

“Trump is not the answer in a democracy”

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“Our Founding Fathers warned us that extreme partisanship would destroy our system of government. Washington, Madison, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe and Hamilton learned that lesson the hard way. They saw first-hand what happens when a faraway government ignores the will of the people. It is a warning we should heed. Human nature and the way it operates in public life are no different today than in 1776.

Democrats and Republicans disagree sharply on the major issues facing our country. That in itself is no surprise. Arguments, even heated ones, are how the people of a boisterous democracy settle things. The give and take of debate strips away the pretense and the posturing. What is left — the real differences — very often lead the way to compromise. Yet that only works when all sides see their opponents as fellow Americans.

That is not the case today. Polarization is probably greater than at almost any time in our history, with the exception of the years leading up to the Civil War. There are too few working for compromise and far too few who respect those on opposing sides.

And that is dangerous. This lack of respect has spread beyond opponents or public officials. It has grown into a festering disrespect of public office, even toward the presidency itself.

We have had strong disagreements between our two major parties, but in times of danger Republicans and Democrats have always come together. We have always had candidates for president from each party — winner or loser — who accepted and respected our constitutional system .

Just before America joined our allies in World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt, a Democrat, faced Wendell Wilkie, a Republican, in the 1940 presidential campaign. Roosevelt won. In 1944, Governor Dewey of New York lost to Roosevelt despite the demonization of FDR and the New Deal.

In 1946, just after the end of the war, voters tired of the ruling Democratic Party. Republicans recaptured control of the U.S. House and Senate for the first time since 1932.

In 1948, the Republican Governor Thomas Dewey of New York was heavily favored to beat president Harry Truman, yet Truman pulled off one of the greatest upsets in presidential history.

However, during the years after World War II, Democrats and Republicans worked together to pass two major bills in 1948, the GI Bill and the Marshall Plan. The G.I. bill helped substantially in building the middle class in America, while the Marshall Plan rebuilt the economies of our former foes, the first time in history when the victor helped the vanquished. Both of these bills helped America.

In every one of these races and most throughout our history, the major parties offered candidates who, regardless of political outlook, saw themselves as part of our constitutional system.

This is not the situation today. We are close to ignoring that warning from the Founding Fathers against extreme partisanship. That would be foolish in any age, but in today's threatening environment, that attitude is suicidal.

Start with the most obvious threat: radical Islamic terrorism (we cannot even agree on what to call it). Radical tensions, the economy, gun violence, climate change and the inevitable sea rise that follows.

These problems are not going away, and many wonder if our political system is up to the task. The system developed by Washington, Madison and others has been usurped by talking heads and Twitter blasts.

Leadership is needed to help us heal our wounds.

That is not the choice before us.

Never before has a candidate of one of our major political parties been so divisive. Donald Trump is unqualified to lead our country on any basis used. His lack of public service, of humility, of understanding issues like climate change and foreign policy, should disqualify him. He lacks what it takes to lead this country.

Clearly a President Trump would be dangerous for America and the rest of the world. The closest he comes to consistent policy is his belligerence toward people who disagree with him.”