

## A House Divided

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In November 1963, approximately one month after ordering troops be removed from Vietnam, JFK was assassinated in broad daylight. Similarly, founder of the Republican Party, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated just six days after freeing American slaves in the bloodiest battle in U.S. history. When Lincoln famously addressed the Illinois Republican State Convention at Springfield in 1858, he declared in no uncertain terms, “*A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand.*” Imagine the gravity of Lincoln’s statements – our country was already fighting amongst itself 82 years after escaping the tyrannical rule of King George.

Division is nothing new in American politics. The recent attempt on former President Trump’s life is an important reminder of the fragile nature of our system. By the grace of God, his life was spared from a bullet piercing his right ear, millimeters from his skull. Despite this failed attempt, we must be grateful for how good we have it in the United States where these events do occur but are rare in comparison to many other nations. In the latest Mexican election, over 30 presidential candidates were murdered.

Many of us feel as if today’s environment is more divisive than ever before – half the country hates Donald Trump, the other half hates Joe Biden. But the truth is other U.S. presidents were just as detested. Obama was hated, Bush was hated, Carter was hated, Nixon was hated, and the list goes on. Part of the reason the political climate seems so toxic today is thanks to social media and the internet. On the positive side of things, today’s technology makes it extremely difficult for our leaders to suppress the truth. Why do you think China and North Korea severely limit internet access for their citizens? With iPhones, anyone can whip out a 4K camera and upload a video in minutes to millions, completely shifting the media’s narrative. This is partially why the legacy media hates Elon Musk and X (formerly known as Twitter). Politicians are desperately trying to force Meta, Microsoft and X to crack down on free speech, censoring information they don’t want publicized. It shouldn’t surprise us...powerful people remain in power by controlling information. Today, information is decentralized. Decentralized information is risky in some ways but seems far better than the alternative, which is tyrannical suppression of the truth. In minutes, iPhone footage showed the July 13<sup>th</sup> shooter sneaking onto a roof, just a few hundred feet from President Trump. Yes, technology has some serious downsides, but it has some incredible net benefits to society. Technology allows us to question the narrative and seek better outcomes from our leaders.

With the election 109 days away, we know the temperature is set to rise, not cool. In every political season people wonder if this time is different and the U.S. is finally finished. Despite all the cheap talk from doom and gloomers that the world is ending, we fail to see their actions line up with words. The doomers threaten to leave the country, buy gold and build a bunker in New Zealand, but most of them appear daily on CNBC leading reasonably normal lives, continuing to operate their highly successful businesses - scaring the pants off the rest of us.

Fear sells in a way good news cannot. Fear appeals to the deepest part of human nature, to believe tomorrow will be worse than today. If you ask 100 random people if the world will be in worse shape in 6 months than it is today, they’ll likely say yes. But if they really believe that, why do they still get out of bed in the morning, go to work, take a vacation, spend time with their family or plan for the future? Most people say they’re scared about what’s to come but behave like the future will be better than the past, and that’s what we must remember, actions speak louder than words.

Yes, the U.S. is divided but that’s nothing new. We’ve survived incredible amounts of turmoil the past 200 years thanks to our system of government, our constitution, and our rule of law and personal property rights that have protected our republic despite the countless experts saying this time it’s different. Watch their actions, not their words – most of the doom and gloomers behave like optimists in the long run.

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