Twitter Thread by ClearingTheFog

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The Republican Party is an authoritarian power structure.

For decades, it embraced greedy nihilists in order to win elections.

In the last 10+ years, a well-funded insurgency has infiltrated and captured it.

They are now threatening & purging any remaining opposition.

We can't address the threat they pose to democracy without addressing the methods by which they maintain popular support.

This requires action across multiple fronts.

In terms of public policy, we are working on the right things:

-Bills to eliminate the GOP's counter-majorian control (voting security, eliminating vote suppression)

-Exposing dark money networks who are funding them (forcing transparency for anonymous shell companies)

-Addressing the immediate socio-economic pain that places people in anxiety-laden debt traps, makes them feel isolated, and makes them ripe targets for disinformation/authoritarian messaging appeals (fighting Covid with a plan, financial relief, genuinely empathetic leadership)

Biden and the Dem Congress are working on all of these things already.

This is moving us in the right direction, and shows that they get what needs to be done here. This is good.

There are three areas that still concern me, that I have been trying to call attention to...

1) Republican capture of the courts.

Many changes that we need to enact may be thwarted by a judicial branch that is controlled by private interests and

authoritarian elements.

Example - what happens if they use the courts to enshrine *rights* for anonymous shell companies?
https://t.co/qWVm061TQ6

> \U0001f6a8 Details:
>
> Two days after the insurrection, SCOTUS quietly took up a case by Charles Koch\u2019s AFPF.
>
> Suing former CA AG Xavier Becerra, AFPF claims that requiring anonymous shell companies to routinely disclose their donors is a violation of their rights.https://t.co/IYv7Qr59xZ
>
> — ClearingTheFog (@clearing_fog) January 18, 2021

Biden is working on this already as well, with a commission to review options to balance the court.

This may be the solution, and it may be enough.

But it still concerns me, as I am not sure if it is aggressive enough.

IMO, we also need to review impeachable activities.

The FBI background investigation into Kavanaugh was controlled and limited by the White House, and dozens of ethical issues were dropped when he was confirmed.

These need to be investigated, along with Ginni Thomas' involvement in efforts against the US government.

Impeachable?

Which necessarily leads to the fact that impeachment can't occur without a 2/3 Senate vote.

The GOP insurgents are emboldened by the power they have now.

If we can expel Senators who had roles in the insurrection (via 14th amendment), this may allow decent GOP to act & vote.

This is not, and cannot be, a witch hunt.

This is about finding the truth, determining whether specific people acted in support of an insurrection against the United States, and enforcing the law and the constitution without fear or favor. Period.

Unsure how likely this is.

As I said, Biden's commission on rebalancing the courts may prove to be enough to address this.

Even so:

A) We should still hold officials accountable, and

B) We should be working on multiple fronts (plan Bs), and not placing all our eggs in one basket (our opponents don't).

2) Right wing media

This is a harder issue to tackle, without trampling 1A protections, but we have seen that lawsuits work very well (e.g. Dominion).

We need more of that.

There is also no easy way for public officials to sue media outlets.

Can we do that? I don't know. https://t.co/zTh8iPaI9B

> The fact that public officials can\u2019t sue for slander/defamation seems like a pretty big loophole that is easy for bad actors to exploit.
>
> Do any of the rest of us have any standing to sue on public officials\u2019 behalf, just to correct the record and discourage this? https://t.co/7iKJbyJcIJ
>
> — ClearingTheFog (@clearing_fog) February 15, 2021

3) This is the most difficult problem we face: Too many Americans hate and fear each other based on false narratives that have poisoned our politics - and it has crept into our every day lives.

Authoritarian support depends on having enemies.

What is acceptable in our politics? https://t.co/h05ZQgM7QI

> Thirty three years ago, Republican Party leadership began teaching conservatives to hate and fear liberals.
>
> There is no Trump without this conspiratorial fear of an \u2018evil liberal agenda.\u2019
>
> Americans need to learn that the lies they have been told about each other aren\u2019t true. pic.twitter.com/vIssj6YJ7X
>
> — ClearingTheFog (@clearing_fog) January 27, 2021

Electing Joe Biden was a big part of the antidote to this.

His moderate & unifying approach to politics, while still enacting progressive policies that help working class Americans, completely short circuits right wing fear mongering about 'evil socialist plots.'

Between that,

and lawsuits that hold media outlets accountable for spreading false/defamatory information (plus exposing their dark funding), we may well be on the way to turning back the tide.

But we have to be helpers here also.

We have to show our friends and neighbors who we are.

In order to do this we have to find a way to stop arguing about facts and details so much, and connect with each other on a human level first.

Some may be too far gone to ever turn back, but you may be surprised.

We need to connect with the elephant before addressing the rider. https://t.co/asioXZFKYT

> We aren\u2019t as rational as we like to think we are.
>
> The emotional part of us - the \u201clizard brain\u201d if you will - is like an elephant. And our logical brain/cortex is just a rider on that elephant.
>
> We like to think that the rider is making all the decisions, but it\u2019s rarely true. https://t.co/A2vZrklyvq
>
> — ClearingTheFog (@clearing_fog) January 9, 2020

These are what I see as our major challenges, along with some potential solutions to address them.

It isn’t comprehensive - we also have very real problems like climate change to address - but these seem like our primary log jams and limiting factors (plus campaign finance).

Apologies for the long thread, but I feel that we are at a real inflection point for western democracy, and these are the things that keep me up at night.

I am incredibly happy with the Biden admin’s approach; it shows that they get it.

I am not criticizing; I am pushing. ■■