Somebody, Please Stop Us

Issue #5



Creating Two Voting Blocks to Swing Elections

It's November 5, 2026, the day after the Democrats swept to victory in Congress, taking the majority in both the Senate and House. But I'm not taking a victory lap. We have work to do. Yes, the voters essentially told Donald Trump: "You're Fired," a la *The Apprentice*, but he's still the executive so we have to deal with this guy. And there's still the problem of a stacked Supreme Court.

Trump created the environment by which six Democratic-Socialists were elected to Congress. It's hard to imagine even five or six years ago (short of powerhouse Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez/AOC), a Democratic Socialist winning a major election, and yet, it happened. As the public tired of billionaires and trillionaire Elon Musk determining their future, a new community spirit arose. Musk's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) never delivered efficiency. Instead, it stole our data, probably for marketing, and shuttered important government programs (many related to children and our health) and agencies like USAID. When a government agency is not working effectively, you fix it. You make it more efficient. Dismantling it only serves corporate interests bent on deregulation and profit. But yesterday, the public spoke loud and clear: An economy where stock prices rocket and common folks suffer, is not okay with the American electorate.

Now, the Democrats must put forth their agenda in the form of legislation. If it's lowering the age of Medicare eligibility to 58, that's great, send it up and let Trump veto it. If it's changing the Electoral College to the popular vote, fantastic, send it up.

Because the American people will see what the Democratic Party could do with a Democratic executive, and that sets the table for the next election.

Returning to Musk, Jill Lepore just wrote an excellent book, *The Artificial State*, which very clearly explains where we are with AI and the lurking dangers during this period of expansion. The truth is, if AI were directed towards solving environmental problems (a bit ironic, since AI causes various ecological issues: mining, water use, massive electrical draw, etc.) and medicine, the public wouldn't have any problem with it. But AI is not being directed that way. AI is being used to replace good jobs. It's being used to make humans less necessary. It's being used in the battlefield. It's being used in a foolish quest to outdo China when we could be working with China.

Japan has been dredging the ocean for rare earth minerals. I, for one, am not willing to trade sea life and ocean ecology so that Google can give me one answer, apparently, THE answer, to whatever question I might come up with. I'll take the multiple sources, thank you very much. This brings me to an important question: : Did anyone ask for AI? Did we opt-in? Look at the lesson of social media. It's anything but social. Our kids are suffering. Depression, anxiety, shaming, bullying, it's a long list. Not to mention the act of just sitting there in front of a screen, not playing in the fields or climbing a tree or talking face-to-face with people, developing real social skills that will serve you in life—help you to form meaningful relationships.

There's no reason to think that AI development will track any differently than social media. The same bad actors, the same

societal ills will come to rise. Equally important, governments will use the technology to increase the body count. It's easier to push a button -- video-game style -- than to plunge a knife into someone's chest on a battlefield. Making killing easier? Is that what we're after? Giving powerful tools to hackers and saboteurs? We should be taking things offline, not putting more things online.

Lepore discusses what it means to take the human element out of things. What does it mean for our society to devalue the Humanities? Look at nuclear development. It's led to various preemptive wars over "weapons of mass destruction" and who is allowed to have them. It's led to a nuclear waste crisis—it never goes away. It's led to decimation and death in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the poisoning of land, air and people. Technology must be developed with certain aims in mind, otherwise, it gets corrupted.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (of the United Nations) should be the perfect guidepost for new technologies, but it's non-binding, a hope, really. What would it mean for the major powers like China and the U.S. to sign a binding treaty that commits to, "… never engaging civilian targets in war such as infrastructure (roads, bridges, energy, water, etc.), schools, hospitals, residential buildings, etc." Very simple, but it would be a stunning step forward.

The Democatic Congress should work towards such binding treaties. When Israel began its first civilian strikes in the war in Gaza, I thought to myself, why is there so little outcry? Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders

issued immediate statements, but the rest of the world stood by. If Israel and Palestine had signed on to this hypothetical treaty I've been describing, they both would've been in violation (as would Putin for Ukraine and Trump for Iran). Of course, with no world police to enforce it, the treaty would have to stipulate levers that would automatically be pulled in case of violation. Here's a scenario. Let's say 20 countries signed and those levers read: "Immediate comprehensive economic sanctions enacted by the 19 countries; immediate withdrawal of all diplomatic personnel from that country; immediate leniency on immigration policies/channels towards the civilian victims of war," who now, many of them, will be fleeing. It would create a deterrent.

Democrats need an agenda that will set them up for victory in the presidential election. They must not allow Republicans (and their corporate benefactors) to define them. Republicans focus on cultural issues to drive a wedge between Democrats and their voters. The cultural issues Republicans select, tend to be losers for Democrats who are seeking a big tent of support. If there's a cultural issue like policies concerning transexuals competing in sports or sex trait modification surgeries among inmates, Democrats have to realize—yes, we should do the cultural work necessary to educate people on these issues, but no, the majority of the public is not currently going to back transexuals in these battles. Even some Democrats are not in support of these transexual rights issues. Democrats can not afford to lose the presidency or Congress because they want to carry the flag on wedge cultural issues. It may be that the far left is correct on these stances, but it will take time to convince

people to get behind sex change operations paid for with public money or letting transexuals compete on teams that do not reflect their born sex. Instead, put the resources into education and start the slow process of getting the correct information out to people. All that Demcratic candidates need to say on these issues is 1) I support civil and human rights for everyone in America and 2) I don't necessarily have to approve of every lifestyle decision that Americans make. If you have the political capital to burn, say someone like Mamdani or AOC, and you're already in, then go for it.

Related to this, we need to get away from identity politics. Many analysts point out that part of how Trump swept to power was by talking directly to poor white groups. He didn't neglect them, at least in terms of campaign stops and talking points. He talked about bringing back blue-collar jobs and a kind of "everything under the sun" type of energy policy that even included harkening back to coal mining. Folks in Appalachia and Western Pennsylvania were listening. See, that's the problem with identity politics. You leave people out of the equation. Notice how Bernie Sanders is always talking about class issues. This is a much stronger appeal that brings people under the tent regardless of race, ethnicity and gender. Part of the historical rise of the Democratic Party had to do with union support. Everyone could get behind having weekends off, holidays off and coverage if you were injured on the job. We need to get back to these broad appeals on issues that impact everyone.

With the rise of the Democratic Socialists in Congress, we have to be smart about what we're trying to do. Are the Democratic Socialists a viable party to win say the presidency? I doubt it, in the same way that I doubt the Green Party could win… right now. But that doesn't mean we stop trying. Quite the contrary. The goals of the Green Party and the Democratic Socialists should be to create voting blocks. Imagine if the Democratic Socialists and Green Party each accounted for a 5% voting block. Together, as a coalition, that's 10% of the vote. That's enough to swing any election and to get your issues on the agenda! Look at how close many of these elections were, in some cases coming down to 400 or 500 votes. So, never underestimate the power of a voting block. Because we need to start building.

We need to come together and make sure that our society is developing according to our values. Killing civilians in war is not acceptable. Directing AI towards taking our jobs, doing the thinking for us and creating one voice where before there were many, is not what we want. Directing AI towards medical advances and solving ecological problems IS what we want.

More cooperation among political parties is needed. Yes, corruption inquiries are fine, but not at the expense of putting forward a strong Democratic agenda. We need to re-center the causes of the Democratic Socialists and the Green Party. If we truly internalized the ecological impacts described in Lepore's book, all of us would have a moral imperative to quit our jobs and work to stop the extinction spasm touched off by humanity. Lepore has a lot to say about factory farming as well, which was

fascinating. Here's one example: corporations have personhood, AI may get personhood in the future, yet we continue to think of animals as automata despite all of the new evidence. It's akin to saying a French person is not human because he/she doesn't speak English. The thought of how AI might affect factory farming is something I don't want to think about. To draw an analogy, AI is like fast food: it yields a quick functional product, but if we slow down our process of inquiry and carefully select the right ingredients, the outcome is better. So let's make the right choices as a society and remember that we can create any type of behavior among Americans (pro-social, anti-social, etc.) simply by creating the situation and passing particular policies. As much as we try to call ourselves civilized, and differentiate ourselves from animals and wildlife, we have a couple million people locked up in the U.S. for crimes. Animals are killing because they need to eat. What are we killing for?

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