

Socialist Vanguard

May 2019 Newsletter

Issue # 104

Edited by Dave Schall

Presenting Democratic Socialist Viewpoints

Chest Pounding and Threats Are Dangerous Diplomacy!

How to be a good diplomat:

- Be helpful. Show an interest helping solve problems.
- Be assertive. Let people know your boundaries.
- Be honest. This means being consistent. Do not say one thing and then do the opposite later.
- Know what your objectives are at all times.
- Do not be afraid to say no.
- Know what tools you have to pressure the opposition, short of making statements, that one is not willing to back-up or would be self destructive.
- Be ready to compromise, but compromise as little as possible.

These are traits associated with many professions; sales agents, contract negotiators, politicians, leaders, One should be suspicious of politicians who claim to be great compromisers, They probably are will to sell out. For example, the goal of an affordable health care system that provides for universal coverage is easy to support. Most leaders in the Democratic Party currently claim to support Bernie Sanders' call for a *Medicare For All* program. Several say it is the ideal, but it is unrealistic. Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, both claimed this to be their goal. Both made some major improvements to our health care system, but both left the power in the hands of the insurance companies. Both presidents backed down in the face of a backlash supported by the health care industries (especially the health insurers). If you plan to vote for a Democrat and universal, affordable health care is a top priority, be careful going into the presidential primaries. Vote for a candidate who has a backbone on this issue! In our 2-party political system and the likely GOP candidate will be Trump or someone equally repugnant, most of us will select the Democrat regardless of his/her qualifications and policy promises.

Now, what does this seemingly digression on health policy relate to diplomacy. Well, let's evaluate the "great dealmaker" Donald Trump. Trump has a penchant for lying and contradicting himself. In the Mideast, Trump has further destabilized the area. Slowly it was settling down, now Trump has given a green light to Israel and the Saudis to pursue their own interests at the expense of others. Trust in the USA's motivations which was always low has all most disappeared, even among our alleged allies. South of the USA border, Trump has destabilized numerous nations. While Cuban relations were moving toward a stet of mutual existence, they have fallen back to a high -level of distrust and animosity.

Venezuela, a country deeply divided by both social class and ethnicity. Has become more divided, as Trump called an attempted coup a process of the rule of law. Besides alienating most Venezuelans, Trump has angered many South American neighbors with his demands.



Mexico which has been a bridge connecting South and Central America to the USA has been hammered by Trump's bigotry that translates into anti-immigrant policies and behaviors. Instead of treating the causes of the current problems which are results of unstable political institutions and unstable economies in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, Trump has threatened to cut off aid. Poor Mexico becomes their go to savior.

When one looks at what makes a good diplomat, Trump fails on each count. In person Trump is often a "yes-man" acting as a good listener and saying yes to most request. Once away from his "confidant" he orders a different set of policies.

His behavior makes the world less safe, as other countries want to protect themselves by building up their military. Even Russia's Putin, who many portray as a Trump ally, can't trust him although he continues to manipulate him. **These divisions created by Trump must be countered with the socialist notion of global unity, equality and cooperation in an effort to improve living standards for all of the Earth's residences! The world cannot continue to be ruled by bigotry and fear. We need to find common goals and interests! DS**

Democratize the USA!

Words for thought

"In most activist traditions, a key goal is to move an idea from the fringe to the center, transforming the impossible into the inevitable, the unthinkable into conventional wisdom."

Beverly Gage

Thanks to Bernie Sanders and some of his disciples, democratic socialism is being used in the major media. Most of the discussion focuses on issues such as health care, college loans, minimum wages, social security, and other policies and programs related to ones' economic wellbeing. In the short-term these make sense. However, the efforts to achieve these material improvements may come up short if there isn't an equal effort to democratize the USA.

Political Scientists Edward S. Greenberg and Benjamin I. Page identify the following 10 characteristics necessary for a healthy democracy:

1. People rule.
2. Government leaders are selected in competitive elections that are meaningful.
3. Elections are free and fair.
4. People participate in the political process. Citizens must care and have the opportunity to participate in the governing process.
5. Information is available. Public records must be available to the public and there should be media institutions providing high quality information.
6. Majority rules.
7. Minority viewpoints must be protected (and encouraged). People must have the right to freedom of speech, to the press and to religion.
8. Government policies reflect the will of the people.
9. Government policies must be effective and accomplish what they are supposed to accomplish
10. Political equality. Everyone should be equal in the eyes of the government. This includes the principle of one person, one vote!

So how does the USA rate? Relative to most other nations our elections are free and fair. There are few irregularities at the polls on election day. However, there have been instances where voting lists have been lost or destroyed or votes miscounted.



"That's all folks!"

With all of or citizen committees/boards there are opportunities for many to get involved. Unfortunately, there are not enough of these so those chosen often are selected for the wrong reasons and many get left out. Also, in most places it is much easier for employers or those in management positions to get involved, thus creating a subtle, but real bias.

The USA has plenty of open records laws and rules governing public meetings. The public needs to be aware of these laws. News has become more sensationalized, promoting fear rather than hope. Disasters, car crashes, crimes become the lead items. The USA needs a stronger presence of what are often called alternative media sources. Unfortunately, our major media sources often report with a political agenda. Trump's accusations of "fake news" may not be accurate, but they are not as far from the truth as we may like.

Without adequate means to monitor the actions of our governing bodies, the ability to evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of government programs is lost.

1. Today, there is talk of a polarized society, and a feeling of hopelessness that things can improve. The increasing attacks on the right to vote, the apathy among too many of the citizens of the USA, the weakening of public discourse and proliferation of mis-information are all increased by a two-party political system, that often is realistically a one-party state in many parts of the nation.
2. A major aspect of the USA democracy that undermines its effectiveness is the use of single-member districts, which rely on plurality-rule, not majority rule. The major weaknesses in USA democracy are:
3. The existence of the US Senate. The principle of 1 person, one vote is horribly violated with the power and system of giving each state, regardless of population size, two senators. Using 2010 Census numbers, California (the most populous state has 1 senator representing 18,626,978 people. Wyoming, the least populous state has each senator representing 281,813 people. The voting power in the US Senate of a Wyoming resident is more than 66 times that of a person in California.
4. Single member districts, which are most common in the USA, create a political climate favoring "lessor-of-two" evil politics. Our two major parties are coalitions of voters with different interests. The coalition's emphasis is winning, not promoting ideas, principles, programs and policies. Personality politics is more important than issues. This encourages attack ads that accuse candidates of misconduct. Without policy goals, we get leaders without a clue. Those with a clue are likely to be con-artists!
5. Most of the mature democracies in the world use some form of proportional representation, which encourages the existence of many parties, thus giving voters a greater choice than Tweedle-Dee vs. Tweedle-Dum. The USA usually ranks among the lowest in voter turnout of all the world democracies.

There is hope. An organization, *FairVote*, is dedicated to promoting better ways of representation. *FairVote* has helped spread representation reforms throughout the USA. The Twin Cities of Minneapolis, San Francisco, Maine are but a few of the places that have adopted the reforms. **Learn more about *FairVote* through its website; fairvote.org.** DS

SP-Wisconsin Meeting: Saturday, June 1 at 1:30 p.m. at the Eastside Library, 2320 N. Cramer St., Milwaukee

Socialist Party of Wisconsin

2025 N. Martin Luther King Dr #305- Milwaukee, WI 53212 – Phone: 414-332-0654
Email: demsocvanguard@gmail.com Website: <http://www.socialistpartyofwisconsin.org>