

Pondering those Ponderous Pontifications

Written by Alex Baer

Tuesday, 08 January 2013 16:00

People sure do have a talent for making things lots more complicated than they need to be. We spend so much time reading between the lines, looking for clues and clarity, it's a wonder anything gets done at all -- which, as you might guess, is a perfect cue to skewer Congress, the ultimate spot of wonder and awe should anything ever be accomplished.

Despite all the hoopla and hocus-pocus, nothing much has changed at all, not even with all the foaming and frothing at the mouth lately over finances. There are still a couple of brands of Republicans haggling and mule-trading with a couple brands of Democrats, everyone happily and heartily posing for the folks back home, as they do their Homeric, heroic battles in the homeland of D.C., shedding all their usual stalling and finally doing their jobs, albeit at the last possible moment.

Flying the GOP banner, there are the Psychos and the Semi-Psychos: The former are convinced they have no obligation or responsibility to fellow humans, fellow Americans, nor to the country itself. Psychos joined government in order to bring government to a complete halt, thereby saving money that would be better lavished on billionaires.

The latter group, the Semi-Psychos, still maintain a tentative tether to the Real World, but understand they are in office during an era of unprecedented right-wing extremism and madness unseen since the days of Caligula and Genghis Khan. In order to provide themselves cover and re-election opportunities, members of this group spout and sputter irrational nonsense and non sequiturs in public pronouncements, but are cagy, canny, and cunning operators in private.

Psychos still outnumber Semi-Psychos almost ten to one in the Republican Party, which helps explain why it seems there are never enough adults to clean up the phenomenal messes, meltdowns, and mayhem the majority leaves for the few.

Democrats, on the other hand, currently appear in these rehearsed skits in one of two flavors: Saviors struggle to keep the nation and its people from collapsing into the steamy, hissing abyss of ruination and financial hells, while Semi-Saviors are really just gussied-up wannabes, envious of those astonishing riches and rewards available and awarded to every member of the opposing players. (Some still go by their old handle, Blue Dogs, and have not yet inflated their own courage to the point of jumping ship.)

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Between these two island camps, across another infamous aisle, philosophical battles rage while real people, processes, and property all teeter-totter back and forth, dipping and rising, threatened death by the hot lava flows deep under the Dome, or perished by virtue of having no air left to breathe, high above the Capitol rotunda. (You have to pick one *only* before the seesaw stops, or a random death extravaganza will be selected for you.)

Somewhere in the middle of all this commotion would be all of us and all that we think and feel important. *Imagine that.*

It's all one huge, well-staged, Show-and-Tell event. Everyone is dialed in, years in advance, Sisyphean scripting well in hand, ready to mount and climb Capitol Hill at a signal, each person takes charge of rocks already assigned and gets rolling. (Considering the member groups involved, these moments might be more aptly named Moan-and-Groans, or Whine-and-Pouts.)

Players on each side dig in their heels, and pledge not to budge or otherwise change the *Dyna mic Tension* in the knotted mass they know to be their own throng. Sure, it might look like a Tug of War, but it's still called Government of The People, and is technically accountable to the country's population -- but is actually answerable only to billionaires, special interests, cronies, lobbyists, and self-interest. (And, sometimes, to spouses.)

No statesmen or compromisers are allowed to play until close to the end, just when it appears everything will turn to stone, go up in flames, and/or drown unless instant action is taken. Until then, every microscopic point is argued and fought in blistering earnest, as if players were defending the honor of generations of mothers. No point may be conceded, no matter how miniscule or minor. No decisions may be made and no solutions achieved until the *final* second of the *fi nal* minute of the *final* hour before the whole shebang blows.

(Of course, it would have been easier just to say something like, *It's still the really dangerous lunatics versus the kinda nutty ones,*

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and let it go at that -- except that I'm only human. These things almost always get away from me, and, before I know it, these sentences have become complicated again, self-morphed while I wasn't looking.)

So, no -- don't expect any changes in anything that happens in D.C. You see, elections used to have consequences, back when reasonable, statesman-like representatives were the norm. Winning or losing an election once meant a corresponding change in the behavior of players, where the infamous Game Ball shifted for a period to one side or another and, through compromise, the country was governed, with each side obtaining enough of what was needed to successfully go forward for another day.

But, all that patriotic reasonableness was *before* lunacy and stonewalling became endearing, embedded traits as much a part of the GOP as members doing the bidding of billionaires and letting the Little People -- and governance itself -- slide into a tar pit and sink out of sight.

No, if you want real change, you'll need to monkey around with much bigger forces, like trying to tame predatory capitalism and get it to stop eating its young, or re-defining exactly what other type of democracy we might want to be -- maybe one that emphasized the importance of people over money. *That's a concept.*

Until then, all the powers that are now in place who could make those changes happen are the very same powers benefitting from the current system, and so, they have zero incentive to change. Probably even less than that.

Until any of The Big Changes comes to pass, it's all pretty much more of the same, from here on out. Brace yourself for an unending series of mental and physical images showing rams head-butting and going nowhere, not even when they charge at one another from opposite sides of the mountain, building up a great head of steam before their clattering collision concludes in a bone-ringing *bong*.

(Don't worry -- all the old goats up on their Hill are immune to such goings-on. It's just *us civilians* who get those pile-driving, pounding headaches from watching how they do business.)

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So, no, nothing's really changed around here. The calendar is sporting a new number, true enough, and, when Congress reconvenes, it will have a new number, too. (Both contain the numeral "13," considered to be so lucky that whole floors have *not* been so named. That is, if you're in the mood to talk harbingers.)

Same old: It's still the rich against the rest of us, and, just like always, the rich have managed to set us, one against another, in order to better conceal their own plans, plays, and sleights of hand, while the rest of us wrestle each other to the ground and try to skedaddle with the spoils.

This will keep happening while Congress plays Tug of War and poses for grip-and-grin photo ops and interviews -- at least, until it's decided we need a new war, then everyone will drop that well-worn and comfortable rope and line up, everyone on one side, ready to upend the Treasury again into the pockets of a few, and run to scatter death and its season-after-season's seeds on some fertile new ground.

And, oh, what glorious, impassioned speeches will suddenly be made -- enough to make fires spontaneously break out, stump-side! As always: We will have plenty to ponder -- now and later -- after every single politician uncannily finds heaps of time to clock in with their own proud, weighty affirmations of national honor and the dire consequences of not protecting our interests abroad. (You have to admit, that's a quaintly polite way of saying the entire world is ours, so hands off.)

You've heard all those speeches before because we in the United States get plenty of practice going to war (far more than other nations), and thereby gain more opportunities than most to break our own backs and the bank, once again, just in time to plead poverty to the citizens on our own shores.

But, that reality's saved for the time *after* all the smoke has cleared, *after* another round of inventive war crimes, and

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we've sated the various benefactors and beneficiaries of war.

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(Where was it again, this time out, that we lobbed another few tens of millions of dollars in drones -- Iran, or Yemen, or Somalia? □ Someplace else? □ Do you remember which drummed-up wars we're fighting now -- or even for how many years? □ It's just so hard to keep up with them all, after a while. □ You know, they all blur together, these unexpectedly swift actions in Congress -- especially when the invasion votes are taken at 3 a.m.!)

The picture and tale is not very complicated. It really doesn't get much simpler than that. Not anymore. See, there's never any *gridlock* when it comes to war -- that's reserved for everything *else*.

Dynamic Tension: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dynamic_tension