of controlling and subduing the popular will, because as James Madison put it, "democracy is the vilest form of government." Alexander Hamilton himself – then first Secretary of the Treasury – warned of the urgency of avoiding the "impudence of democracy", or what Thomas Jefferson called "elected despotism". The qualifiers are understood when several of those "Founding Fathers" were slaveholders, landowners and belonging to enlightened elites.

Over the decades, what allowed the United States to survive and maintain unity amid factional strife was the materialization of liberal institutions, the division and balance of powers, and the abolition of slavery. It took almost a century since the Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies for Abraham Lincoln to understand and become convinced that the only way to avoid the disunity or disintegration of the new nation was to incorporate the people into the notion of democracy introduced by "The Founding Fathers."

So, factionalism and tyranny were the ghosts to be eradicated. Hence, "The Founding Fathers" emphasized, with their peculiar notion of democracy, the need to avoid the concentration of power in a few hands. If this was not avoided, then tyranny was at the nation's door and would reproduce the vices that the British Crown imposed on the Thirteen Colonies at the time. And for this they devised a highly decentralized political system based on tension and reciprocal control between the different powers instituted and on the restriction – from solid institutions – of discretion on the part of those who occupy those powers. In addition, through federalism the governments of the States of the American Union would be empowered to impose limits on the central government. The right to resistance was also enshrined in the Constitution, just to deal with the concentration of power in a few hands.

Ultimately, rights such as property or liberty in any form would not be subject to voting; they transcend it because they are inalienable rights in the pragmatic political philosophy of these "Founding Fathers" endowed with an aristocratic spirit. The opposite of this

notion of freedom was the renunciation of it by amorphous masses willingly subjected to tyrannical powers in exchange for protection and security. Moreover, "The Founding Fathers" opted for a society free from religious persecution; although they were opposed to law and power being an expression of the general will, as it was venerated in the ideology of the so-called "French Revolution". Aware were "The Founding Fathers of the United States" that this abstraction of the general will ends up sucking freedom and emptying it of meaning.

What Alexis de Tocqueville observed on his 1831 and 1832 trip to the United States was a nascent nation without the anarchy that characterized the smoking embers of Europe's feudal past. Pragmatism, individualism (understood as the value of the individual) and materialism, fused with religiosity and the sense of community, were the traits that the French aristocrat observed on his trip and expressed them correctly in his work *The Democracy of America*.

Just the point related to tyranny and its super-imposition on the liberal and conventional notion of democracy, is what is failing today in the case of the United States. The factionalism of the plutocratic elites prevails over fidelity to the nation. The financial agents of megabanks, *mass media* and digital corporations achieved so much power that by themselves they are able to shake that notion of democracy from "The Founding Fathers". Without balances or counterweights, these factional powers extend their influence beyond their right to property and individual guarantees, escalating their depredation to the whole of the increasingly privatized public space.

And here it is not a question of making a reductionist revisionism of the thought and materialization of the ideas of these "Founding Fathers", but of understanding in its right dimension and in its time the political ideology that gave shape to the nascent nation. In principle, tyranny was observed by them in the outdated practices of a then decadent and transitioning Europe. Revisionism would have to be made, in any case, with respect to the way in which that ideal of society degenerated and with respect to the vested interests that led along that path at least since the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1945.

What "The Founding Fathers" did not foresee at the end of the eighteenth century was the risk that these instituted powers, including the Executive, would tend to be privatized, to

be kidnapped by these factions of the plutocratic elites and to distance themselves from the ordinary citizen. That is precisely the background of the bloody confrontation of the last five years in that nation, and that threatens to lead it to a civil war.

"The Founding Fathers" also did not foresee the dangers of the excessive and also privatizing use of the military/industrial complex, of which Dwight Eisenhower warned in his farewell speech delivered in 1961 as President of the United States. Although in the Political Constitution they enshrined the right to carry and use weapons for the self-defense of citizens.

What has happened in recent years in the United States is related to a process of social and political decomposition of long gestation and duration, which had as its zenith the last five years. It is related – as we have already referred to (<http://bit.ly/33jXPPo> and <http://bit.ly/36GXQO3>) – directly to the fierce disputes between two factions of the plutocratic elites confronted by the control of power, the hegemonic decline of the United States, and the course and transitions of the pattern of accumulation and that will mark a new economic cycle in the next half century. On the one hand, the nativist/nationalist/industrialist/ultraconservative plutocratic elite whose visible head is Donald Trump himself and his alliances with the oil and industrial lobby, and on the other the ultra-liberal/financial/digital/military/globalist plutocratic elite embodied in the Bush, Clinton and Obama dynasties, and allied to the vested and factional interests of Wall Street, Silicon Valley, Hollywood, and the lobby that promotes the so-called *Green New Deal* as a renewed source of profit.

A political phenomenon like Trumpism can only be explained by the impacts of the recurrent banking/financial crises of the last four decades and by the sclerosis and dysfunction of that nation's political system to process and react to the needs and urgencies of the American population. Hence, it is not an isolated or decontextualized phenomenon, but the expression of the same hegemonic decadence of the United States and the rupture of the ideals around the so-called *American Dream* and the *American Way of Life*. The expired political establishment in Washington led to a bipartisanship that was stagnant, distant from the citizenry and oblivious to its feelings regarding the *great national and world problems*. Embarked on the maelstrom of warmongering and its Manifest Destiny – of which Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan are proof of their failure and historical unviability

–(<https://bit.ly/3C1a4iX>), this political elite neglected its citizens over five decades, deindustrialized the country, socialized the induced bankruptcy of the banking/financial system, promoted and ignored the epidemic of opioid overdoses(<https://bit.ly/3sCUkix>), and did not notice the conditions of social pauperization that made it impossible to materialize this dream.

Moreover, political exclusion reaches millions of citizens who do not have access to decision-making processes or spaces for public deliberation co-opted by the agenda imposed by the large investment funds and the *mass media*. This political establishment, full of technocracies and civil and military bureaucracies, experiences a frank collapse of legitimacy as a result of the divorce from the masses of citizens segregated by economic crises and the rise of inequality – and the proportion of 1/99. Trump, then, is the result of the accumulated discontent and unrest among the social sectors – native and Caucasian – impoverished and excluded.

As long as this deep-rooted *discomfort with politics and politics* (<https://bit.ly/2ZKkZgg>) is not reversed by attacking the underlying problems, neither the increase in deflationary public spending nor the *media construction of Trump's defenestration* (<https://bit.ly/3w8eLE0>) will end the deep crisis of legitimacy of the American state and capitalism. Moreover, the germs of a possible civil war become evident as the demagoguery, lies, tribalism and *politics of resentment* raised by the two factions that lead the plutocratic disputes in the context of the hegemonic and societal decadence of the country take hold.

The situation of political violence as an expression of these extremisms – those of the government in turn and those of the opposition – could lead – together with the crisis of legitimacy – to a collapse of the US power system, in what is emerging as a long-term conflict that was not stopped with the so-called "Storming of the Capitol" or with the rise of Joe Biden and the return of the warmongering/financial/globalist agenda to the Presidency (<http://bit.ly/3bGyfJ9>).

Political violence is combined with digital violence and armed violence. Broad supremacist sectors dressed in a nativist and anti-immigrant ideology deploy their speeches of anger and hatred, and have as an incendiary correlate the institutional speech

of Biden proclaimed last January six where he blames the other side for "hanging a dagger in the throat of the United States and American democracy." Neither extreme takes perspective to assume the limitations of its factionalist position, and this is so because of the vested interests and the model of civilization that each one defends and promotes.

Polls indicate that large portions of the U.S. population believe fraud was committed in the last presidential election. Moreover, there are many citizens who maintain that the "Storming of the Capitol" was not an illegal act, but something legitimate to evidence "tyranny". And this is expressed in the context of that mutual *politics of resentment* stoked by the *mass media*, political leaders of different signs, and those who hide in the keys that activate the socio-digital networks.

Gun violence is expressed in the fact that about 23 million to 40 million firearms were purchased throughout 2020 by 17 million Americans. The situation did not cease in 2021 until reaching an estimated 310 million weapons in the hands of individuals. The justification that these citizens offer today regarding these purchases is related to "self-defense or protection against abuses that the government infringes on citizens." These local extremist groups attend rallies, marches and protests showing their weapons, and on many occasions intimidate with it and threaten politicians, particularly from the Democratic Party. The risk of promoting violence to seize power is latent, and even more so if it is combined with long-standing structural and conjunctural problems. Hence the wide real possibilities of civil war a year after the so-called "Storming of the Capitol".

Más todavía: el escenario que se abre para el 2022 en los Estados Unidos no es nada halagador y menos lo será para las poblaciones pauperizadas y asediadas por la pandemia del Covid-19. Al 9 de enero del presente año, con 60 072 321 de casos diagnosticados y 837 594 muertes por esta enfermedad (<https://bit.ly/3naAzgE>), Estados Unidos continúa como el epicentro de la *crisis epidemiológica global* y la evidencia fehaciente del colapso de los sistemas sanitarios privatizados y desmantelados.

With inflation reaching 7% in 2021, the effects of hyper-indebtedness and unrestricted money printing accumulated over the last two years are beginning to be felt. Contrary to the precepts of orthodox monetarist economic theory, the Federal Reserve (FED) system printed in 2020 22% of the total dollars historically in circulation in order to finance the

mega-bailout packages aimed at banks and private companies; thereby accentuating deficit public spending. The same Fed indicates that the volume of dollars rose from 15.33 trillion dollars at the end of 2019 to 19.1 trillion before the end of 2020. This is the highest inflation in 30 years and this will have consequences for the world economy as a whole. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell himself noted in early December 2021 that this inflation is not temporary or transitory but a "persistent" economic phenomenon(<https://bit.ly/3HOu62J>).

The social debt in the American Union, which increased with the shipwreck of the real estate/financial crisis of 2008/2009, yielded 40.6 million poor people by 2016 – one in 5 children were in this condition (something like 15.3 million infants) – (<https://bit.ly/3qaa0dh>) and extended to *the homeless* (the "homeless"), which by 2020 amounted to around 600,000 people – of which 23% are Latin Americans and the 39% are of African descent – (<https://bit.ly/3r23CnR>). This housing crisis is also expressed in the proliferation of people living not in caravans or mobile homes, but in compact cars(<https://bit.ly/3F4VU1a>). These are new poor people who are not exactly unemployed, but are shipwrecked by the high rental prices of housing (above \$ 1,500 for a small study) or the impossibility of taking some property. For the city of Los Angeles alone, it was estimated that in 2019 around 16,000 people lived in their car(<https://lat.ms/3nakVlr>); while in the city of Mountain View, where the Silicon Valley technology district is located, around 300 cars with technicians and engineers sleeping in them were parked that year(<http://hrlid.us/3Fbfh8E>). These data show the *absence and prostration* of the State in the face of public problems, and where local governments at most aspire to grant free parking for these cars and prevent their owners from exposing themselves to public insecurity.

In that logic, the outlook for the government presided over by Joe Biden is not flattering either, since the ineffective – and selfishly ignorant – handling of the pandemic persists – more than 437 thousand deaths from Covid-19 were added since January 20, 2021 (more than half of the total registered) and after the start of the massive vaccination campaigns – as well as migratory phenomena – as of October 2021 this government deported and expelled around 1.2 million migrants(<https://bit.ly/3F4QgMs>). Added to this is the aforementioned hyper-inflation and the lack of political capacity to promote an ambitious infrastructure law project. In case of winning the renewal of Congress those political

groups nucleated around the figure of Donald Trump, the scenario opens that the midterm election results in the frank paralysis of the mandate and projects of Joe Biden from the legislative branch. To that same electoral process American society will arrive fragmented and inoculated by hatred and noneness of the opposite extreme.

Understanding the background of the structural problems experienced in the United States is an urgency that undoubtedly merits overcoming the Manichaeism and hate speech that are disseminated from the conventional media and from the socio-digital networks – whoever controls both – and to nail the incisive gaze of historical analysis in the conjunctural facts and megatrends related to the exhaustion of the hegemony of the *pax americana*. . What happens in the North American nation and with its confronted elites is not an isolated matter, but something that concerns the whole of humanity and, particularly, Latin America, because in that power the course of power relations in the world economy, international politics and in the paths adopted by changes in the pattern of accumulation is at stake. More relevant is the impartial analysis of these realities when the systemic decline of the world and the institutions configured after 1945 is evident.

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semantics and prospective scenarios.

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