

1 **Politics of Our Times: Asking the Difficult Questions**

2 **Draft document** <sup>1</sup>

3 **Questioning the foundations of the United States polity: Democracy, equality and**

4 **the Bill of Rights**

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7

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9 **Abstract**

10 Recent institutional changes in many economically advanced countries raise questions  
11 about a number of political beliefs about democracy and civil liberties. The United States  
12 as the richest and militarily most powerful state and because of its influence on other  
13 nations is justified as a focus of analysis. A partial list of beliefs that might be examined  
14 includes: the United States is a democracy; civil liberties and human rights are central to  
15 foreign and domestic policy in which there is an attempt to, a) protect free speech,  
16 religion, and the press, b) insure freedom from slavery and forced labor, c) provide  
17 equality before the law, and d) insure the right of privacy; opportunity exists for social  
18 and economic advancement; education and medical care are available to all segments of

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1 1 The paper title has changed and the abstract has been rewritten. However, the paper  
2 follows the original conceptualization. References are not complete, they may never  
3 be, and there will inevitably be additional editing changes. The paper has been  
4 uploaded to allow comments which are strongly encouraged, as is tolerance.  
5 Apologies for the inability to fact-check every statement included with a credible  
6 reference.

7

19 the populations; drug policies are for the protection of the health of the people; regulation  
20 of the environment including the air and water supply, the workplace, and of food and  
21 manufactured goods is for public safety; there is a major effort to prosecute those  
22 engaged in sexual harassment, sexual assault or trafficking in women and children; the  
23 domestic police protect the people; NATO is a defense organization. The paper  
24 emphasizes two major topics but they provide a basis for a broader analysis. The United  
25 States as a democratic state: both the election process and the representation of the  
26 citizens are discussed including voter restrictions, vote verification, and the influence of  
27 money and the media; The U.S. as an empire: the U.S. military budget, a significant  
28 portion of the total military budgets of the world, is examined as well as foreign  
29 intervention and corporate activity. The evidence is consistent with a hypothesis that the  
30 militarization of the U.S. is to dominate, militarily and economically.

31 Key words: United States democracy, voting process, U.S. Empire, mass media,  
32 voting machines, voter suppression, health and, economic inequality, surveillance

33 **Outline**

34 Introduction—The thesis

35 The U.S. as a democratic republic

36 The election process

37       Presidential elections

38               Bush vs. Gore—2000

39                       The Florida election

40                       Court decisions (possible subtopic)

41               2004—Bush vs. Kerry

42               2008 and 2012—Obama-McCain and Obama-Romney

43               2016—The Democratic primary, Clinton vs. Sanders

44               2016—Presidential election, Trump vs. Clinton

45       Voting machines

46       Voter Suppression

47       Exit polls

48       The influence of money and the mass media

49               Media

50               Money

51       Congressional representation

52 The media

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54       Elections, public officials and legislation

55       The marketplace is self-regulating

56 Economic Inequality

57 Destruction of health world-wide

58 The surveillance state and the Bill of Rights

59 Empire

60 Summary and conclusions

61

62 **Introduction—The thesis**

63 Evidence is examined for the following thesis: The United States is an empire that  
64 has corrupted its democracy and engages, by its own actions or the support of others, in  
65 the destruction of large numbers of people in other countries, denies rights to a large  
66 portion of its citizenry and allows, and at times fosters, great risks to their health and  
67 safety.

68 **The U.S. as a democratic republic**

69 Consistent with standard definitions (*Governmentvs (2018)*), a democratic  
70 republic is defined as:

71 A state in which political power is exercised by representatives who are  
72 elected by the citizens and who are periodically subject to an election  
73 process in which the citizens may either re-elect or replace the  
74 representatives and in which voting age citizens are eligible to both vote  
75 in the election and/or be a candidate for elective office. (The U.S.  
76 constitution does restrict the presidency to “natural born citizens.” and  
77 also requires a minimum age for many offices.)

78 The election process

79 The examination of the election process focuses on national elections for president  
80 from 2000 to the present and also on representation in the Congress. Voting machines,  
81 voter suppression, and the influence of money and of the mass media are evaluated.

82

83           **Presidential elections**

84           **Bush vs. Gore—2000.** Although the voter selects a president by name, the vote is  
85 for the unnamed electors pledged to that candidate. The state's electoral vote is the sum  
86 of the two senators per state and the population based number of representatives.  
87 Wyoming receives an electoral vote for each 200,000 citizens but California one for each  
88 750,000. Except for Nebraska and Maine, all states are winner-take-all based on a simple  
89 plurality. In the 2000 election, Gore won the national popular vote by 550,000 votes but  
90 lost the electoral vote by four. The outcome depended on Florida's 25 electoral votes  
91 which was declared for Bush by 537 popular votes, .01% of the almost 6 million counted  
92 for these two candidates.

93           This election was important beyond the consequences for policy. Although  
94 corruption of the voting process had occurred previously in U.S. elections and continues,  
95 the U.S. Supreme Court, contrary to precedent, removed power from the Florida Supreme  
96 Court and halted the recount. As Justice Stevens noted in his minority remarks, the Court  
97 demonstrated that it was not politically unbiased.

98           ***The Florida election.*** Katherine Harris, Florida Secretary of State, who also  
99 worked for the Bush campaign and was a delegate to the 2000 Republican convention,  
100 developed the ineligible voter list based on felony convictions. The list consisted of over  
101 50,00 names and was substantially inaccurate. A majority on the list were Black

102 Americans. The Black population voted 92% for Gore. Individuals were excluded who  
103 had not been tried and in some instances never charged with a crime. The list ultimately  
104 was evaluated as approximately 95% inaccurate.

105 Margolick (2014) provides a general overview.

106 A Florida court has recently ruled that a felon who has served a sentence cannot be  
107 disqualified as a voter. (Hawkins, 2018).

108 Before election day and on that day, there were additional impediments for Black  
109 voters including false information about voting locations.

110 Military ballots cast after the polls had officially closed were included in the  
111 Florida tabulation. The New York Times established, after the election, the ineligibility  
112 of these ballots. The military voted heavily in favor of George W. Bush and the number  
113 of ineligible military ballots provided more than the margin of the declared plurality for  
114 Bush.

115 In some districts, ballots were so confusing that voter testimony established that  
116 many realized afterwards that they had not marked their intentions correctly. Florida law  
117 required a re-vote in those districts. No re-vote occurred. (Van Natta & Canedy, 2000).

118 In other districts, the physical marking of the ballot was not read by the voting  
119 machine. However, in many instances, the visible marks clearly indicated the voter's  
120 intent. A recount was started on a ballot by ballot basis. The Republicans organized  
121 physically intimidating protests. In at least one instance, the board stopped the recount

122 effort because of the protests (Filkins and Canedy, 2000).

123           *Court decisions.* The Democratic party petitioned the Supreme Court of  
124 Florida to allow the recount to continue. The Florida SC, supported the claim. The  
125 USSC was then petitioned by the Republicans and it overruled the state and stopped the  
126 recount. The questionable legal basis of the 5-4 majority was evidenced in their  
127 statement that this decision only applied to this single case. Aside from the impossibility  
128 of a Supreme Court decision not becoming a precedent, the reasoning of the majority was  
129 based on a claim that there was unequal protection of the law, as required in the 14<sup>th</sup>  
130 amendment to the constitution, since the Democratic Party suit requested a recount in  
131 only some of the Florida counties. However, application of the principle of unequal  
132 protection would invalidate almost all U.S. elections, including the Florida vote, since  
133 states do not have uniform voting standards in their voting jurisdictions. Further, the  
134 court could have ruled that the state court was required to present to the USSC a plan for  
135 a uniform recount of all of the state ballots that would have allowed the recount to  
136 proceed (Seckler, Perez, Haaugse, 2003).

137           **2004--Bush vs. Kerry.** Although the national popular vote favored Bush by a  
138 three million vote plurality, the outcome of this election depended on Ohio's 20 electoral  
139 votes.

140           Kenneth Blackwell, the Ohio Secretary of State, and an honorary co-chair of the

141 Ohio G.W. Bush re-election campaign, also developed a voter exclusion list. It consisted  
142 of individuals who were likely to vote for the democratic candidate. The list was  
143 substantially erroneous. During the election, urban areas that generally voted democratic  
144 were provided relatively fewer voting machines. A number of unrepaired voting  
145 machines were present in those districts. Coupled with inclement weather and long  
146 waiting times before voting, many voters exited the line before voting. The principle of  
147 unequal protection was not raised. Shuler (2004) presents a review of some of the  
148 election problems.

149         However, the vote margin in Ohio was declared to be almost 120,000. The tally of  
150 the votes based on the voting machines represented one major difficulty. In some  
151 districts there was no ability to verify the accuracy of the vote. In addition, a quarter of a  
152 million votes were uncounted. They had either been classified as unreadable or were  
153 provisional ballots provided to voters whose credentials were questioned. Finally, the  
154 rotation of names to prevent order effects which was required by Ohio law (LawWriter,  
155 2018) did not occur due to the late withdrawal of a candidate. Jon Krosnick has  
156 estimated that the rotation may account for a 2% difference in vote (NPR, 2006). Bush  
157 received 2.1% more votes than Kerry in Ohio in 2004.

158         The Kerry campaign assessed an unlikely win in the courts and decided not to  
159 contest. Unfortunately, this resulted in no public record of the problems thus contributing  
160 to future repetition.



161

162       **2008 and 2012--Obama-McCain and Obama-Romney.** Whatever problems  
163 existed in vote tallies were overcome by large margins of victory for Obama in both  
164 elections. The 2008 election outcome was affected by dissatisfaction with the Iraq war  
165 but was primarily a consequence of the economic collapse before the election.

166       **2016--The Democratic primary, Clinton-Sanders.** In addition to the biases of  
167 the Democratic party that favored Clinton, Sanders was provided with a fraction of media  
168 coverage accorded Clinton and Trump during the early primary campaigns (Cole, 2015).  
169 To decrease the possibility that the voter in the Democratic primary would err in ballot  
170 choice, the party developed a super delegate system that awarded nominating votes to  
171 elected officials and other significant figures in the party. Eighty-percent of the over 700  
172 super delegates, almost one-quarter of the number (2382) required for nomination, had  
173 announced for Clinton before the convention and only six per cent for Sanders  
174 (Wikipedia, 2018). Since the Democratic party conducted its primary vote on a  
175 proportional basis, Sanders would have been required to obtain large pluralities in the  
176 primaries to overcome the Clinton super-delegate advantage. The Democratic party rules  
177 stated that the delegate vote count during the primary was only to be based on elected  
178 delegates but the rule was regularly violated. Nevertheless, although funded by non-  
179 corporate and primarily small individual contributions, the Sanders campaign seriously  
180 challenged the Clinton inevitability. While post-election analyses assess whether Sanders

181 could have won the majority of the elected delegates had the voting process itself not  
182 been corrupted by the party, the overall primary outcome probably depended on the  
183 results in Illinois. Had Clinton lost the Illinois primary, the Sanders campaign would  
184 have been in a strong position to obtain a majority of the elected delegates and that fact  
185 influences the vote of the super delegates who are not committed until the actual vote at  
186 the convention.

187         The hypothesis of an ultimate Sanders primary victory is based on momentum.  
188 The Sanders campaign had won victories in a number of states including Minnesota by a  
189 large 15% and in Michigan by a narrow, 1.5%. Both the Illinois and Missouri primaries  
190 were one week after Michigan. As the sixth most populous state, a Clinton loss in Illinois  
191 would have further undermined the image of inevitability that had been fostered by the  
192 Clinton campaign for years. Clinton won Missouri by 0.2% of the vote. In Illinois,  
193 Sanders lost the state by 1.5% (CNN, 2016). Voter testimony before the Chicago  
194 Election Board established that machines registered votes different than those that were  
195 cast. The Board listened and no action was taken. Had Clinton lost Illinois, it is  
196 reasonable to hypothesize that she would have been unable to achieve the nomination.  
197 That conclusion is also supported by public opinion polls that consistently indicated that  
198 Sanders was a stronger candidate against the Republicans than Clinton (Rafai, 2016).

199         **The presidential election of 2016-Trump-Clinton.** Clinton obtained three  
200 million more votes than Trump but lost the electoral vote (227-304). The Clinton

201 campaign committed a number of strategic and messaging errors, but this analysis is of  
202 the voting process. Two important factors were the voting machines and voter  
203 disqualification. Trump's final electoral victory was based on victories in Pennsylvania  
204 (20), Ohio (18) Michigan (16), Wisconsin (10), and Iowa (6). Clinton's loss in Iowa was  
205 large enough to not bias the state's electoral vote. Although the loss by Clinton in Ohio  
206 was large, (447, 000 of almost 5.5 million), the state turned off the vote verification  
207 system of the voting machines, raising questions about the accuracy of the count. The  
208 state also had a cross-check list of 497,000 names, over weighted with Black voters, and  
209 it provided limited resources for voting to that population (Palast, 2016). The outcomes  
210 in Michigan (11,000 of 4.5 million), Pennsylvania (46,000 of 6 million), and Wisconsin  
211 (23,000 of 3 million) may have been determined by voting machine problems and/or  
212 voter suppression.

### 213 **Voting machines**

214 A democratic election requires public verification of the vote but that is not the  
215 case in many voting districts in the United States (Black Box Voting, 2017, Blaze, 2017,  
216 Verified Voting, 2017). Not all voting machines provide a printed copy. As a result, the  
217 voter cannot ascertain whether the vote registered represents the vote intended. In  
218 addition, public supervision of the process is frequently absent. Companies have claimed  
219 that the machines and their operation, hardware and software, represent proprietary

220 information and in some instances the legislatures have conceded oversight to the  
221 companies themselves. Of the three major states in question for the 2016 election,  
222 Pennsylvania was evaluated as not providing sufficient independent verification.  
223 Pennsylvania did not have a paper trail (Ballotpedia (2018)).

224 **Voter suppression**

225 A second problem is that of voter disqualification. For a number of election  
226 cycles, a cross-check system had been established to prevent voter fraud. Among the  
227 states that participated were Pennsylvania (it has since removed itself from the cross-  
228 check system, SIIPCampaigns, 2017), Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa. In  
229 2016 a total of 98 million records were compared. Independent studies have indicated  
230 that 200 legitimate voters were eliminated for every potential (not actual) instance of  
231 fraud, and have concluded that there are fewer fraudulent votes than one in 20 million.  
232 Penalties for voting fraud are severe.

233 Voters can challenge, as they could in the 2000 and other elections, their status and  
234 may receive a provisional ballot. These were not counted in the Clinton-Trump  
235 campaign. The destruction after an election of uncounted provisional ballots is not  
236 unusual.

237 The cross-check system that occurred in Michigan had a significant effect. The  
238 list contained over 400,000 names. A large proportion of these were Black voters,  
239 Without the cross-check system, Trump would have lost Michigan.

240 In Wisconsin, the voter suppression was based on voter ID requirements that  
241 disproportionately affected groups that favored the Democrats. This system eliminated  
242 hundreds of thousands of voters and resulted in Trump's electoral victory in that state.

243 **Exit polls**

244 The methodology of exit polls accounts for their demonstrated ability to provide  
245 results very similar to the final vote tally. First, they only include those who have  
246 actually voted not those who are eligible and intend to vote or who are likely to vote.  
247 Secondly, they ask for a memory of behavior that has just occurred. They are still subject  
248 to error from sampling and from voters who do not participate. The sampling error is  
249 very small even on a state by state basis, usually less than one-half of one percent. There  
250 is no scientific evidence that those who decline to participate alter the representativeness  
251 of the sample.

252 The discrepancy between exit poll results and official counts in a number of  
253 instances, among which were the Bush-Kerry, the Clinton-Sanders, and the Clinton-  
254 Trump campaigns, has added to the concern about the integrity of the voting process.  
255 The “explanations” offered for the discrepancies are unsupported by analysis.

256 Exit polls do have a potential source of significant error since they may not have  
257 separated those who received provisional ballots from verified voters. A discrepancy  
258 based on this factor would emphasize the importance of the provisional ballots and the  
259 potential bias from voter disqualification lists.

260 Sometimes nature provides a control group. In a primary, for example, individuals  
261 receive a party ballot since the vote is for a party nominee. In the Clinton-Sanders  
262 campaign there were numerous discrepancies between exit polls and outcome but in those  
263 same states and districts there was not a discrepancy for the Republican voters. Further,  
264 the discrepancy in the Democratic primary tended to be greatest in those areas with  
265 voting machines for which there was no *bona fide* verification. In national elections, the  
266 control group is more tenuous but one approach would be to compare the exit poll and  
267 official results based on which political party controls the election process. There is now  
268 an attempt to eliminate exit polls as an independent evaluation of an election outcome.

269 **The influence of money and the mass media**

270 **The media.** An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free  
271 people “ That quote, erroneously attributed to Thomas Jefferson, applies to both formal  
272 education and continuing education through the media. This discussion focuses on the  
273 media.

274 Two legislative safeguards for achieving an informed public have been removed.  
275 The first was a limitation on the number of media outlets that a single corporation could  
276 control. The second was the fairness doctrine that required other points of view be  
277 provided access to the media.

278 Predictable consequences resulted from these changes. Major corporations bought  
279 other media companies. At this time, five or six major corporations control most of the

280 mass media in the U.S (Lutz, 2012). Although the number of VHF and UHF television  
281 channels are limited by the available bandwidth, cable and satellite channels have greatly  
282 expanded the number. However, access to the channels has required two resources. The  
283 first is money. Since a large percentage of U.S. citizens have income at or below the  
284 poverty level, such payment is not inconsequential. Secondly, cable companies control  
285 access through the necessity of purchasing a pre-established group of channels. A very  
286 few cable companies control the U.S. market, but alternatives have been developing and  
287 consumers have been canceling subscriptions in favor of less restrictive alternatives.

288         New departments have been incorporated into the entertainment division. This  
289 was one reason that Trump received a great deal of political air-time during the primaries  
290 and presidential campaigns. Sanders, although drawing large crowds to political rallies,  
291 received cursory exposure.

292         The political parties cooperated in eliminating alternative views. Presidential  
293 debates were formerly conducted by the non-partisan League of Women Voters. Then the  
294 two major parties formed a private corporation, chose a misleading name, the  
295 Commission on Presidential Debates, and agreed to rules that exclude any but the two  
296 major party candidates. Although there is a theoretical possibility that a third party  
297 candidate could achieve the required 15% of major specified polls, the typical poll  
298 question reduces the likelihood of achieving that level. The last third party candidate to  
299 reach that level was Ross Perot in the 1992 GHW Bush-Bill Clinton-Ross Perot

300 campaign. Ross Perot was a billionaire before almost everyone lived in a neighborhood  
301 with a billionaire. The importance of candidate debates was illustrated by the  
302 Gubernatorial victory of Jesse Ventura in Minnesota.

303         A common form of the pre-election poll question is: “If the election were held  
304 today, who (sic) would you vote for (sic)?” (Americans love incorrect English, it just  
305 sounds better.) Since the voter reasonably assumes that one of the two major party  
306 candidates will be elected, the choice is generally of one of them. If the question were:  
307 Who (no sense in fixing something that works) do you prefer in the election for  
308 president?, it is likely that a much larger percentage of voters would indicate a preference  
309 for a minor party candidate. This was particularly true in the 2016 election.

310         **Money.** There has been a tendency, present in both parties, to appoint to key  
311 positions of regulatory agencies members from the corporations that the agency is  
312 intended to regulate. This has occurred in areas ranging from the environment to banking  
313 to pharmaceuticals. Whereas, during the savings and loan crisis of the late 1980's, a  
314 thousand individuals were actually sentenced to prison under President Reagan, not  
315 generally regarded as anti-business, the economic crisis of 2008-09 that was the major  
316 factor in the election of Obama, resulted in no prison sentences although there was  
317 substantial evidence of fraud (Cohan, 2015). Eric Holder, appointed by president Obama  
318 to head the Department of Justice, was from a firm representing corporations and  
319 returned to his position. Loretta Lynch, whom Obama appointed to replace Holder, had



320 served on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

321 A third role of money is the ability to influence legislation. The research by Gilens  
 322 and Page (2014) suggests that legislative decisions are statistically independent of public  
 323 opinion, but there is a strong association between decisions and elite opinion.

324 **Congressional representation**

325 The congressional house districts have frequently been designed to minimize one  
 326 party's representation compared to the other. District boundaries are drawn by the state  
 327 legislature. The courts oversee the process but state judges are frequently elected and  
 328 their election is supported by one of the political parties. Table 1 present some important  
 329 states in which the percentage of vote for Trump and for Clinton (in that order) are  
 330 presented, then the senatorial representation (Republican, Democrat) and then the  
 331 congressional representation (R, D).

332 **Table 1. Percentage popular vote, senate and house representation in key states**

333 State	DT-HC%	(R,C)	(R,C)
334	popular vote	Senate	House
335 Pennsylvania	48.8-47.6	(1,1)	(12-6)*
336 Ohio	52.1-43.5	(1,1)	(11, 41 vacant)
337 Indiana	57.2-37.9	(1,1)	(7-2)
338 Michigan	47.6-47.3	((), 2)	(9-4, 1Vacant)
339 Illinois	39.4-55.4	(0,2)	(7,11)
340 Wisconsin	47.9-46.9	(1,1)	(5,3)
341 Minnesota	45.4-46.9	(0,2)	(3-5)
342 Iowa	51.8-42.2	(2-0)	(3,1)
343 Missouri	57.1-38	(1,1)	(6,2)
344 Senate count		(7, 11)	
345 House count			(63, 39)

346 \*Court ordered redistricting in Pennsylvania to achieve greater fairness in representation  
347 was not in effect on March 13, 2018 when the Democrat won a narrow victory over the  
348 Republican incumbent in the 18<sup>th</sup> district.  
349

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350         The House representation is notable in the populous states of Michigan, Ohio, and  
351 Pennsylvania. In the full set of listed states, selected because of their importance in  
352 presidential elections, the Democrats have 61% of the Senate seats, but only 38% of the  
353 representatives in the House. Because only one-third of the Senate is elected every two  
354 years but all members of House serve two years before another election, comparisons are  
355 not definitive. However, this pattern has existed for a sufficiently long period to conclude  
356 that in many states the House districts have been designed to favor one party over the  
357 other. (This is also the case in many state legislatures.)

## 358 **The media**

### 359 **Defining the boundaries of thought**

360         One does not think in French unless one has been exposed to the French language.  
361 Some cannot imagine pronouncing the word controversy without the second r until  
362 visiting the UK. Further exposure leads to a realization that that r was saved for other  
363 words such as the nation of Cubar. The media influence boundaries on thought. To the  
364 extent that they only report a narrow range of ideas, other possibilities become less likely  
365 to be imagined and therefore discussed, a prerequisite for mobilization (Gamson, Fireman  
366 and Rytina, 1982). Since the media in the U.S. are not independent of the two major

367 political parties, a debate is more likely to be about the appropriate increase rather than  
368 decrease in the military budget. Over 40% of the U.S. voting public identify themselves  
369 as independent rather than as Democrat or Republican (Gallup, 2018). The percentage  
370 that actually identifies with a third party is very small. The emphasis on corporate profits  
371 results in minimal exposure for points of view that do not serve this purpose. In addition,  
372 the government actively suppresses alternative opinions as it attempts to mobilize public  
373 support for its policies. The media have intimidated to the point of unemployment  
374 journalists who attempt to report independently such as Donohue, Ventura, Hedges, and  
375 Schultz. The government also utilizes direct coercive power (Moyers, 2007) through  
376 threats, based frequently on charges of breaches of national security, to prosecute whistle-  
377 blowers who provide information about unconstitutional and/or illegal governmental  
378 activities. Assange, Kiriakou, Snowden, and Manning, are but a few of the examples of  
379 the exercise of such coercion (Greenberg, 2014).

380         Although alternative media have become widespread, the mass media still  
381 constitute the major exposure for a large majority of the population. Nevertheless, a  
382 surprising majority of the citizens disagree with numerous government policies but are  
383 faced at election with two political heads competing for the same corporate body.

384         **Elections, public officials, and legislation.**

385         The general finding that the candidate who spends the most money is the likely

386 winner is confounded by the fact that incumbents are most likely to win re-election.  
387 They also are likely to raise more money. The Sanders campaign illustrated other caveats  
388 including a) popular candidates can raise money even though the average donation is  
389 relatively small, and b) volunteers are worth a great deal in monetary terms. Nevertheless  
390 as Zajonc (1968) has demonstrated, there is a relationship between familiarity (mere  
391 exposure) and liking and money allows the purchase of familiarity through the mass  
392 media. This problem was accentuated by the Supreme Court of the United States when it  
393 decided that restrictions on expenditures during a campaign were infringements of free  
394 speech. The majority in the Citizens United decision had all been appointed by  
395 Republican presidents. The minority included one, Justice Stevens, appointed by a  
396 Republican; the others had been appointed by a Democratic president. Among the  
397 majority were Justices Kennedy, Scalia, and Thomas, all of whom had voted to halt the  
398 recount in Florida in the 2000 presidential election.

399 **The marketplace is self-regulating**

400 The media, political pressure and the educational system lead to beliefs that are  
401 accepted by a large number of people as truisms, for example, capitalism and democracy  
402 are inextricably connected, or the marketplace is self-regulating. In other areas of human  
403 existence, public dress, sexual behavior, drug use, pedestrian traffic, automobile  
404 movement, and a myriad of others, society understands the need to regulate behavior.  
405 But the marketplace, where the individual seeks gain, can be regulated by the behavior of

406 other individuals without institutional intervention (unless the intervention aids business).  
407 A reasonable hypothesis is that many truisms are developed to serve underlying motives  
408 other than serving the public good.

409 **Economic inequality**

410         The U.S. has both a high level of inequality (Guardian, 2017) and a low rate of  
411 social mobility (Gould, 2012). Inequality is increasing and is most pronounced when  
412 comparing the Black minority to the remainder of the population but the inequality also  
413 affects other minorities as well as large segments of the White population. Recent tax  
414 changes, for example, in estate taxes, accentuate the development of an oligarchic  
415 society. The inequality is fostered by legislation that privatizes prisons. The agreements  
416 with corporations frequently include a “guaranteed” incarceration rate as high as 90%.  
417 Governments have agreed to pay for the cost of almost full occupancy and would  
418 therefore be expected to increase arrests to meet the contractual obligations and justify  
419 the expenditures. The privatization does provide legislators with sources of campaign  
420 contributions from the prison corporations. It also provides inexpensive labor since  
421 prisoners frequently produce goods for private corporations at salaries that are a fraction  
422 of the cost of “free” labor, thus placing pressure on non-prison workers to accept low  
423 wages.

424         That the inequality is extreme in the United States is indicated by the fact that the  
425 assets of the wealthiest three families is equivalent to the combined assets of the bottom

426 half of the population. The racial disparity is illustrated by the fact that the bottom one-  
427 half of the Black population averages net assets of eight USD (\$8). Worldwide, the  
428 estimate is that the eight wealthiest individuals possess assets equal to that of the  
429 combined assets of the bottom 3.5 billion people. Three billion people attempt to survive  
430 on 2.50 USD/day or less. Nine million each year are not successful, they die of  
431 starvation. Over three million of these are children. Partial success is achieved by 800  
432 million who end each day with severe hunger. The cost of eliminating the starvation is  
433 less than the monetary value of the food destroyed in the U.S. each year (Rosenthal &  
434 Martin, 2008, Buzby & Hyman, 2012, FAO, 2015).

435       There are others in the U.S. below the wealthiest three who are also billionaires  
436 and then a number of others whose net worth is over 100 million USD, a level which  
437 most of the population would find sufficient for a comfortable existence. Laws have been  
438 enacted that provide tax reductions for the wealthy, such as corporate executive and  
439 hedge fund managers, and there is not a vigorous attempt to prosecute tax evasion by the  
440 very wealthy individuals and corporations.

441       These inequalities have additional consequences for the society. They in effect  
442 coerce individuals into the military as a means of escaping the poverty. For the females  
443 that select this route, approximately 20% will be sexually assaulted during their term of  
444 service with practically no prosecution of the offender and frequent penalties for the  
445 victims if they report the crime (Dick, et al, 2012), Lucero (2015). Poverty might be

446 avoided without the risks of military service, for example, by prostitution.

447 Another route is through education. However, the increasing costs of education  
448 require many of modest economic means to obtain loans. Many borrowers, however, are  
449 unable to obtain employment that allows repayment. Laws have been written against  
450 declaration of bankruptcy in this case. The result is long-term indebtedness. Health costs  
451 are the largest factor in actual personal bankruptcy in the United States.

452 The percentage of US families close to or below the poverty line is about 40%. As  
453 a result, the pay-day lender services have become larger. Interest costs from these  
454 lenders may amount to several hundred per cent on an annual basis. Congress has  
455 refused to meaningfully restrict the levels of interest charged by pay day lenders.

#### 456 **Destruction of health world-wide**

457 The U.S. provides 25% of the CO2 emissions with less than 5% of the world's  
458 population. The fact that the U.S. produces far more than 5% of the energy does not  
459 settle the issue since the rest of world is affected by the standard of living in the U.S. and  
460 other developed nations. The current administration has eliminated many restraints on  
461 fossil fuel production and emissions and opened large territories to new fossil fuel  
462 exploration. It proposes a 30% tax on imported solar panels ostensibly to encourage  
463 domestic production, but the effect will be to slow the transition to non-fossil fuel and  
464 renewable energy sources.

465           The inability of the U.S. to manage citizen health-care has not only resulted in a  
466 decrease in life-span for those who do not have health insurance, but also to hospital  
467 dumping in which hospitals have occasionally simply deposited indigent patients onto the  
468 sidewalks to remove the expense of further care.

469           U.S. companies frequently endanger, knowingly, the health and well-being of the  
470 citizens in the countries in which they operate. An egregious example is that of the  
471 Texaco oil waste in Ecuador. It damaged the source of drinking water for the local  
472 population. The company physically attempted to hide the waste dump. Ecuador sued  
473 for billions but the case, in one instance, went to a U.S. court that ruled in favor of the  
474 company. The U.S. judge had stock in the company but he did not publicly identify this  
475 fact and did not recuse himself in the case.

476           The U.S. and many international corporations frequently do not discriminate  
477 between citizens and those outside of the country. The West Coast of North America is  
478 still not cleared of the Exxon-Valdez oil spill. The BP Gulf disaster still has large  
479 remnants of damage. The fines are frequently tax deductible as a cost of business; the  
480 required safety measures have not been achieved. The results, as with the banking  
481 system, is to reward, through company profits and consequently executive pay, the  
482 destructive behavior which increases its future likelihood. The U.S. experiences many oil  
483 spills during the year. Because of media biases, also discussed previously, few are  
484 reported to the public.



485           The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and FDA (Food and Drug  
486 Administration are frequently led by and frequently staffed by representatives of the  
487 industries they are responsible for regulating. The current U.S. administration has placed  
488 a number of federal agencies under the leadership of those who had expressed opinions  
489 prior to appointment in favor of abolishing the agencies to which they were appointed.  
490 These range from education to housing to environment to drug safety.

491           The U.S. decades old war for drugs, labeled the “war on drugs”, has resulted in  
492 hundreds of thousands of deaths, both inside and outside the U.S. Examples include,  
493 Vioxx and the current U.S. opioid epidemic both of which resulted from inadequate  
494 regulation. The U.S. has a long history of encouraging drug use. Europe has shared in  
495 that effort. The Opium Wars in China and then the Boxer Rebellion remains icons of the  
496 fact (History.com, 2009).

497           However, within U.S. history one might cite the FBI Director Hoover's failure to  
498 devote resources to control the U.S. mafia, an organization about which his own agency  
499 had investigated, named key figures and observed their meetings, while devoting massive  
500 resources to secure the country from communists, of whom there were few and in which  
501 party membership was never outlawed.

502           During the war in Nicaragua, the U.S. supported forces that killed Nicaraguan  
503 civilians. To finance the war, the U.S. engaged in drug running (National Security  
504 Archives, 2017).

505           The war against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan has had many consequences in addition  
506 to the apparently permanent establishment of U.S. military bases there. While Al Qaeda  
507 had eliminated the opium production in Afghanistan, the occupation by the most  
508 powerful military in world history has been followed by new record poppy production so  
509 that Afghanistan produces approximate 90% of the world supply. The result has been a  
510 physical disaster for many Afghans and Chinese in the border area (UNDOC, 2009).  
511 Opium availability is widespread in the United States.

512           There has been a disregard by corporations for environmental and worker safety  
513 standards. Many laws are inadequately enforced and in some instances repealed. For  
514 example, the recent documentary, *The devil we know* (2018) , presents the pollution by  
515 Dupont of the Ohio valley (Goodman, 2018). The U.S. drinking water contains many  
516 contaminants. The excessive lead in the water in Flint, Michigan represents only one of  
517 many areas that have high lead levels and other pollutants. Estimates are that PRC, a  
518 carcinogen that poses additional health risks, is present in the drinking water of 99.7% of  
519 U.S. residents.

520           For three-quarters of a century, Monsanto products have resulted in deaths and  
521 other health risks. As with many corporations, it did not voluntarily remove the dangers  
522 and, also common among corporations, prevented information from reaching the public.  
523 The U.S. Air Force deposited dangerous chemicals into the Colorado water supply,  
524 denied the facts initially, but after a large amount of publicity has made efforts to improve

525 filtration of the water.

526 GE emitted radioactive pollutants and exposed the workers and surrounding area  
527 to those dangers while denying information that would have allowed protection. In fact,  
528 they provided workers with ineffective radiation detection devices but portrayed them as  
529 effective. Ultimately, the increase in cancer rates and other health problems led to  
530 questions about the corporate practices. Alabama recently experienced a sewer backup  
531 into the drinking water.

532 Corporations have frequently opposed regulations that place a burden on profits  
533 unless the cost could be “externalized”, that is placed on the taxpayer. The lack of regard  
534 for human health is international. Nestle fostered a milk product in Africa that increased  
535 the expense and was inferior to breast feeding. A previous CEO of Nestle said that the  
536 position that water was a public right was extreme (Emory, 2018). When restrictions  
537 were placed on tobacco use, companies sold in other countries. The Joint Chiefs of Staff  
538 developed a false flag operation to murder U.S. citizens and blame the event on Cuba.  
539 The only response would have been the invasion of Cuba. The Kennedy administration  
540 said no (Ruppe, 2001).

541 **The surveillance state and the the Bill of Rights.**

542 Surveillance extends the control of the thought processes beyond that of the media  
543 and the educational system. The U.S. citizens appear to be more surveilled than even the  
544 British which makes US number one. Once the population believes that they are

545 surveilled, dissent is substantially reduced with a corresponding increase in conformity  
546 and obedience to authority. This surveillance has now been extended by corporations to  
547 their workers to prevent discussions of unionization and to automobiles. Phone calls and  
548 email are not secure means of private communication and, even if one is not a target, the  
549 possibility of surveillance is intimidating.<sup>2</sup>

550 Evidence of the surveillance, illegal by constitutional standards, was known before  
551 the 2004 election. The Bush administration appealed to the New York Times to not  
552 divulge the information because of “national security”. That suppression by the New  
553 York Times may have contributed to the Kerry defeat although it was only one of many  
554 factors.

555 The fourth amendment to the U.S. Constitution states:

556 The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against  
557 unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue,  
558 but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing  
559 the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

560

561 The statement is of “people” not “citizens”, and is equivalent, therefore, to stating  
562 the principle as a general human right. The words “persons, effects, and papers' are  
563 separated from the word “houses” and therefore does not restrict the government only  
564 when persons are in their “house”. The oath or affirmation of the probable cause must be

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2 A very recent poll by Monmouth University found that over half were worried about government invasion of privacy and over half of the respondents stated a belief that the collection of information about individuals was widespread (Wright, 2018).

565 specific and requires a court presence. These protections have been eroded through a  
566 series of court decisions that allow exceptions.

567 **Empire**

568 While the traditional political definition of empire requires an emperor or the  
569 equivalent, the concept also applies to corporate empires in which the emphasis is on  
570 control over a large number of resources and markets. The British Empire existed for 150  
571 years after the elected parliament became the effective political decision-maker rather  
572 than the monarchy.

573 The United States has at least 800 military bases in at least 80 countries around the  
574 world (Vine, 2015). All of the other nations of the world have an estimated 40-45 outside  
575 of their territorial boundaries, with two-thirds of them represented by Great Britain and  
576 France. The Chinese, for example, have one, and the Russians, ten. A third of the  
577 discretionary budget of the U.S. federal government is devoted to the military. In  
578 addition to the direct cost, there is a necessary reduction in resources to improve the lives  
579 of its populace (Levy, 2011, Statista.com, 2016). Thinkbnumbers, 2016).

580 The U.S. has a history of overthrowing democratically elected governments,  
581 installing and/or supporting dictatorships as replacements or supporting already  
582 established dictatorships, and directly killing through military action or other support,  
583 tens of millions of civilians throughout the world since World War II. (GlobalResearch,  
584 2017, Gonzalez, 2018)

585 **Summary and Conclusions**

586           The facts are: the U.S. ranks lowest among Western democracies in its election  
587 processes (Norris, 2016); its health costs are double that of any other nation but with high  
588 infant mortality rates (World Fact Book, 2018) and high diabetes rates due to inadequate  
589 diet and exercise; it places some restrictions on tobacco sales but incarcerates for  
590 marijuana possession, although the smoking of cigarettes results in over 400,000 deaths  
591 per year and marijuana, zero, by the government's own statistics. The life expectancy of  
592 its recent generation, the millennials, has decreased; it has one of the world's largest  
593 income inequality levels, it is a tax haven unmatched by any other major nation; it has  
594 more people in prison on both a population and an absolute basis than any other country  
595 in the world; it spends over three-quarters of a trillion USD for "defense" but little on the  
596 actual threats to citizens (Levy, 2011); its domestic police are involved in sixty times the  
597 rate of fatal shootings as the UK (Lartey, 2015); it has killed tens of millions of civilians  
598 in other countries since WWII and continues to do so directly and through support of  
599 others; its media report little negative news about government or advertisers; it prosecutes  
600 whistle-blowers who divulge government illegality and corruption; it appears to have the  
601 highest rate of rape of its own female personnel of any developed country with gender  
602 integrated military( Dick., et al, 2012, Reuters, 2017, Haaretz, 2017, Stone, 2017,  
603 Advocates, 2013); it continues to pollute its own and the world environment and has been  
604 relaxing restrictions that prevent such pollution; it has disabled labor unions thus

605 reducing worker ability to collectively bargain; it has judicially restricted mass action  
606 suits and thereby made it easier for corporations to engage in fraudulent activity; it has  
607 allowed the wealthy more free speech than others to an excessive degree; it has increased  
608 the privatization of its educational system and forced many to borrow money for a  
609 college education; it perpetuates discrimination against African-Americans in many  
610 forms including residence, freedom of movement, education, and employment, and it is  
611 moving in the direction of greater oligarchy and will, very likely, engage in additional  
612 wars to secure control over resources and to aid private businesses and divert public  
613 attention from serious domestic injustices.

614 The U.S. Declaration of Independence reads in part:

615 “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are  
616 endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life,  
617 Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are  
618 instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —  
619 That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the  
620 Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its  
621 foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall  
622 seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate  
623 that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient  
624 causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to  
625 suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to  
626 which they are accustomed. But .....”<sup>3</sup>

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37 3 ....when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same  
38 Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is

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