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RED AND BLUE NATION?  
CONSEQUENCES AND CORRECTION OF AMERICA'S  
POLARIZED POLITICS

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**Introduction and Moderator:**

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. NIVOLA: Good morning, everybody. I thought we should get started. The requisite five or ten minutes have gone by and don't want to waste too much more time here.

I'm Pietro Nivola, the director of the Governance Studies Division here at Brookings. And I am one of the sponsors of this beautiful study that we've done with the Hoover Institution. My coeditor here and coconspirator, Dave Brady, from the Hoover Institution is with us today.

I want to make sure that you know that this is undoubtedly the best study that's been done on the subject of partisan polarization in American politics. There are a number of other important books out on this topic, but this is top of the line. We assembled the nation's very best political scientists and many of the country's best and most scholarly journalists to work on this. And I think we've pulled together kind of the last word on the subject.

I should mention, by the way, that one of the -- one of the contributors among the great political scientists that we had on the team was Nelson Polsby of UC Berkley, who passed away in the middle of the project, but not before he had made a really important contribution to it. And so, as a friend and dear colleague, we dedicated this second volume to Nelson.

Now, this study has two volumes. They both look the same from this -- from the cover. But if you look on the spine, the colors are reversed. Don't tell me what metaphor that might be, but they -- we've covered this subject from soup to nuts. The first volume asks the question okay, what is polarization? What is this all about and how did it happen? What are the root causes?

Part two, the volume that we'll be discussing today asks well, so what, why does this matter. What difference does it make? And what, if anything, should be done to correct the alleged problem?

Now, what I'd like to do today is the following. I'm going to make some rather lengthy actually introductory remarks and observations because so much of the casual commentary on this phenomenon of partisanship tends to be kind of loose and often misleading and indeed in some cases, pure nonsense. And I think we need to clear up some of the confusion in order to have a more informative and intelligent conversation later on on this panel. Later, my colleagues here are going to drill down into some specific findings of the book. So, we have about two hours, and we're going to cover a lot of ground.

Let me introduce my friends here, starting with Dave Brady. Dave wears multiple hats, not today. He's the Author McCoy Professor of Political Science and Ethics in the Stanford University Graduate School of Business. And he also has the Morris Doyle Centennial Chair in Public Policy at Stanford. He, in addition to being a professor of Political Science

there, is a deputy director and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and is in charge of organizing the research there. And I couldn't have done this project without his great companionship and great help.

He is the author of a whole bunch of books. I'm not going to bore -- go through the whole list here, but the latest one is highly topical, the latest one besides ours. It's called *Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy from Carter to Bush II*.

Next to David is Peter Beinart, who is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He's also editor at large of *The New Republic* and a monthly columnist for the *Washington Post*. When he was with us as a guest here at Brookings a couple of years ago, he wrote one of the finest books to be produced here called the *The Good Fight*, which deals with the travails of the Democratic party in developing a stance, a clear stance and position on the War on Terror and on foreign affairs in general. We're delighted to have Peter here because he's also written one of the best chapters in the book.

I regret to say that we were supposed to have another fine young scholar named Marc Hetherington, professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University, who wrote a stellar chapter on who polarization affects civil engagement and political participation. Unfortunately, Marc had a family emergency and at the last minute, called us to say he couldn't come. So, I'm just going to give you later on a couple of quick

nuggets from his study, but we will miss his contribution because it was very important.

Finally, my dear friend and colleague and coauthor, Bill Galston at the end over there. Bill was a professor of Political Science and of Public Policy and also the dean for a while at the University of Maryland. Before that, he was a professor at the University of Texas Austin. And before that, believe it or not, he was a United States Marine. He's the author of many, many important books, the latest one called *Public Matters*, which came out last year.

I would like to say that I couldn't have done this project without Bill either. I'm a Republican actually, and Bill is, as you know, a Democrat. If the Democrats and Republicans in this town could have worked as beautifully together as the two of us did, the problems of this country would long be over by now.

So, with that, let me make a few other important acknowledgements, however, that are not to be missed here. This whole project required external funding, and we got it from four foundations, which were crucial to our efforts, starting with the Smith Richardson Foundation, followed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, then McArthur, and Carnegie. Without their support, this could not have happened.

I also want to thank my many other Brookings colleagues who contributed to this project and also especially my support staff, Bethany Hase, Erin Carter, Gladys Arrisueno, and Mike Colgin. These are

unsung heroes and heroines in this project. They were working behind the scenes and again, I couldn't have done it without their enormous help.

Back on the West Coast -- I mean, this is really one of the finest bicoastal partnerships in the history of our institution and probably of Dave's here. But out on the West Coast, we got some wonderful contributions, scholarly contributions from our friends, Morris Furina, Larry Diamond, Peter Crabel, and John Ferejohn. I wish they were here with us today. And Dave, without the help of Mandy McKella probably wouldn't have been able to pull this off either, his staff.

Okay. Let me begin with three sets of observations. I want to talk a little bit about the salience of our project amid this high drama of the 2008 election. And then I want to, as I said earlier, dispatch some of the misunderstandings and misapprehensions about this country's partisan politics. And finally, I want to get to what we should really be worried about, what should really concern us, which is not the myths and fictions that you often hear about.

So, let's start with the election and its implications for our work. This is undoubtedly one of the most historic and riveting elections in my lifetime. Let's start with Senator John McCain. The comeback story here is a saga for all times. I mean, he came out of -- he was flat broke, and he's managed to work his way to the -- toward, you know, within, you know, very close reach of the Republican nomination.

This is the most interesting Republican maverick, I think, since Teddy Roosevelt. He's also the first -- in many ways, the first authentic GOP centrist since perhaps Eisenhower. This is really historic stuff.

On the Democratic side, two extremely worthy candidates have moved to the top, but let me say a word about Senator Obama. This is really a pretty astonishing story as well. A little known African American politician from the state of Illinois within reach also of the presidential nomination. I can only think of one other presidential candidate from Illinois who started out with so little name recognition and actually so little experience in high office and who catapulted to the top. His name was Abraham Lincoln.

Now, Senator Obama up until now has been more centrist in style than in substance. I think Hillary is right about that. But he's also a very smart and supple politician, and I think he's going to make adjustments. If Obama turns out to be the nominee, he's not going to let himself be caught way out there on a limb on the far left that McCain will easily saw off.

So, all of this actually raises an important basic question for our study, and that is, have events passed it by? Is the era of hyper partisanship basically over? Are we at the dawn, as it's being said, of a post-partisan age? Trust me, we're not. The partisan divide is deep. It will become keener as the general election progresses. The chasm

between the party philosophies of the two -- of the Democrats and Republicans is especially deep in the area of foreign policy, as Peter Beinart will explain in a little while.

And I would argue that in fact the differences between John McCain and either Senator Obama or Senator Clinton is greater on this dimension than the difference between the two parties was in the 2004 election. I'm sure that many of you remember the debates in that election. During one of them, John Cain was very -- John Cain -- John Kerry -- interesting slip there -- John Kerry was very explicit. He said, "I'm not talking about" -- this was when the subject of Iraq came up -- "I'm not talking about leaving; I'm talking about winning."

Well, with Obama and Clinton, all the talk, at least up until now has been about leaving at various rates of speed. And McCain is going to hammer them on this point. They will hammer him in turn on the question of well, how long are you planning to stay, the 100 years question. So, trust me, again, understanding how we got to this point, how the two sides became so polarized and the implications of that is as important today and relevant today as it was when we started this study three years ago. I simply urge you to read this book, both books actually.

All right. Let me come to some of the misapprehensions that surround this whole subject. I want to clarify a number of things so we can have a really smart discussion later on. The differences between Democrats and Republicans run very deep on certain key issues. And the



differences are not just at the level of the political elites, they actually drop all the way down to the level of the mass electorate or a considerable segment of it.

But, keep this in mind. And this is a very -- first point I really want to emphasize. Our partisan divide, these in 2008, pales in comparison with other historical periods in the history of this country, and it pales with the partisan disputes that go on, the intensity of the partisan disputes that go on in various other democracies.

No one in this room is going to tell me that we're quarreling more than this country did back in the mid-nineteenth century over slavery, for example, when members of Congress caned each other, literally caned each other, and then we wound up eventually with a Civil War.

And no one is going to even tell me that our partisan conflicts exceed those of the first decades of our republic. Just remember the election of 1828 between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, for example. The supporters of those two candidates hurled slurs and insults at each other that, as Bill Clinton colorfully put it, would have blistered the hairs off a dog's back. And he was absolutely right.

Now, speaking of international comparisons, if you want to see polarization, let me show you some. This is an Italian member of Parliament who was pummeled, leveled -- I mean, I don't even know if

he's alive; he looks like he's sort of half dead -- by another member of -- another deputy in the Italian Assembly.

So, you know, yes, our partisan disputes are sometimes intense, but our partisans are civil, indeed genteel in comparison with what you just saw. We have sharp partisan cleavages on key issues, but here's another important point. They're not across the board. There has actually been a great deal of convergence between the two political parties.

And if you take a long view here, the larger view, you will really appreciate this. Consider the actual important -- very important policy items, welfare reform, the expansion of healthcare. You know, both parties have been expanding healthcare. That's what Medicare Part D was all about. Whatever else it was about, it was an expansion of healthcare and a very costly one. And that was a Bush Administration initiative, as you know.

Foreign subsidies -- all candidates, Republican and Democrat, speak with the same fervor about something called energy independence. I'm not sure what they all mean by that, but they all seem to agree on that. Even taxes, no Democratic candidate is calling for a return to the pre-Regan era where the top marginal tax rate was 70 percent. What they're quibbling about now is the question of sort of a marginal change from 35 percent to, you know, back up to 39.6 percent. Yeah, that's a big deal, but it's not as big a deal as the 70 percent rate was before the Regan revolution.

If McCain turns out to be the Republican nominee, as I think he will, the convergence will be even more dramatic on many issues. There won't be a big distinction between the partisans any longer on stem cell research, on negotiating with drug companies to lower drug prices, on immigration, on same sex marriage, on, you know, water boarding and torture, and much more. But again, there will remain an important chasm, a huge chasm actually on what do to in Iraq.

So, anyway, my -- this is my first point. Our polarization, it exists, it's real, but it is pretty mild by historical standards and in comparison with various other countries.

Now, here's another point I want to make. Partisanship actually gets a pretty bad rap, and it's silly to give it a bad rap. I have a lot of respect for, for example, former Senator Bob Graham of Florida, but he wrote in the *Post* recently an article in which he spoke about the need to "cut out the cancer of partisanship." Well, partisanship is not a cancer, I don't think. Parties are essential to a viable democracy. Without them, you cannot organize politics. You can't -- a democracy does not function without partisanship.

And the more distinct the parties are, in some ways, the better. When there was not "a dime's worth of difference", as we used to say between Democrat and Republican candidates, it actually had a negative effect on political participation. Voters got bored by two parties that were too much alike. With the parties more polarized, they been

energized, they're engaged, and they're turning out in much bigger numbers.

This is one of the themes that Marc Hetherington's fascinating chapter in our book lays out very nicely. Let me see if I can turn to that -- oh, we're back to the Italian victim here. This is the name of his chapter, "Turned Off or Turned On", and what he shows is polarization actually turns people on. This chart, which he would have done a better job of explaining than me -- than I, shows as you can see here an increase in -- no matter how you measure it, you can measure voter turnout in either of two ways. But in recent years, you've seen a really dramatic increase, you know, back to levels that we didn't see or close to levels that we didn't see, you know, as far back as the late sixties.

When asked about intensity, how voters feel about whether they, you know, care who wins the presidential race, again, very significant increases in the level of interest in presidential -- and this proceeds, of course -- this is only up to 2004. It precedes our current election cycle. And this is -- by the way, this increase in intensity is true of liberals, it's true of conservatives, and it's true of moderates, and it's even true of people who haven't thought that much about politics at all. That's rather interesting.

So, there is much to be said for presenting the voters with a choice and not an echo, as Barry Goldwater so pivotally put it years ago. And it's important because what it means for a democracy is greater

accountability. When voters know who they're voting for and what they're voting for, they can put that party in power. If they then don't like what the party has accomplished or failed to accomplish, they can toss the rascals out and bring in the other side. But at least they know what they're choosing.

And so our political system has really become more like the European parliamentary democracies, where you have more party cohesion, more party unity, and more party discipline, and the choice becomes a little more, the line gets a little brighter between the choices that you make. And I don't think that's all a bad thing by any means.

I want to make another point of importance. Having a party - parties that are more cohesive, more reliable, if you will, and more disciplined does not necessarily lead to gridlock. This is a misunderstanding that's widespread in town here, that just because there's a lot of partisanship, it means gridlock. That is not the case. Dave Brady will talk perhaps a little bit about this in a little while.

But, you know, very important, very expensive, for example, pieces of legislation such as the prescription drug benefit I mentioned earlier. We're essentially passed on a party line vote, okay. They were passed because -- that was passed because the Republican Party was very disciplined. And so, you can find examples, important examples actually of where more party cohesion actually greases the skids towards legislation for better or worse. I'm not trying to judge whether the

prescription drug benefit was an ideal piece of legislation or not, but it was passed.

A couple more points, we hear a lot about how much we would prefer bipartisanship to partisanship. But bipartisanship can be overrated. One tends to rhapsodize about the days of bipartisanship. But let me give you a couple of examples of bipartisanship that I didn't like and probably nobody in this room liked.

Nearly a century after reconstruction, we had a form of bipartisan consensus on racial apartheid in this country, not a good thing. In the 1920s and well into the 1930s, we had a form of bipartisan consensus, very much so, on isolationism, not a good thing. Don't overrate the elegance and the virtue of bipartisanship in all instances.

Final myth that I want to debunk and that is that you continually hear that our democracy is broken, that it's dysfunctional, it's paralyzed, and so on, and that it needs reform, you know, root and branch reform at all costs. Beware of this. The cure can be worse than the disease. Some aspects of our polarized politics are -- and our arch-partisanship is indeed unhealthy and dangerous perhaps. But to administer political chemotherapy to this patient can actually kill the patient. So, be careful.

There's a long history of attempts in this country to suppress partisanship. It was particularly acute during the progressive era as you recall. Bill Galston and I have written quite a lot about that in our final

chapter. The progressives wanted to basically pull the parties out of the political process as much as possible and let the voters -- and turn power over to the voters, get the party politicians, the party leaders, the party bosses out of the process of slating candidates and electing public officials.

They would -- they introduced innovations such as the nonpartisan ballot in municipal elections. Well, guess what? It all backfired or much of it did. The nonpartisan ballot in city elections resulted in plummeting voter turnout because voters got confused. They couldn't figure out what the candidates stood for. So, there are plenty of unintended consequences in reform.

And we're -- I'm by no means suggesting that there shouldn't be any reforms. In fact, Bill's chapter and mine are all about that. But one has to be extremely careful. Be careful what you wish for. Now, all of that said, we conclude in this book that there are at least three or four ways in which the excesses of partisanship in recent years have wrought some havoc or at least should give us very serious pause.

The first of which is the subject that Peter is going to speak about. he wrote -- the title of his chapter is "When Politics No Longer Stops at the Water's Edge." It's a beautiful title. When politics no longer -- and partisanship no longer stops at the water's edge, foreign policy is in trouble. It's very difficult to conduct a resolute, stable, long-range national

security strategy in foreign policy when the two parties are as split over something like this as we've seen in recent years.

Secondly, this country, like all other Western democracies, faces the problem of what to do with its welfare state and how to restructure it in sensible ways and how to deal with runaway entitlement spending. And unless this is done, we're going to face a massive fiscal crisis in this country as the baby boomers retire and that demographic bulge works its way through the python, so to speak.

This third rail -- python and third rail are terribly mixed metaphors. I apologize. It's something that no politician, no Republican or Democrat particularly wants to touch. So, you do need some bipartisanship here. Without the cover of bipartisanship, no one is going to address this big long-term problem, challenge.

And finally, two other things. Judicial appointments, the process of appointing and confirming judges in our system has become way too acrimonious, politicized, and contentious. And it, I think, is beginning to threaten the independence and viability of the third branch. I could give lots of examples, but let's just take a local one here from our neighborhood, the US Court of Appeals for the fourth circuit, which is Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the Carolinas.

Well, one-third of the judges on that court are missing. It's one -- there's -- one-third of that court is vacant. Part of that is because for years now it's been so hard to make appointments even at the level of



the -- even at the appellate level in the lower courts. Forget about the Supreme Court, which is where the pyrotechnics take place.

Finally, when partisanship becomes excessive and the partisan quarrels become too petty and too -- and do indeed lead to some paralytic effects, it can undercut trust in government. It can generate more cynicism about politics and a steady -- we've seen a steady decline of trust in government over recent years, as Dave Brady will explain later. This is not healthy for our democracy, and it would make us pretty much the same as other countries. We don't want to, however, become like France and Italy in that department.

So, with that, I've droned on way too long. I apologize. But I'm now going to turn it over to my friend, Dave Brady, who will talk about his chapter.

MR. BRADY: Okay. So, in the initial volume, Pietro and Bill wrote a very balanced essay talking about what are the possible consequences of polarization, among which were these: decreased trust, decreased representation, rise in policy gridlock, and so on and a number of others. But these are the ones that we chose to investigate.

The first was this notion of trusting government. And what we found was there's some evidence for it. Now, in the actual book, we do the usual scholarly things, you know, cite the literature. Trust is a hard thing to figure out. It can be related to the presidents. Population

presidents can make it rise and da da da da. Having said that, we then analyze public trust from 1964 to 2006 and do find some evidence for that.

So, here's trusting government and the top line is polarization. By the way, two side comments. One, polarization in this is measured in various ways, the difference between the median member of congress on the Democratic and Republican sides subtracting the difference between the mean Democrat and Republican and a number of other statistically interesting analyses, none of which made any real difference to the findings. So, that's the first comment. That's what we mean by polarization.

And the second part of that notion is that remember that this is a study about the effects of polarization, a single variable. This is not a study about all of what accounts for public policy in the United States with a whole bunch or right hand side variables of which polarization is one. So, the task is incomplete in the sense that you're looking at polarization as one variable and trying to assess how much effect it has. And that's of course what we're doing.

But it is -- trusting government and confidence in congress, which is the lower one on the second half are exactly as you'd expect. The higher the level of polarization -- and that means a whole bunch of things, the higher level of conflict in congress, the higher amount of news that comes out that's conflictual, the lower the confidence in the congress and the lower the trust in government. So, we have reason to believe --

there's reason to believe that that's an area worth investigating and that polarization has some effect on it.

One way we wanted to check that was to say well, what's the one institution of government that people are familiar with and that is not nasty or polarized in that sense. It may be polarized in how they vote, but certainly, they're very civil in the way in which they disagree. So, Justice Fryer and Thomas may not vote alike much, but they're actually friends. They know each other. Their children know each other, et cetera.

So, we looked at -- the idea was well, let's look at the Supreme Court during these periods if that makes some sense because people might value the fact that it's less partisan in that sense. And it worked. Polarization again is the line up top, and the other line is confidence in the courts actually increases over this time period. And our suspicion is that the reason is because while the other institutions are seen as polarized, president and congress, what happens is that the Supreme Court, by virtue of not being polarized in that sense, picks up some of the benefit.

So, the conclusion is that again, there is a negative relationship between polarization and trust in governments and confidence in congress. And that's supported a bit by the Supreme Court data.

I'm not going to spend much time on this but one of the claims was -- not a claim that Pietro and Bill made and in fact, in their essay, they sort of talked about most legislation being relatively speaking

at the median. We spent a lot of time talking about -- we look at legislation, the 2001-2003 tax cut, the negotiations on it are not outlandishly one way or the other. It's negotiated by Max Baucus, a Democrat from Montana. It's forgotten that presidential candidate Gore actually suggested a \$750 billion tax cut, not much different from the one President Bush proposed.

So, the bottom line is that the policies that even the Bush Administration pass seem to have been altered to get the support of the median member of congress and the senate where you have to get 60 votes, that was often a moderate Democrat like Senator Baucus and before him, Senator Borrow.

Well, the gridlock, the idea -- the ideas that what does gridlock means, it means that you can't pass policies in certain areas. And cynically when we thought of that, we thought well, it's hard to believe that congress wouldn't manage to pass highway transportation acts and agricultural subsidies because those are important for reelection.

Most of the other studies on gridlock have not used budget data. They've used data -- they've used data from David Mayhew's work about policies passing, generalized work. So, what we have here from 1955 to 2005 is a special data set done by the Congressional Budget Office and OMB and after that, by John Kogan, who is deputy director of OMB and is certified by OMB and CBO. And this data is such that it takes care of all of the accounting transformations between 1955 and the

present. It also takes care of all the backdoor spending. So, if a bill is appropriated now and then the spending occurs five years down the line, that's averaged out. And it also takes into account all supplemental legislation.

You can imagine this is a rather large task to have this data set. But the data set means that you can attribute in one congress that's what they voted on in regard to appropriations. And so, that's it's actual utility. And the other utility, of course, is you can go back and look at a program that's changed three or four times in name and have the actual dollars spent in real dollars. So, it's got change -- we looked at change in the discretionary spending year to year, and gridlock is a small magnitude of change.

Okay. On pork barrel policy, we did agriculture and highways, and it shows very little evidence of gridlock. These are, as you can see, big swings, normally tied to election years. Other little bit of evidence on that is the two largest agricultural spending bills. You know, since 1933 and the introduction of the agriculture acts where the federal government funded it are 1986 Ronald Regan and second was George Bush in 2002. So, we know at least that the extremes, those sorts of bills -- but there's no evidence when you -- and for those of you who are interested, the actual paper has -- the appendix has all the regressions that show there's not much of an effect here.

However, in partisan areas, that is, areas where the parties disagree, there is support for the gridlock hypothesis. And here, you can see the line defining gridlock, the line -- let's say roughly 1979-80 and after that, the percentage of change drops down. As polarization drops, the amount of money funded drops. And the reason is pretty straightforward because here in an area where the parties disagree, the polarization prohibits movement -- much movement up or down, and so you tend to get stable patterns.

Now, in the book, we just show these two areas, but this also appears to be true across a whole set of other areas. One of the more interesting areas is defense appropriations. And because of the complexity of the pork barrel aspects of defense spending, plus the national security aspects -- we're trying to break those out in another study to look at something along the lines of what Peter said is there -- what Peter is going to tell you about, foreign policy has become partisan. And that data we're still trying to break out. So, we don't have much to say -- nothing to say on it in this book.

Another question though is we did look back and did turn to see in both -- our view is that polarized governments can change policy if the states are high. And in 1990 and Social Security in 1981, both times in which there was polarization in congress, probably because the exogenous shock affected both of them, they did come up with remedies that solved the problem, at least for 10 or 20 years. So, the question -- the

last question then is can governments do anything is a question which I'll come back to, and I'm not sure that we all agree on that.

Now, the other question is there's some -- this notion about well, what about the use of restrictive rules in a congress and that means that partisanship and polarization means that the congress is going to act under restrictive rules. And here, there is strong evidence for relation between polarization or restrictive rules, but it both precedes the Republicans and postdates it, that is, now that you have a Democratic congress and look at the series of closed rules.

So, the argument about restrictive rules is well, what happens is the one party gets in and they decide here's what we can pass, so -- and we can't have any amendments, we can't deal with this, so we're going to pass it, it's going to be a closed rules, no amendments, limited debate. And then we're going to -- that's it. we're going to jam it down the other party's throat, and that's the notion of the effect of polarization, and there is in fact.

And so, there's two things you might think about parties, one way in which they might polarize, they might get more homogenous. They look -- members in each party look more like. And the second things that's happened is they can separate and move further apart. And that's what's happened in the case of parties in the United States Congress. And all three of these things lead to increases.

So, measure of -- so, the first measure up here is the difference in party means on a nominate score. And you can see that that has gone way up. and then the other notion is majority party variance. I mean, how many liberal Republicans are there, how many conservative Democrats, which there's enough people out there my age that you remember there was at one time a liberal wing to the Democratic party -- to the Republican party. And there was a conservative -- more conservative wing of the Democratic Party. There's still a little bit of that, but almost nothing left of that liberal wing of the Republican Party. And both of these show that, so you get separation and homogenization and that's the notion of plurality.

So, in regard to the restrictive rules, so you have open rule probability and polarization difference in means, you can see that in both cases in the second one, it's just a different measure of open rule probability and polarizations. That's variance, those are those two measures, separateness, homogeneity, and in both cases and the regressions show they're absolutely related. So, there is evidence that polarization does increase, decrease the use of open rules, increase the use of closed rules, and fewer alternatives being voted on.

We then looked by probability of open rule by congress, probability of modified open rule, probability of modified closed structured rules, and probability of closed rules by congress, and the idea in each case being that the first graph doesn't show you the complexity of it.



When you look at the set of these, the general results are the same, that there has been a decrease in open and an increase in closed rules. And that -- we haven't got the data for the -- the full set of data for this congress, but that has not changed in this congress, though it's controlled by Democrats.

So, one, conclusions, polarization is somewhat related to trust in government and it's related in the proper way, it goes down. Second, it's related to gridlock in contested policy areas, which means across a whole set of areas where the parties disagree, it's harder for the congress to pass legislation, moves it very much offbeat one way or the other. And it's strongly related to the choice of rules in the House of Representatives.

And it might make it more difficult to deal with long-term problems. And why do I say might? Well, first of all, the inability of governments -- Democratic governments to deal with long term problems is not unique in the United States. If you looked at the problem of unfunded liabilities that is reasonably strong in the United States, that problem is stronger in Japan. That is, they have more unfunded liabilities. It's bigger in Europe. Particularly in Europe, as populations decline, the unfunded liabilities versus the number of workers are much more significant in magnitude than they are in the United States. And no European -- Japanese government, no European government has been able to solve that problem.

So, I'm not -- from my view, polarization may affect this. I think it probably does. Within any social scientific sense, there are other institutions, i.e. replying to short term factors, that seem to make a difference in governments not being able to deal with long term solutions, such as unfunded liabilities. Thank you.

MR. BEINART: Thanks. I think that they said this was a coalition between intellectuals and -- between academics and scholarly journalists who put this together. And putting aside the fact that I always have been told that scholarly journalist was an oxymoron, those journalists who were involved tried to do our best to approach the rigor of some of our colleagues.

The first question it seems to me when you talk about polarization and foreign policy is to ask when this golden age of foreign policy bipartisanship was. And I think it lasted roughly 28 years, between 1940 and 1968. I think if you had to put dates on it, you'd say 1940 to 1968. there's lots of foreign policy division in the late 1930s.

It's not clearly along partisan lines, but it's very much along the old regional lines that you see basically for the first -- all through the progressive era into the twenties and thirties a kind of Eastern internationalist or even imperialist Wall Street, kind of big Navy wing embodied by people like Teddy Roosevelt and Elihu Root and Henry Stimson versus a kind of a Midwestern isolationist or at least anti-imperialist wing led by people like Robert LaFollette, George Norris,

William Borah, Arthur Vandenberg. But in 1940, Franklin Roosevelt on the eve of World War II brings in Stimson and Knox as his secretaries of war and Navy, two very, very prominent members of the Republican Eastern internationalist elite, which wants to enter the war but viscerally dislikes the New Deal. And that really, I think, creates the kind of -- the bipartisan internationalist coalition that then continues through the war and defines American foreign policy in the beginning of the Cold War.

And the Cold War, of course, kind of quickly, you have this -- a coalescing around the idea that conflict with the Soviet Union or at least competition with the Soviet Union is going to be the right prism for understanding American foreign policy, and the right strategy is containment.

It's worth noting that even in this period of -- from the late 1940s until the late 1960s, you could argue that this Cold War consensus contains the seeds of its own destruction, that it's much -- it's actually more fragile than it appears because containment really is most bipartisan when you're talking about Europe. As the containment starts to expand in Asia, it very quickly becomes more bitterly partisan. I mean, even in the early years.

You think about the, you know, the fight in 1949 over whether we should have tried harder to contain the -- contain communism in China, the fight in 1950 about rollback in Korea. Those were incredibly bitter partisan fights that were basically about the -- whether containment

should be applied to every communist movement around the world and indeed whether we should try to go beyond containment to do rollback.

And anyone who thinks that this Cold War period on foreign policy, the first two decades of the Cold War was all sweetness and light simply needs to remember how important Korea and China are to McCarthyism, which is absolutely one of the most brutal periods of partisan warfare and demolition in 20th century America.

It -- this Cold War consensus breaks in Vietnam. And I think it breaks because containment expands and expands and expands from an idea that is really much more limited to Europe, not intended by Kennon to be the -- a kind of bulwark against communist movements all over the world, but it becomes that for various reasons. And you can already see with the China debate in 1949 that in some sense, containment can't really stand the pressure of being a global ideology and then that, of course, it clearly becomes true by the late 1960s with Vietnam.

And what happens in the 1970s? the foreign policy debate in the 1970s, I think, is very instructive, the 1970s and the 1980s. I think it offers in many ways a kind of a template to understand the debates that we have today. For conservatives, traditional conservatives and also neo-conservatives emerging in the 1970s, the Cold War still is the right prism for understanding American foreign policy, the global containment of communism.

And for conservatives and neo-conservatives, the only thing it's really changed in the post -- late Vietnam years and post-Vietnam years is the decline of American will, that America no longer has the will in fact to try to contain communism all over the world.

For a kind of coalition of post-Vietnam liberals and realists, people like Kennon, and to some degree, you would even include people like Nixon and Kissinger in this, this Cold War prism of global containment really no longer works nearly as well. And what you find with liberal foreign policy in the 1970s, which is the -- is an argument that the world is no longer bipolar as a result of the Sino Soviet split, that the Soviet Union is not really a revolutionary power anymore. It's a status quo power, that military force has less utility in foreign policy than it did before, that in many ways, north south issues are eclipsing east west issues.

And many of the challenges of American foreign policy are dealing with issues having to do with the global south that really can't be understood in a communist versus -- in a kind of east versus west framework, that economics is a much more important part of foreign policy than before, and that fundamentally as a result of economic changes the world is much more interdependent. And the way to maintain global order is by trying to build networks of international interdependence, particularly using international economic institutions.

That basically becomes the kind of idea that starts -- these ideas define liberal foreign policy in the 1970s. This is not initially, it's

worth noting, a partisan divide. I mean, as late as the election in 1976, you have Scoop Jackson, as maybe the most important neo-conservative politician in America, running in the Democratic Party, actually winning Massachusetts and New York. While on the Republican side, you have Gerald Ford, who in many ways is sympathetic to some of these liberal ideas.

But I think what very -- what happens very importantly is that with the Carter victory and neo-conservative and conservative kind of alienation from Carter and then of course the election of Regan, you see kind of ideology and partisanship kind of click into alignment with Regan's election. And so, you have these debates that were really some ways within the parties about the degree to which the Cold War and containment were still relevant become a debate between the parties by the early Regan years.

And I think the reason that this is so important is that so -- and I think Jim Mann's book, *Rise of the Vulcans* is really good on this -- so much of the way that the people who have made American foreign policy in the Bush Administration see the world, was in fact defined by those debates in the 1970s and early 1980s. and there has been a lot of, I think, foreign policy by analogy in understanding the post-9/11 world in similar ways to the ways that they interpreted the debates of the 1970s and 80s.

And I think there are interesting parallels. You know, after 9/11, the War on Terror at the very beginning, is a rather narrow idea and a very bipartisan one. We're going to fight back against Al Qaeda and we're going to fight back in Afghanistan, which is where Al Qaeda has its bases. And there's virtually no partisan difference over that.

But just as containment broadens quite quickly -- I mean containment in 1950 is quite different than containment in 1946. The War on Terror broadens even faster, so that by George W. Bush's state of the union speech in January 2002, the War on Terror is not simply a struggle against Al Qaeda. It's a struggle against any nations that are accused of having relationships with terrorists, even if they're not terrorists who have attacked us, like in the case of Iran. They may actually have a hostile relationship with Al Qaeda, even though they have terrorist connections or Iraq, whose terrorist connections are actually quite weak but is a hostile regime that is pursuing, we thought, nuclear weapons or even North Korea is ramped -- is thrown into the Axis of Evil in January of 2002, which almost everyone agrees has no terrorist ties whatsoever, but is really simply a nuclear proliferation problem.

And it's with this broadening containment and then of course with the War in Iraq in the fall of 2002, that you basically see liberals and Democrats getting off the bus in terms of believing that the War on Terror is their vision for seeing the world. That is actually masked by the fact that in the US Senate you have a lot of support for the Iraq War. But I think

public opinion amongst Democrats out in the country and if you look at Democrats who have safe seats in the House and Senate, for instance, you see actually pretty strong opposition to the War in Iraq.

And so, this Republican -- if you look at where the foreign policy debate stands today, I think you can see that again Republicans define the War on -- conservatives define the War or Terrorism very broadly, to include not just Al Qaeda as a non-state actor made up of Sunni jihadists, who launched an attack on the US, but all terror associated regimes and even some regimes whose relations with terror is kind of weak but are hostile to the United States and are seeking weapons of mass destruction. And they're -- the War on Terror is basically coterminous with American foreign policy.

If you look at Rudy Giuliani's piece that he wrote in foreign affairs, for instance when the candidates were writing pieces, he basically discussed no other element of American foreign policy, other than the War on Terror. For many conservatives, the War on Terror still defines American foreign policy almost as much as the Cold War defined American foreign policy in the 1970s and 80s.

For liberals, I think liberals and Democrats tend to define the War on Terror more narrowly. They define the terrorist threat more narrowly, thinking of it only in terms of basically this Al Qaeda, Sunni, non-state network. And therefore, it represents only a much smaller part of the larger elements of American foreign policy. And I think that when --



liberals have been, I think, less good at kind of articulating what their larger framework for foreign policy is.

But I think if you -- when you look at it closely, I think what you find is that it's actually quite similar in many ways to the framework that they had in the 1970s, basically that the prism is globalization. It's the idea that we live in a world in which non-state actors are empowered, both to do good and to do ill and that in that world, the challenge for America is to create growing degrees of cooperation so that we can harness the benefits of globalization and protect ourselves against the dangers of globalization.

So, you see a lot of talk in liberal circles about the danger of failed states, the need for economic development so that failed states don't breed disease, environmental destruction, and terrorism. You see much more talking about environmental issues. Global warming is a much, much bigger part of the Democratic debate than the Republican debate, much more concern about international economic questions. I mean, just think about how much more important international economics were to Clinton's foreign policy, how much more important a player Ruben was in Clinton Administration foreign policy than Bush's secretaries of the treasury have been in his foreign policy.

International economics, as it was in the 1970s, I would argue, is a much more important part of the way liberals think about foreign policy right now than it is the way conservatives think about foreign

policy. And underlying all of this is the idea that military force has less utility in foreign policy than conservatives are likely to ascribe to it.

I think these basic fundamental differences are likely to endure into the next presidency. There are certain ways in which people like Barack Obama or John McCain could find common ground. I mean, actually, I think what's striking is McCain. I mean, in some important ways, McCain really does deviate. He was early amongst Republicans and I think very brave in taking global warming seriously, even though that is not a foreign policy problem that can be thought of in terms of a military response. And he also takes a somewhat different view on the question of treatment of detainees and torture. So, those two issues, which have been very partisan issues, could become a little bit less partisan.

Still however, it seems to me you have issues out there that will continue to be drivers for very big partisan disagreements, of course, the War in Iraq. I mean, there was a possibility, I think, that the War in Iraq was going to become actually more bipartisan because the Republican support for continuing American presence there was going to collapse. It hasn't collapsed, partly because of Republican discipline, more importantly because of the success, however you want to understand it, of the surge, which I think has solidified Republican support. And McCain's winning the nomination is kind of testament to that.

But also, I think the War in Iraq will have big implications for how we see debates over other countries. Iran, I think, the possibility of

Democrats, liberals supporting military action against Iran, I think, is extremely low, in large part because of the legacy of Iraq, while I think listening to what John McCain has said, Republicans remain more open to that. And in even more the long term, if you imagine that American foreign policy will almost inexorably be defined more over time by the debate over China.

I think that we may find that Iraq has an important legacy for American debate over China. It would not have been so impossible, I think, before Iraq to imagine that the China debate would not split among partisan lines, that you could imagine people on the left wanting to take a more hawkish line on China. You have a human rights group. You know, Nancy Pelosi has been kind of hawkish on China. You have a human right element that would take a hawkish view, a labor group in the Democratic Party. You could almost imagine the kind of group of revived, scooped -- kind of Scoop Jacksons, kind of hawkish labor Democrats wanting to take a more hawkish view on China with the business community supporting a more dovish view on China.

I think because of the legacy of Iraq, I think that's much less likely. I think it's much more likely that Democrats and liberals will be very resistant to anything that they -- that seems like excessive military containment of China and that particularly if there are not other terrorist attacks, the Republican party will move towards more of a focus on East

Asia with more of an emphasis on military containment of China while Democrats are more skeptical of it.

And I think -- ultimately, if you want to try to understand what the fundamental divide, I think, and the kind of DNA of liberals and conservatives on foreign policy, I think that at root, it basically goes back to the belief in international -- about the possibilities of international cooperation. I think conservatives are simply more skeptical about the possibilities of international cooperation. They see the world fundamentally in more Hobbesian terms. It may go back to just fundamentally different views of human nature overall.

And I think liberals basically are the children, much more than conservatives are of Woodrow Wilson. You know, we think now Woodrow Wilson is only this guy who wanted to promote democracy, but what Woodrow Wilson was -- really believed in fundamentally was the idea of collective security, the idea that all nations are in it together, the idea that you would create a universal league of nations in which -- based on the principle of all for one, one for all, we're all in it together. If any one country aggressed against its neighbor, all countries would come together to oppose it. this was a very broad grand vision of universal international cooperation.

I think that idea is still -- I'm writing something about this actually as we speak. I think this is still basically the idea that animates liberal foreign policy. And I think it has undergone after the Cold War a

kind of resurgence in a globalized age. When for liberals there are a whole new series of threats, whether it be environmental threat, global public health threats, terrorist threats, the spread of nuclear proliferation that basically threaten all nations, that liberals conceive of as standing outside of the nation's state system but threatening all nations and in which you should be able to build universal frameworks and international cooperation, whether it be against terrorism, whether it be a new regime on international nuclear proliferation, whether it be bringing China into this system, a system of universal norms.

And I think conservatives simply think that's utopian. The conservatives are really the children of Henry Cabot Lodge, who said, "I don't want a universal league of nations. I want an alliance with France at the end of World War I against Germany." The basic element -- competition defines international relations, and what we should try to construct is a balance of power with our allies against our enemies, not a balance of power in the sense of equilibrium, like a scale, but a balance of power in the sense of dis-equilibrium like a bank balance, a favorable balance of power and that that's the right -- that the problem is not nuclear proliferation at large; it's nuclear proliferation to countries that are enemies of the United States.

The problem is not terrorism as some disembodied force; it's terrorism as the expression of countries that are hostile to the United States. And I think that's why, ultimately I think, you are likely to see

conservatives, I would be, move towards a view on China that is more -- that is focused on trying to establish a disequilibria of power in East Asia balancing against China with the United States allied with countries like India and Australia and Japan. And I think that fundamental debate is likely to divide liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans for a long time to come.

I'll stop there. Thanks.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I'm acutely aware of the fact that you've already had a lot infused into your brains in the past hour, and I will try to keep my remarks short. Let me just begin, however, by underscoring a point that Peter Beinart made almost in passing, which I think helps to define what our subject matter is. He pointed out that in -- you know, at the height of the furor over the Vietnam War, we had a question at the center of American politics that divided both political parties from within. Vietnam was not principally a struggle between Democrats and Republicans. It was a struggle between Democrats and Democrats that started in 1968 and then also between Republicans and Republicans a few years later.

And that launched a period of struggle within the two political parties that was not resolved cleanly until 1980. In 1980, Regans took over the Republican Party and realism of the Ford, Kissinger, and now Brent Scowcroft variety was pushed to the margin. And in the Democratic Party, it was not until 1980 that it became clear that the forces behind

Senator Henry Jackson and people who agreed with him no longer had a dominant role in the Democratic Party. And indeed, many of those people picked up their marbles that year and migrated to the Republican Party.

So, the issue before us is not just polarization. It's polarization that is mapped onto the party system such that the two parties systematically become bearers of these differences on central public policy issues.

And so, the question -- one of the questions before us is is it a good thing or a bad thing that the likely nominees -- of the likely nominees of the two political parties, one is -- one has said publicly that we should remain in Iraq for 100 years and the other that we should get out of Iraq in 16 months. Is it a good thing for the polity that the two political parties are so starkly divided on an issue of such central significance?

And there are many others. Is it a good thing or a bad thing for the country that one political party fervently believes the tax cuts pay for themselves and the other does not? It was Richard Nixon who famously declared we are all Keynesians now at precisely the moment when that was ceasing to be the case. You know, I could go on about Hegel if I wanted to, but I won't.

Okay. Let me -- so, let me just say very briefly what I've prepared to say this morning. In our study, stepping back from the details, we explored four principal explanations for increased partisan polarization.

If you want an easy pneumonic, you can think of them as the four Ds, divisive leaders -- I will say no more about that -- divided followers, that's the second, demographic change is the third, and dysfunctional institutions. Those are the big four. There are others, but those are first and foremost.

Our project suggested analytically that there was some truth to all of those hypotheses, and scholars' argument -- argued about the weight to be attached those four. In our concluding chapter for this volume, Pietro Nivola and I focused on the dimension most amenable to intentional change, namely the role of institutions and therefore, the possibilities for institutional reform.

And we offered a long laundry list of suggestions concerning the following six institutional areas of the American government, electoral processes first, second, congressional rules, how congress does its business, third, how the President of the United States conducts him or herself in the executive branch, fourth, the judiciary, fifth, federalism, an important institutional features of our institutions, and finally, the media, which we do treat as a quasi public and quasi governmental institutions.

Now, in my remarks I just want to focus on the electoral process dimension, the one out of the six areas and symmetrically but accidentally, we offered six principal reform proposals in this area. The first has to do with congressional redistricting. Although we -- although scholars who participated in this study, I think, effectively debunked the



extreme hypothesis that the polarization in the congress is principally attributable to a skewed districting system, nonetheless, between a sixth and a third of the increased congressional polarization has to do, we found, with the districting system.

And we urged the -- all 50 states, each in its own way, to follow the lead of states like Iowa, which have gone to a nonpartisan system. The state of Virginia, as we speak if you read *The Post* this morning, is waging an argument about the desirability of moving in that direction.

Second proposal, it is only people with very long memories who will recall that it has not always been the case that the congress of the United States has been elected from single member districts. For a century and a half, there were multimember congressional districts. It is not until 1967 that congress passed a law formally prohibiting the states from using that electoral device.

We found a lot of evidence that -- from the states that a combination of multimember districts plus a voting -- a voting strategy that allows you to take, say there are three representatives to be selected from a district, you get three votes. You can if you choose cast each one of your three votes for three different candidates or you can combine them and cast three votes for a single candidate. The evidence from the state of Illinois, which is a century and a half suggests very strongly that you get a less polarized legislature if you employ electoral rules of that sort.

Our third proposal, in most primaries, there are multiple candidates, not just two. And there's an electoral rule called instant runoff voting that enables you in effect to designate the rank order of your preferences and that rank order is then used to move from stage 1 to stage 2 to stage 3 until someone finally gets a majority without the necessity of going back for runoff after runoff. And it turns out that instant runoff voting gives candidates incentives to reach out to each other because it turns out to be important that your -- and you're a portion of the electorate's second choice, even if you're not their first choice in a multi-candidate field. There's evidence from San Francisco and a number of other municipalities that this strategy works in that way.

Our fourth proposal, what we'll call for short semi-open primaries, it turns out to diminish polarization and to give moderate voters a greater voice if you have a primary system which is not closed, and that is to say restricted only to registered members of a particular political party. The best system it turns out is a system that enables independents to participate in party primaries as long as they register in advance to do so. And we recommend that more states move in that direction.

We endorse, fifth, a variety of long discussed reformed proposals to expand the electorate, election day registration, the mailing of polling place information and sample ballots in advance, and the timing of elections either on weekends or on days that are declared to be holidays. All of those devices are affirmatively related to increasing turnout. And

increasing turnout, all other things being equal, tends to bring less passionately committed voters into the system. The lower the turnout is, the more it is going to be dominated by passionate activists.

Sixth and most controversially, we recommend that America experiment with a -- with a policy that a majority of the member nations of the OECD already employ, namely mandatory voting. Lest this sound like a radical proposal, a well-known libertarian nation, namely Australia and you have to go there for a little while to see how libertarian they are in their sentiments, adopted mandatory voting back in the 1920s when their voting rate fell to the low 40s. It has been over 90 percent ever since, and it has coincided with a significant upsurge in the belief that voting is a civic duty. They started out resenting it; they ended up internalizing it.

Now, we are aware of the fact that it would extremely imprudent for the United States to surge from its current system to national mandatory voting, so we recommend that a number of states take it up as an experiment. And we learned from our colleague Marty Shapiro that there was already one state, namely Massachusetts, whose constitution explicitly gives the legislature the power to making voting mandatory, so that would be a very interesting place to begin.

At the outset, Pietro mentioned that this volume was dedicated to our late lamented political science colleague Nelson Pollsby. And you had to have met Nelson to know what a distinctive human being he was and what a loss to the profession and to the world he represents.

We honored him by dedicating this second volume to him and I'd like to extend the honor by taking a couple of his very trenchant criticisms of our proposals seriously for just a minute.

And let me just pick out two to give you a flavor of Nelson and also to put the debate on the table.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

MR. GALSTON: No. First of all, Nelson argued that redistricting reforms in the direction of nonpartisanship are "hostile to political parties." That is true if you believe that being friendly to political parties means writing them -- allowing them to write all of their own rules.

Pietro and I are very friendly to political parties, but we believe that political parties should not be all powerful institutions and they certainly should not be allowed to create a duopoly that institutionalizes safe seats for both of the parties and systematically reduces as far as possible the number of competitive congressional districts.

We do not think that that is good for the democracy. And in the long run, we don't think it is good for the parties either to be dominated by the most hardcore members of the safest seats that they can draw. So, that is my response, and I just wish Nelson were here to jump down my throat.

Second and in conclusion, Nelson, to put it mildly, did not react kindly to our most radical suggestion for experimenting with mandatory voting. And he said, and I quote -- I will remember this

sentence for a long time -- "The herding of citizens to the polls under the threat of legal sanction seems to me repugnant on its face and incompatible with Democratic values." To which I would reply, "Is the essence of democracy that people are never required to do something to sustain that democracy?" I can't believe that, and I don't think Nelson believed that either.

And so the question is not whether democracy should require to do -- their citizens to do certain things in order to help sustain the vitality and health and indeed viability of that democracy. The question is what should those things be. We happened to believe that a world in which -- a world in which citizens think of voting as a civic duty in the same way that they think of jury -- sitting on jury as a civic duty, it is a mandate. It is not a choice. You are fined and otherwise punished if you don't do it when you're called.

We think that there is a moral and practical analogy between voting and jury duty that ought to be taken seriously within the context of devotion to Democratic values. And so, no, it is not, we believe, repugnant on its face. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. NIVOLA: We have -- is this working? Can everybody hear me?

We've got a good half hour, a little -- actually, a little more than a half hour for questions from the floor. And we're -- so, we'd love to just open this up now for your questions.

Yes, ma'am?

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) that polarization is not such a bad thing.

MR. NIVOLA: Yes, I agree with you. I think these are the big-ticket items, and they are the challenges that the nation is not addressing. And indeed, polarization has contributed to the impasse there. All I was trying to suggest is that not all features and aspects of this phenomenon are undesirable for our politics. I mean, it -- you know, if one tries to depolarize the system and goes to far in that direction, one risks, for example, lowering the level of voter engagement.

And if Marc -- again, I wish Marc Hetherington were here to really hammer that point home, but that certainly is one of the risks. And it's one of the risks that's involved in some of the discussion that Bill and I were involved with in trying to figure out sensible reforms that would not undercut the role of the parties excessively and thereby under -- you know, erode voter participation.

But, in addition to that, you know, as I was trying to suggest, you know, a measure -- some semblance of party discipline and cohesion is useful actually in the legislative process and in actually getting certain types of policy decisions made. I mean, we cannot do everything on the

basis of bipartisan -- sort of ad hoc coalition building every time you need to get something done.

But on the three items that you just mentioned, yes, I think we've reached a point now where this -- where partisanship is having some truly negatively consequences.

MR. BRADY: Yeah. I got to say I'm not quite so sure for that. On major policy issues, why shouldn't we disagree? It's not so clear to me that they -- it's not clear to me that the answers are -- what people normally mean by that is well, the group of people I talk to, Stanford faculty have the answer to this, let's do this, or the people I talk to have the answer to this, so let's do this. But I think those are hard issues, which reasonable people disagree.

And if you'll look at American political history, these issues take time to sort out. And I don't think pulling a bipartisan coalition together can do it, so if you ask me about government policy and what to do in regard to the economy, I'm going to come down on the side of markets, rather than more government regulation. Others up here will come down on the other side. I don't see any way in which we could talk forever in which I'm going to say a market isn't going to work better than the government in the long run.

So, those issues get resolved over time by political parties taking positions and having elections and give and take of politics, which doesn't bother me. It's not to contradict fully what anybody says. It's just

not clear how much it's doing or where that line should be drawn. I don't know where the line should be drawn.

MR. NIVOLA: Gary?

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report. I want to ask a two-part question. The first is definitional and the second is -- is an analytical one. And the first question is can you give us sort of a working definition that distinguishes between polarization and partisanship.

And the second part of the question is is it -- is it -- are we led to believe that there is some conflict between the way polarization animates the electioneering process but complicates the governing process.

MR. NIVOLA: Okay. Who's going to take a -- Dave, do you want to take a stab at the first part of that or Bill?

MR. BRADY: Bill, you start and I'll see if I can think of something.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I would feel -- on the distinction between partisanship and polarization, you can have a situation in which people are dedicated to their two political parties in the same way that they may be dedicated to the Red Sox and the Yankees, but the actual differences of sentiment on major policy issues between those two parties are quite small.



Under those circumstances, you would say that there are partisan divisions, namely Democrats really want the Democratic Party to win and the Republicans really want the Republican Party to win. But from the standpoint of public policy, it doesn't really matter all that much because they're not all that divided on the principal issues of the day.

And there was a period in postwar American history where the relationship between those -- between the two parties could be described in exactly those terms, a lot of partisan fervor but not so much policy content to it. You can have partisan fervor, and this was particularly true of the Democratic Party for a long time, not for policy reasons but because party victory meant jobs, okay. It meant control of the mechanism of government and therefore, benefits from that control above and beyond and in many cases, instead of implementing concrete policies that were very different from the ones that the other party would have implemented if it had had the chance.

So, that's the distinction. And what we, you know, what we have now and this was the point of my opening riff off Peter's remarks, what we have now is a situation in which we have very high levels of partisanship in the sense that Democrats in national elections are very likely to vote for Democratic candidates, and Republicans are very likely to vote for Republican with much less crossover than there used to be and also a very significant policy content to that partisanship, sharp differences

on foreign policy, on the foundation of economic policy, and on many other issues. So, that's the difference.

MR. BRADY: When we thought of polarization in this project, it's really at three levels. One level is at the electorate. What's the electorate believe about things? And then, there's a party elite and government, and how do they do it?

So, with the party and the electorate, you had some disagreement between scholars with my colleague, Morris Furina saying the parties are -- people are -- in the electorate, people are divided but not seriously divided, and that's what happened is there's been a sorting process where conservatives who used to be Democrats because they live in the south became Republicans and liberals in the northeast, liberal Republicans became. So, that's one level.

The second level is, which we all agree to, is that at the elite levels, the parties have become more polarized or partisan. And I don't -- we didn't distinguish that so Bill's distinction is a good way to think about it, but I think in the chapters that -- where we measure stuff, we don't really -- we don't distinguish it in that way. It's implicit -- what he said is implicit, but it's not there.

So, two things when I think about -- I just did a paper on polarization, studies around the world. And it turns out that the dilemma is that how those three parts fit together. That is, it's easy -- you can imagine a situation like in the United States, and the last chapter of this

book says, "Well, the electorate is -- forget how polarized -- it's not as polarized as some had claimed it is. And therefore, you have polarized government, and therefore, you have what Bill and Pietro did with institutional arrangements to try and say in some fundamental sense, let's get the elites back to where the people are. That's a situation which I believe is president of the United States.

The one condition I can't think of is where the electorate is exceedingly polarized and the government is moderate. I can't -- I can't think of examples where that's sustainable. So, it's a very good question, and in the United States is an example, I think, based on what Bill said of trying to make a change to get the two parts to fit back together as they should. And so, we don't have one where polarization and partisanship are at least measurably different.

MR. BEINART: Actually, that's a very interesting question you just raised, Dave. And I can think of a couple of examples, one from 40 years ago and the other from right now. Forty years ago, I recall a governor of Alabama by the name of George Wallace, who marked around the country saying that there wasn't a dime's worth of difference between the two parties, and that represented an elite conspiracy against public sentiment.

And what he tried to do with some success ultimately was to break the two parties apart on the question -- on the question of sort of attitudes towards the implementation of the civil rights movement. And we

have something of the same thing going on right now because there -- you have populists in both the Democratic and the Republican party arguing that fundamentally, elite -- elite consensus between the parties on trade and economic policy has worked to the disadvantage -- call this the Lou Dobbs effect. And so, what he's trying to do, he's trying to play George Wallace on economics.

And you know, interestingly, you now have candidates in both political parties who have picked up that manual and you know, trying to create a new line of cleavage between the parties. So, I --

MR. BRADY: That's an interesting point. So, the question there is that -- how sustainable is that.

MR. BEINART: Yeah, exactly.

MR. BRADY: Is it winnable? And I don't have an answer to that, but it's a real -- it's a good comment.

MR. BEINART: And even going beyond trade and immigration, I mean, if you look at Dennis Kucinich and Ron Paul, both arguing that the elites of neither parties are willing to consider fundamentally stealing back the terms of American Empire, but just wanting to kind of enforce American Empire in different ways, there's -- you know, there's -- and both -- there's also, I think, a fundamental disagreement. And they both represent something I think that spreads. We've seen with Ron Paul how he has a constituency in the Republican

Party as well as the Democratic Party. And I think you're right. It's a populist thing that is anti-elitist.

MR. MITCHELL: Can I just do a follow and ask --

MR. BEINART: Sure.

MR. MITCHELL: So, is it your sense that whatever we call it, polarization -- let's call it that now -- does animate the electioneering process but also runs the risk of complicating the governing process? I'm not --

MR. NIVOLA: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. NIVOLA: Yeah. I mean, where it complicates governance and policymaking is, you know, it's the three areas we talked about, but let me bear down on one of them. I mean, any reform -- let's say -- let's give as an example George Bush's effort to change Social Security. You know, that was not -- that was going to fail if it was going to be a one party effort, no matter how disciplined the Democrats were -- the Republicans were at the time.

For anything that involves taking a major entitlement program and basically inflicting considerable pain on both swats of the electorate, you've got to get some bipartisan buy in. You need some cover for that because otherwise, you know, politicians are going to shy away, even their own partisan, shy away from taking all the heat and not to mention, the various -- the way our political system enables, you know,

the minority to obstruct. I mean, just you need 60 votes in the senate and so forth.

But for any -- for taking on those types of big challenges going forward, there has to be some cooperation between the parties. They have to be able to syndicate responsibility for changes that involve inflicting huge costs on a lot of parts of the electorate.

MR. BRADY: I'll just add to that. that makes Bill's distinction earlier. Last time I recall anything like where you had partisanship but reasonable people governing was in California when Pete Wilson was governor and Willie Brown was speaker. There was a deficit. And they actually got together and said okay, I'll take half and you take half. Well, Willie being just a little better politician got about 55, 45, but they split the differences in taxes versus expenditures. And that no longer happens. It just -- it's a -- you can't add to taxes and you can't cut expenditures. And that's sort of the complication.

MR. NIVOLA: Uh-huh. Yeah, I mean, just on this point, one side will accept no new taxes under any circumstance. And the other side simply won't cut spending unless there is a substantial tax increase. And it's even questionable whether to be ultimately at the end of the day willing to cut that much spending, even if there is a major tax increase. So, that's the kind of polarity that really just creates a total impasse, deadlock over these kinds of questions.

MR. GALSTON: Let me just drop an historical footnote here. There's a risk of confusing the proposition that polarization animates participation, which appears to be true with a much broader proposition, namely that only polarization animates participation. And the reason this is important is that if you recall that chart, that voting chart that Dave put up, a period of very, very high political participation, the highest in the entire 20th century coincided with a period of very low partisan -- you know, polarization, namely the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s.

So, if we're really in a period now where only polarized polarization animates participation, then that represents an important change in our politics. and it's something we ought to think harder about. I remember I, you know, I first became aware of this as an important issue when I was on a panel about a year ago over at AEI and I made the, you know, the broader argument and a young fellow panelist by the name of Dave Campbell, who is a Canadian, smiled at me and said apparently, you haven't heard of Canada. And the point of that was that they have very high levels of political participation but much lower levels of what we're calling polarization.

So, I think it's an open question, whether we move toward a situation now where only white hot differences between the parties can get people into the system and if so, what that means about contemporary American political culture.

MR. NIVOLA: Way in the back?

MS. ORCHOWSKI: Peggy Orchowski. I'm a congressional correspondent for the Hispanic Outlook. And I think immigration is really a good example of a issue that is somewhat polarizing but not in a partisan sense, that it's an issue that has split both parties really, openly in the Republican side but also in the Democratic side. And Rama Manuel has actually asked Democrats not to talk about immigration because it's such a split issue for them between their labor constituents and their immigrant constituents.

But I think we're seeing this with a lot of issues -- a lot in the politics now. It's not just partisan, but it depends on the issue. And I think an issue like immigration is a vertical issue. And there is a very strong libertarian side of that, that issue. And in a way, it's how people see the role of government.

And you can say in a way that the libertarian side, the Kennedy and Bush side -- how do you explain Kennedy and Bush together on the same immigration bill? Well, they have kind of a libertarian view of it. they want very little government role in immigration. They want as open borders as possible; whereas on the upper, you might call the Dobbsian side, but it's also joined by Democrats who are concerned about too much free trade and hurting American labor. They're more on the economic nationalist side.



So, I think there are issues that are vertical issues that are not -- who are splitting the parties.

MR. BRADY: I agree.

MR. BEINART: Yeah. I think that's totally right.

MR. GALSTON: I agree too, but -- and it suggests, you know, a very interesting fact that's emerging, namely the Republican party is on the verge of nominating the only person in its candidate field who had the guts to stand with his own president on this issue. And what that suggests to me is that whatever the outcome of this election, there will be a president in the White House who agrees with President Bush about the desirability of what's come to be called comprehensive reform.

SPEAKER: He's changed his mind.

MR. GALSTON: I'm sorry?

SPEAKER: He changed his mind.

MR. GALSTON: No. Look, President Bush has changed his mind -- he's changed what he says under pressure.

MR. BEINART: So has McCain.

MR. GALSTON: And so has McCain, but neither of them means it. That's the important point. And so, we are going to have, I believe, in 2009 a different kind of new discussion about immigration policy and one that's much more likely to lead to what I at least would regard as a sane conclusion.

The other good thing about what's happening is that the country is being spared a very ugly general election debate over immigration that I think would have done us no good in the long run.

MR. BEINART: The other of this, I think, is what Huckabee represents. And what I think is interesting is that the Christian right keeps on spitting up politicians who are anti-libertarian, not only on social issues but on economics. Go back to Gary Bower or Pat Buchanan. There is clearly something as working class basically pro-government cultural conservatives have moved from the Republican party into the Democratic party -- I mean, from the Democratic party into the Republican party.

They have -- they are pushing hard against the libertarianism that existed in the Republican Party. And I think that the sheer weight of their numbers as upscale more libertarian people have moved from the Republican party into the Democratic party is going to make it -- is putting every election cycle pressure on the Republican party's libertarianism on economic issues.

And I think where you'll see even the bulk of the intellectual effort going now on conservative side. If you look at David Brook's column this morning, if you look at David Frum's new book, it's all about basically Republicans -- as difficult as this is for libertarians to deal -- to accept, it's all about conservatives finding ways of being pro-government in their own ways.

And I think that's a response to the need for them to find a way of holding on to these essentially pro-government, cultural conservative voters who have become their mainstay.

MR. BRADY: I look at that a little differently. The Republicans have gone down from -- in the last six, eight years from 33 percent of the electorate to 25. and 25 percent who have left have essentially been libertarian, less religious, antiwar, et cetera. And I don't think they've become Democrats, but they've swelled the ranks of the independents and they, therefore, may vote for Democratic candidates. And that's been the cost, but that means then, what Peter said is that the numbers still work in the direction in which he's suggesting, there are a lot more Huckabee like voters out there than John McCain thought, even here in this area.

MR. GALSTON: Although it's interesting -- it's interesting to put McCain's declared economic stance up against the template you just laid down, because he is, you know, on economic policy, he's pretty close to the libertarian end. He is -- he is, I think in this respect, an heir of Barry Goldwater more than he's an heir of Ronald Regan.

MR. BRADY: Uh-huh.

MR. GALSTON: He genuinely believes in a smaller government with not only lower rates of taxation but lower rates of spending.

MR. BEINART: And he prioritizing spending over the taxation like Goldwater did.

MR. GALSTON: Absolutely. And so, he's not going to be very amenable to the sorts of more activist economic policies that people - - intellectuals in his own party are urging on him. And I think that if that's the case, then there will be a debate on economic policy just as fundamental as the debate on foreign policy. And by the way, I would hate to be arguing McCain's brief in 2008 on that plight. I think that's going to be a tough sell if the country is in hard times.

MR. BRADY: Yeah, a recession won't help that argument much.

SPEAKER: I was wondering if you guys had any thoughts on how partisanship and even expanding the electorate would affect the quality of voter participation as opposed to the quantity only on participation, how partisanship can mask kind of these nuances and differences between candidates if you have these people strongly for their party?

MR. NIVOLA: Could you say -- did you say quality of --

SPEAKER: Quality, yeah, quality of voter participation.

MR. NIVOLA: Right. Well, I mean, just quickly, I mean, that's a big issue. As you expand voter participation, you risk getting descending levels of quality in terms of informed voters, certainly

passionate voters as Bill mentioned earlier, but also basically informed voters, voters who understand what they're doing in the voting booth.

This became a big issue, by the way, in Australia when they went to mandatory voting. There was a lot of debate about whether they were inviting in so called donkey voters, voters who really didn't know anything about what they were doing. And so, you know, there's a complex normative debate here. I mean, do you want to leave this decision people who really take the trouble to learn about what they're doing in the business of voting or do you want to include people who are less knowledgeable, less engaged, and who are going to sort of make an arbitrary decision? And then, that leads to the question will you get an arbitrary outcome from that.

I think Bill and I kind of felt that the evidence such as there is on this suggests that it's not something to worry about too much, especially in sort of the information age. It's -- most voters have some sense of what they're voting about, voting for. And just expanding the electorate a little bit to include other less active voters can't really have too much of an ill effect.

MR. GALSTON: There is also -- there is also evidence of a feedback effect. You know, this has been studied obviously much more in Australia, which has been doing this sort of thing since the 1920s, that in the same way you may not want to sit on a jury, but if you're there, you will then learn some things. You will have concrete incentives to learn things

that you didn't really care about previously. Similarly, there's some evidence that if you're required to vote, the chance that you'll acquire at least basic information arises.

So, I think you're right to raise the qualitative question. As a matter of fact, I sat on a task force for the American Political Science Convention that came out with a report a few years ago, and we distinguished among three dimensions of the issue: the quantity of participation, the quality of participation, and the equality of participation.

And you know, if you think about those three dimensions, it's a lot easier to measure quantity and equality than it is to measure quality, but it is not irrelevant to the health of a democracy what kind of participation is occurring, even though there will be huge debates among scholars as to the, you know, normative standards that ought to be applied.

MR. BRADY: I'm not the slightest worried about what the quality of the voters because first of all, I don't know what that means. I do know that the studies show that the people who are most likely to vote and know the most are also the least likely to change their minds. They're strong Democratic and strong Republican Party identifiers. So, if you go down and ask what they know about the issues, it's fine.

I, however, defy anybody in this room to stand up and give me a very lengthy or knowledgeable dissertation on the difference between Barack Obama and Ms. Clinton's policy plans for healthcare.

When you get into the nuances, how do they treat like health savings accounts, for example? Does that mean -- and I -- hell, I don't know and I don't care. Does that mean I'm not a quality voter? No. And that's one so I don't --

MR. BEINART: It means you have no intention of voting for either one of them.

MR. BRADY: Probably not. I'm not for either one of their healthcare plans. I can assure you of that. but, the second thing is that you know, you've got to -- always believe in Henry Mayo's shoes pinching theory. You don't have to know how the damn shoe is made to know how it pinches. So, if voters take the trouble in the American system to do what they need to do to register and get out and vote, I'm all for it. Let them vote. And that's better, not worse.

SPEAKER: I'd agree with that.

MR. BRADY: And what does it mean when you say well, we'll get a arbitrary result? My candidate doesn't get elected, it's not -- it's arbitrary. If my candidate gets elected, it was a brilliant decision. I don't see how you operationalize those in a way that makes any sense as a social scientist.

MR. GALSTON: That's why I'm a political theorist.

MR. BRADY: Yeah. It's easier to be a theorist.

MR. NIVOLA: Right here on the end?

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Val (inaudible). I'm wondering if you could elaborate a little more on some of the reforms you suggest that are not of the electoral institution, that are of say congress, presidency, other reforms that you suggest in your last chapter?

SPEAKER: Pietro?

MR. NIVOLA: Sure. Well, let me -- the list is very long, so I will abridge radically here. But, let me just rattle some off and then we can get into a deeper discussion about some of them if you want.

With respect to judicial appointments, we think it might be interesting to try to experiment with nonpartisan nominating commissions to bring forth judicial nominees. And in cases where the president accepts recommendations of such commissions, they would -- those nominees would be put on a fast track. That is, they would be -- they could not get slogged up in the senate -- the normal senate confirmation process. They would be given an up or down -- a quick up or down vote. We think that might take some of the -- some of the conflict out of the confirmation process.

Bill mentioned nonpartisan commissions as a way of drawing congressional district lines. We'd like to see more of that at the congressional level. In terms of congressional rules, back to judicial appointments, we also think it would be useful to allow -- I mean, we're willing to allow sort of the de facto super majority system to work in the senate for Supreme Court nominees. But we feel that perhaps at the level



of the lower courts and the appeals courts, a simple majority should decide who gets to be appointed.

We'd like to see fewer closed rules in the House. Just give the minority a chance to air its grievances or put forth its side of the argument. The same on conference committees, we'd like to see routine minority representation on conference committees, so that they don't just railroad things through that have nothing to do with what the minority might like to see, so that -- at least, give the minority a chance to debate within conference committees.

We'd like to see a change in the legislative calendar so that lawmakers spend a little more time in Washington getting to know one another and getting to deal with one another rather than so much time back in their districts and doing things other than legislating.

Let me just say a word about federalism. We have the sense that some -- and this is utopian admittedly, but if fewer controversies rose to the level of national -- a national political debate and could be left, could be devolved, decentralized to state and local governments, that process of denationalizing these disputes might help depolarize national politics to some extent.

Now, you know, the classic issue here is the abortion question. But, I think that one is a little too calcified to be able to do anything about it now. It's up there, and it will stay there. But, many of the other debates about social issues, same sex marriage, you know,

medicinal marijuana, whatever, these types of things, not all of those deserve to become sort of question -- you know, central constitutional questions for the national political elites to be trying to resolve.

And so, I think there's real potential here, at least ideally, theoretically simply allowing state and local governments to resolve questions of that sort in their own diverse ways. And that would take some of the gas out of the polarization problem.

MR. GALSTON: Could I just drop a --

MR. NIVOLA: Yeah.

MR. GALSTON: Since we're reaching the end here, if I could just drop a brief footnote to one of the points that you made. I just want to underscore that we went out on a limb and actually made quite a radical proposal. It might be a proposal of constitutional dimensions, although scholars differ, with regard to Supreme Court appointments.

And reflecting on the experience of constitutional courts of many European countries as well as on our, you know, our own recent experience, we suggest not only formalizing a super majority, a 60 vote rule for elevation to the Supreme Court, but also switching from life tenure to a single nonrenewable term of let's say 16 years.

And the reason we did that is that, you know, in the early decades of the Supreme Court, the average tenure of a justice was seven and a half years. Today, it's 25 and a half years. So, it used to be a lot like a senate term and now, it's more like being king for life. And that has

a number of perverse consequences in our judgment. First of all, it means that decisions made in year X continue to reverberate through our system 25 years later. And we have some practical and normative doubts as to whether any appointment system ought to have consequences of that duration.

But secondly, and I think even worse in the long run, life tenure now circumstances of polarization is giving presidents incentives to select younger and younger nominees in order -- so -- and there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that highly qualified nominees in the past decade or so have been ruled out because at the age of 62 or 63 or 64, they were deemed "to old" even though they were at the peak of their judicial performance because somebody did a back of the envelope calculation that if we get a 50 year old, then we have a liberal or conservative for an extra 15 years just looking at the actuarial tables.

This is not the way we ought to think about composing our court. And so, we did come out with a radical proposal there, which probably would require a constitutional amendment, but we are not deterred.

MR. NIVOLA: I think we have time for like one more question.

SPEAKER: There's several in the back there.

MR. NIVOLA: One or two.

MS. CARIEZ: Hi. My name is Jennifer Cariez. I've recently moved to Washington from the Netherlands after 12 years. And I'm very pleased and impressed at Mr. Galston's presentation and choice to highlight electoral reform, election systems reform as one possibility of bridging the gap in a very polarized system we have in the United States. That's why I'm trying to actually turn toward that direction of work.

My question to you is in light of a highly polarized national representation, in light of one seat district domination of representation, safe seats, and a swing states system of national representation, what will be the engine for electoral reform for which you've given very valid and excellent examples, such as proportional representation in multi-seat districts, what will be the engine for a more mainstreaming of the need for this reform, especially when we're locked into incumbency congress?

MR. NIVOLA: Can I suggest why don't we collect the other question that's in the back and we'll try to answer them both?

MS. NIHASHIME: I'm Simone Nihashime with German public radio. I have a question on the upcoming general election. You mentioned that on an issue like Iraq, there are differences between different candidates within one party that are bigger than the differences between the two parties were four or six years ago. And on the other hand, we have issues like immigration where we can't really see any distinction on party line.

So, could you -- I'm interested in your opinion in a historical sense if we look back over the last decades. The upcoming election campaign up until -- or campaigns up until November, will they be really very strongly polarized or will the candidates have more or less difficulties to really distinguish themselves from each other in a historic sense?

MR. NIVOLA: Bill, do you want to take the how do we get there from here question?

MR. GALSTON: Well, sure. Look, that's always the right question, namely how do you close the gap between, you know, an academic proposal, which is what we are, two political scientists making a proposal and the real world. And the answer of course is that a significant number of real world actors at both the mass level and the elite level have to come to think that it's in their interest.

And if you look at -- if you look at what's going on this year, one of the Democratic presidential candidates, namely Senator Obama, has made more progress than nearly anyone expected that he could by -- in part, by appealing to a wide public sense that, you know, that our politics has become too polarized. And he is presenting himself as a kind of figure who might be able to get beyond some of the debates of the past and to create more consensus than we've become accustomed to recently.

The jury is still out on, of course, whether he would be able to do that even if he were elected president. But the fact that there's been

some real resonance, you know, public resonance for that message suggests that -- suggests that there may be public support for the sorts of electoral reforms that might move in that direction.

At the elite level, if you look at what's going on, for example, in the state of Virginia right now, you have a divided legislature, where one house is in the hand of one party, the other party is in the hand of the other party. Neither party is confident that if the current system for congressional districting is maintained that it will have control of that party dominated system.

And so, in those circumstances -- in those circumstances, both parties in order to ensure themselves against the worst outcome, namely a system dominated by the other, might have incentives to move towards a more nonpartisan system where they will have some say but won't have total power.

And it is interesting that the number of states with a version of a more nonpartisan congressional districting system has risen in recent years, and there's room for a lot more growth. So, you've asked the right question. There are some suggested signs of hope but no guarantee that this program will be embraced in its entirety or even piece-by-piece any time soon.

MR. NIVOLA: Peter, yeah.

MR. BEINART: I'll take a shot at the 2008 question. I think one potential way of thinking about how 2008 might play out would be to

think about an analogy with 1980, which is to say there would be a basic -- there's a basic polarization between the two parties, but in the Democrat, if it's Obama, I think you see someone who has a -- who has a very, very good shot of first, locking up his partisan base as Regan but also extending into the other party's turf and poaching a bit.

While with McCain, I think you have -- you see someone who's going to have a lot of trouble in actually solidifying his own party base as Carter did. I think that it's going to be really hard for McCain to get the kind of mass turnout amongst conservative evangelical Christians that was so important to Bush winning and conservative Catholics to Bush winning in 2004.

He does have some potential to poach. He's a more popular amongst independents than a lot of other Republicans, but I think the wind seems right now -- at least it's flowing strongly in a Democratic direction. And I think that -- I think you will see -- the basic partisan polarization will be there, but I don't think it's going to be as much a 50/50 polarization as we saw in 2000-2004.

MR. BRADY: I guess I disagree a little bit with that. I don't -- I think the big mistake for Senator Obama as things stand out -- Peter is correct. I don't think things will stand nine months from now as they do now, i.e., he's run a brilliant campaign. And that campaign maintains -- has to maintain the differentness of what he's done. And there, of course, there are always rumors. There's 100 things that could happen that would

bring him down, money trails in Chicago, what happened when he was so on and so forth. In which case, you get a different kind of electoral result.

And I guess I disagree with the notion that he's an evangelical Christian is what they're going to do. I think -- I'm reminded of that Groucho Marx movie where he's failed at a number of careers, and so he decides to take up a new career. And his new career is he wants to be a thief. And so -- and the thief -- and so he's worried though because he's very shy. And so, this is relative to the conservatives. He decides he's going to be thief anyway, but he's so shy, he's waiting in an alley and the victim is coming down the alley, so Groucho Marx leaps out, points the gun at his head, and says take one step closer and I'll shoot myself.

So, I think that's the status of the conservatives and I think they will be out. And I think they'll be out -- I think they'll be much more out of artillery than Obama. He has a much better chance to avoid that sort of situation. But in this -- if Senator Clinton gets the nomination, then you'll get that polarization. But Obama is the only candidate that has a chance not to do that.

MR. NIVOLA: Well, with that, don't go out and shoot yourselves because we've got an absolutely beautiful political system by most respects and it's proving to be as excellent as the founders initially intended.



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