## Republican Is Not A Dirty Word, Just Arbitrary

## Lyndon Kyle Gerron

Williams' Introduction:

Kyle Gerron comes to the Osgood Center as a young conservative exploring his own views and the state of politics in the US. We have directed him to many conservative for a in DC where ideas flow and rigorous debate ensues. Kyle, uniquely, has chosen to share his process with the readers of his think pieces in DC. It is a brave decision and one that we hope will benefit himself and his readers.

Shelton Williams, President The Osgood Center

## "MY TAKE ON CURRENT POLITICS"

For the genesis of my research I reflect back to the words of one of our great conservative leaders:

"Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives." - Ronald Reagan

I question whether, in practicality, it is this simple and why there is such divisiveness within the political system. The logical explanation to this is the pervasiveness of parties, or what Madison called "factions." It is here where my interest in this matter lies and where I intend to delve to examine the subject of the ideological divergences in government and how they affect policy. I am focusing on my own party first.

I will be attempting in the next couple of months to convey that within the current political climate there are several factions within the Republican Party which exist along an ideological continuum. Conservatism has shifted over the course of our Republic and we are soon to witness yet another shift. How the intellectuals and policymakers of D.C. align themselves on both domestic and foreign issues, I believe, will show how the party in the upcoming future will be altered into an essentially new GOP. I find this to come at an important time for the country as 2012 will prove to be a critical election year and what is said and done between now and November should be analyzed in depth to show the intricacies and dynamics of the current Republican Party.

To explore where we are heading, I will be attending numerous conservative lectures, congressional hearings, and conducting one-on-one interviews with individuals at the forefront of these issues. I eagerly look forward to embarking on this intensive study and publishing my experiences and findings on here.

I very much appreciate your following this study and process. I hope it is as enriching for you as it is for me.

Within the past two weeks I have spent considerable time sitting in on panel discussions held at some of the most famous right-leaning think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Heritage Foundation, as well as center-right institutions such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Many of the events brought in among the best and brightest minds in the field, regardless of party. For instance, within just one week I have had the privilege to listen to former president Bill Clinton, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senators John McCain and Jerry Moran. In addition to that I have sat in on two congressional hearings, one on capital market structure and the other on foreign affairs specifically involving the New Start nuclear arms treaty.

In this vast array of topics being covered I have found that there is a distinct divergence among the Republican Party on the issues. Of course, there are ideological differences between the Republicans and Democrats as well. Further, these differences make the passage of legislation the slow and tedious process that it is. It is commonplace for people to use interjections like "my friends on the other side of the aisle" or talk about the partisan difficulties. However, when interpreting the rhetoric from those speaking a little closer, it becomes clear that there is a deeper frustration, and that is actually intra-party conflict. An example of this occurred at the START hearings when Sen. McCain, discussing the crisis in Syria and the United States' position and involvement, addressed the reality that he does not fully have the support of all members of his party in supporting the treaty. Moreover, Sen. Kerry, presiding over the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, mentioned that the Congress is in a current state of disarray and that until sincere compromise is made we will be forced to live with deadlines not being met, costs being increased, and ultimately security being threatened.

This type of disunity is stalling progress within the government. It is ineffective, inefficient, and malignant to the democratic process. As much as this may hurt to say, it is the Republican party itself that needs to hold the blame. Interestingly the Republican Party already seems to carry the blame for the dismay felt across the country. Yet, from what I have witnessed, it is coming under attack for the wrong reasons. It is this phenomenon I wish to explore.

Now to fully understand this I want to go back and explicate the varying forms of conservatism. I would like to go beyond the notions of fiscal and social issues. These simply refer to the idea of the government's involvement in its citizens' lives, so to speak. This idea holds that spending should be kept low along with taxes, and that free trade be highly promoted. Socially, conservatism now states that the government should have more of a presence to guide and direct the cultural aspects of the country and hold to traditional values. Two current factions dominate the Republican Party: the pragmatic establishment and the progressive, yet radical tea party. These factions are often labeled as troglodytes and unguided extremists, respectively.

In my experiences here I have noticed that even among these present expressions of conservatism in the nation, there are varying levels and nuances to each. In short, the Republican Party is a many splintered thing. This might be because it is a critical time for the nation as the 2012 election nears. There is so much uncertainty within the country on so many fundamentals, primarily the future of the economy and our standard of life. From what I have seen, there is much riding on how the Party evolves in the next few years depending on who gets into the White House in November. Scholars tend to offer the situation as it is, explain the probable outcomes, and then note that due to political conflict, nothing will be done to resolve these deep divisions. This is the unfortunate mentality which prohibits action within Congress. The overarching position here in D.C. appears to be to wait it out and to make decisions after the election. Though, equally as possible, is that a solution is not likely to come after November either. There is another crisis coming. I think the core disputes must be resolved sooner rather than later because the repercussions of prolonging the inevitable could be worse than ever thought.

Inter and Intra politics are damaging this country and preventing true political action. This is what I have found my first week here and look forward to pursuing the subject further.

## IT'S TOUGH NOT TO GIVE IN TO APATHY AND CYNICISM

In continuing with my experiences in and around DC I find that there is constantly this ubiquitous outlook that matters of legislation that are highly debated can be tabled until after the upcoming election. Just this week, countless times, Congressmen and commentators have gone on cable news and talked about such analogies as 'kicking the can down the road'. The Washington Post likened this to a form of a 'procrastinator's prayer'. The idea is that making decisions and showing productivity in the Congress and White House are best left alone and put off until after an election. The innate problem here is that there are always elections being waged. House members, Senators, and the President all serve differing length terms and when reelection is the primary concern on their minds, actual legislation and constituents' concerns are

left behind. This is portrayed as negligence on the policymakers' part.

Also, as of June 28, two remarkable instances took place on the Hill which I was fortunate enough to be a part. First, the U. S. Supreme Court decided on the National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius et al. case (the constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act aka. 'Obamacare'). Their decision upheld the Circuit Court's decision and affirmed that the Law is, in fact, constitutional on the grounds that the major component of the Act which was in such strong debate loosely falls under the Commerce Clause. Immediately after this decision was made, on the Senate floor minority leader Mitch McConnell said quite forcefully that the Court's opinion must and will be appealed and overturned. Regardless of party it seems as though there is such a stark contrast in this city on almost all issues. This is to say, there is never real consensus and this trend is only broadening.

Then, later in the afternoon, the full House of Representatives convened on the floor for a vote to hold Attorney General, Eric Holder in contempt of Congress for withholding documents from the Oversight Committee. Again this shows to be a sign of attacking one or part of a party in order to shine negative light on it nearing an election.

In addition to this, CNN Money came out and stated that economists are giving the administration a score of D for its handling of the economy. Certainly, news networks publicized this greatly as there was commentary from each side of the aisle, especially in comparing this administration to the possible Romney.

I see all of this as a way to show that the easiest scapegoat for the negative overtone cast across the country is obviously the government. Yet, the incentive to attack the government is not to promote good governance, but more so as a way to bar the current administration from receiving reelection. As previously mentioned, the only way these types of actions can be seen is a giant mudslinging and not aligned with good governance. And now that we know we all do it, all ideologies, we should get beyond it.