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# **The Imminent Demise of the Republican Party**

by **David W. Orr**

Following the election of 2004, much has been made of the weaknesses of the Democratic Party, even its possible end. But it has escaped the notice of our blow-dry television pundits and political observers alike that the Republican Party, in the full blush of triumph in control of all the branches of government and large sections of the media, stands on the edge of certain extinction. The reasons grow daily more evident. Over the past three decades, the moderate, business-oriented party of Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower was captured by its extreme right-wing thereby becoming a party dominated by ideologues, increasingly divorced from unmovable facts. But no organization, political party, or nation can long survive by ignoring realities of ecology, social justice, law, economics, and true security. Sooner or later, it will step off the proverbial curb into onrushing traffic of events, forces, and trends that it refused to see.

The Republican Party has already stepped into the road. The question is not whether it will survive as presently constituted, but what else will be destroyed as it collapses in ruin and ignominy, sooner than later. Beneath the noisy spin of its media echo chamber, the true platform of the Republican Party, its future epitaph, is founded on denial. The rules of the Republican Party of George Bush, Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, Tom Delay, and their brethren are these:

- Deny science when its findings are not agreeable to your base. Republicans, notably, are on the wrong side of the largest issue in human history: human driven, rapid climate change. They've chosen instead to live in a Crichton-esque science fiction fantasy in which real science has no standing and human actions have no tragic, irreversible, and global ecological consequences. This is not just boneheaded, it is a form of criminality for which we have, as yet, no adequate words.
- Deny the looming approach of peak oil extraction thereby advancing the potential of economic, political, and social chaos when global oil supply and demand diverge as soon they will.
- Deny the proven potential of superior technologies, design strategies, and policies that would move the country toward energy efficiency and a secure energy base of solar and wind power as well as the reasons of self-interest and economic advantage for doing so.
- Deny the true costs of air and water pollution thereby undermining the health of Americans.
- Deny the human and economic effects of pandering to the wealthy, thereby undermining social cohesion and the sense of fairness? historically, often a prelude to societal breakdown and revolution.
- Deny any and all mistakes, bad judgment, and corruption, relying on spin not truth and thereby building a solid reputation for mendacity and incompetence.
- Deny the limitations of military power to impose order on a recalcitrant world and thereby condemn the U.S. to a future of international isolation, conflict, and endless terrorism.
- Deny the great vulnerability of the American infrastructure to malice, malfeasance, and acts of God, thereby laying the groundwork for a future of recurring disasters.
- Deny the necessity for civil discourse, honesty, and transparency in the conduct of public life, thereby holding the citizenry in contempt and promoting a spirit of meanness.
- Deny without admitting it the democratic values of the country enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, the Gettysburg Address, and the Four Freedoms of Franklin Roosevelt, thereby undermining democracy at home while purportedly fighting for it in Iraq.

The Republican Party has chosen to deny social, ecological, cultural, religious, and economic realities which are unavoidably complicated, complex, diverse, ironic, and paradoxical. Instead they have chosen to make their own simplistic, ideological, and chauvinistic fantasy world that

has little affinity for law, science, a free and independent press, fairness, true security, ecological sustainability, and the accountability that is requisite for genuine democracy.

That fantasy is on the cusp of becoming a real life nightmare. Having made the United States a large bulls' eye for terrorists and malcontents, it may implode catastrophically taking much else with it. It may come undone more gradually, but no less catastrophically, as the economy sinks under the weight of war debt and foolish tax cuts. It may be overthrown if and when thoughtful conservatives disturbed by fiscal recklessness and imperial pretensions, all honest persons offended by mendacity, bombast, criminality, conniving, and diversion, and all Christians sufficiently alert to notice the discrepancy between the words and life of the "Prince of Peace" and our foreign and domestic policies finally shift alignments. It may take longer as the die of climate change and ecological deterioration is finally cast and we trigger adverse global changes of which we have been often warned. Unlikely as it seems, in a different scenario the Republican nightmare still could be averted by an effective, committed, agile, and strategic opposition smart enough to recognize the historic convergence of opportunity, patriotic duty, sheer necessity.