

Chapter 1.

The Heart of The Matter

The majority of our government's troubles are due to two factors. First, the distance of government from the people. And second, over-centralization of power.

In the American system, government is a partnership between the people and their representatives. And much like real-world relationships, this partnership depends on close proximity and clear communication. Yet in our current age, what should be a close partnership has turned into a long-distance relationship. The peoples' representatives are in Washington DC far more than they are at home.

This long-distance relationship is further strained by the fact that the people no longer have direct access to their own representatives. Instead, that access is reserved for lobbyists. Specifically, lobbyists from the industries of Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Defense Contractors, and Pharmaceutical Corporations. Sadly, the average American simply cannot compete with the vast level of resources lobbyists from these industries can offer. And so the people are ignored.

Thus, the distance between government and people is both literal and figurative. Senators and Representatives are physically distant from their constituents for most of each year. At the same time, these representatives have also become emotionally and intellectually distant from the people. Barricading themselves behind armies of gatekeepers, our representatives have become almost completely unreachable. Citizens who take the time to voice their concerns to their Senator or Representative count themselves lucky to receive a bland form letter as a response. The most fortunate may get to speak to an aide or intern.

This problem of distance is compounded by over-centralization of power in Washington. States, which were designed to listen to their citizens' needs, have, over time, been relegated to mere provinces of the federal government. This usurpation of State powers has effectively nullified the voice of the people. And because Washington has accumulated these powers, it views itself as having all the solutions to the problems of the people. Indeed, almost every matter of importance, from social issues and health policies to economics and the environment, is decided at the federal level.

Unfortunately, Washington tends to enrage half of the nation with each "solution" that it offers. And this fact persists regardless of which party controls the federal government. Conservative States and regions don't want to be ruled by progressive leaders. And

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The problem only gets worse each time a party claims a "mandate" and attempts to impose its will over the entire country. Such attempts to dictate policy typically results in resistance and rebellion among the dissenting States and regions. More importantly, attempts to make "one size fits all" policies alienate the peoples of America from their government...and each other.

Simply put: America's incredible size and cultural diversity make over-centralized solutions a recipe for disaster. Logically, the best solution to these problems is to shorten the distance between the people and their government. And to decentralize the powers of the federal government. This book is a blueprint to do just that.

These modifications will go a long way towards solving our most pressing problems. Namely, by returning the bulk of decision-making power to the citizens. And by providing a flexible and responsive government that better reflects the tremendous diversity of the American peoples. It must be stated, however, that even the best-designed Republic still depends upon the citizens to make it work. This means it is up to the people to educate themselves, control themselves, and fully participate in their government. Doing anything less will result in a return to the tenuous spot we currently occupy.

Fortunately, I have the greatest confidence in America. The fires of liberty that began stirring in the 18th century still burn in the hearts and minds of the people. It is up to us to turn that smoldering flame into an inferno...and ensure that America once again lights the way for all those who yearn to be free.