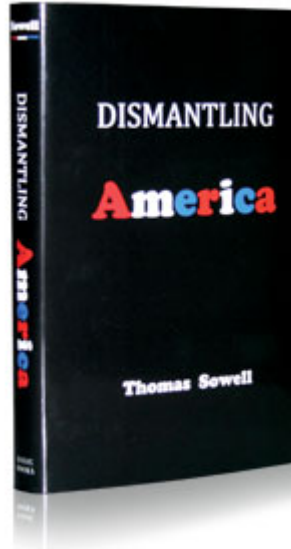




Review of Sowell's "Dismantling America"

Leading economist and writer Thomas Sowell has a talent for simplifying difficult concepts and applying common sense when analyzing the issues plaguing America today. Nothing exemplifies this talent more than Sowell's newest work, *Dismantling America*, a book comprised of over 100 of Sowell's syndicated newspaper columns written on an array of subjects from financial bailouts to illegal immigration.



In his introduction, Sowell lays the groundwork for his book by establishing that the first rule of prospering in today's political environment is differentiating truth from fiction, i.e., accepting that the truth is rarely ever uttered by a politician:

Separating words from realities is one of the most important steps toward evaluating government policies, whether domestically or internationally. Since rhetorical skills are among the most highly developed skills among politicians, any serious attempt to see government policies for what they are means keeping our eyes fixed on facts, despite the distractions of rhetoric.

It is because of this deception, according to Sowell, that Americans have allowed the country to be so far removed from the original intent of the Founding Fathers. Americans have willingly compromised the principles of liberty and small government in exchange for entitlements and "security," however unaffordable and false entitlements and security are. It is through artful political rhetoric that such things are achieved, notes Sowell, and Americans are lulled to sleep while they are robbed of their dignities.

Broken into five sections — government policies, political issues, economic issues, cultural issues, and legal issues — *Dismantling America* compares the political rhetoric politicians use to advance their policies on political issues to the realities of the same policies and issues. The book focuses on the Obama administration's policies; however, Sowell does not simply seize upon the opportunity to criticize the Obama administration, he describes in detail how the administration's policies have failed the American people, and provides solutions that are basic, common-sense approaches.

Needing Help From Government Help

According to Sowell, more often than not, the government can achieve more good for the American people by doing nothing. Similar sentiments were articulated by Sowell's hero, President Ronald Reagan, when he said: "The government is not the solution to our problems. The government is the problem."

Take, for example, the depression of 1920, one of which most Americans are unaware, since it was short-lived and solved without government intervention as the government allowed the free market to work itself out. After all, it always does, and when the free market bounced back from this depression, Americans experienced what became known as the "roaring twenties," a period of great prosperity.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 30, 2010

Now fast forward nearly a decade to the year 1929, when the stock market crashed. Despite the success of Harding's economic policies, Hoover and Roosevelt believed they knew better, and rather than adopting similar policies, they attempted to end the depression through massive government regulation. Unfortunately, it is well established that the hands-on government policies of the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations helped to prolong the depression for over a decade, until it was finally "rescued" by a bloody war that did not begin for America until the year 1941.

Despite the lessons history has taught, however, the Obama administration continues to follow in the same footsteps of its progressive predecessors.

The economic policies of the Bush and Obama administrations have been disastrous, notes Sowell. In fact, it was government policies, he observes, that created the mortgage crisis that brought about America's recession, not "corporate greed," as politicians have asserted:

It was members of Congress (of both parties) who pushed the regulators, the banks and the mortgage-buying giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac into accepting risky mortgages, and in the name of "affordable housing" and more home ownership.

Political trickery, however, is necessary in order to distract the American people from the real antagonists, the politicians. Instead politicians offer the American people scapegoats in the form of "evil, greedy capitalists," bankers, oil companies, and other "despicable" corporate interests.

Other government policies that have been harmful to the American people involve "bowing to world opinion," he writes. According to Sowell, who has a somewhat expansive view of what America's foreign policy should be, the Obama administration is repeating some of the same mistakes made by the Western democracies of the 1930s that allowed Adolf Hitler to rise to power virtually uncontested. He writes: "At the heart of those mistakes was trying to mollify your enemies by throwing your friends to the wolves. The Obama administration has already done that by reneging on this country's commitment to put a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe and by its lackadaisical foot-dragging on doing anything serious to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons. That means, for all practical purposes, throwing Israel to the wolves as well."

Perhaps none of Obama's policies has been as detrimental to the future of America as the advancement of the "nanny state." Sowell believes the Obama administration has abandoned "old and trite notions of saving for a rainy day" in lieu of the notion that "we must indulge people who refused to save for a rainy day or live within their means." Politicians advance these policies under the guise of compassion, but, as noted by Sowell, "The one person for whom there is no compassion is the taxpayer."

Sowell provides a great deal of insight into a variety of other issues, including the Progressives' program of indoctrination, better known as public education, the growing threat of a nuclear-armed Iran, the underlying racist policies of the Democratic Party, ObamaCare, and the moral corruption of American culture. Citing statistics, experts, and historical examples, Sowell's assessments are indisputable.

Sowell's Solutions

Unfazed by the number of seemingly insurmountable crises facing America today, Sowell offers simple solutions — solutions that have proven effective in the past and can be successful again: lower taxes, decreased spending, entitlement cutbacks, decreased regulation, and strict adherence to the limits set by the Constitution.

Unfortunately, these solutions will not be utilized by establishment politicians who suffer from



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arrogance and an elitist “God complex” that leads them to believe they know better than the American people. To insure that such politicians are adopting the simple solutions proposed by Sowell, the American people must shake off their complacency and begin to hold these politicians accountable not only at the polling booths but every day of the year.

Thomas Sowell is a brilliant individual with an array of evidence supporting his intellectual prowess. Besides being a nationally syndicated columnist, he is a scholar in residence at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and has taught economics at Cornell, UCLA, and Amherst. Yet it is clear that he does not write simply to showcase his intellectual abilities, but to educate the American people on subjects that have been distorted by the mainstream media and political magicians.

Sowell has the ability to strip away the political complexities of government and cut right to the bare basics, concepts that anybody could understand if the right person were willing to explain them properly. In fact, this is one of Sowell’s criticisms of the Republican Party — the inability to explain its strategies to the American people in such a way that they would recognize the benefits. Like Sowell says, “Sometimes it doesn’t matter that you have the better product, if your competitors have better salesmen.”

Likewise, the American people are faced with politicians that seem to complicate issues deliberately by passing 2,500-page bills and creating committees upon committees so that voters become so overwhelmed that they opt instead to place their unending trust in the political elite. Alas, this is what led the American people to where they find themselves today.

One solution that Sowell utterly refutes is the notion that the Republicans need to become more moderate in order to appeal to a larger minority. To this, Sowell responds:

Ronald Reagan won two elections in a landslide by being Ronald Reagan and — most important of all — explaining to a broad electorate how what he advocated would be best for them and for the country. Newt Gingrich likewise led a Republican takeover of the House of Representatives by explaining how a Republican agenda would benefit a wide range of people. Neither of them won by pretending to be Democrats. It is the mush “moderate” ... who lost disastrously.

It is too bad Reagan, and especially Ging-rich, failed to live up to their campaign rhetoric once in office. And indeed, voters constantly criticize politicians for their inability to stand for anything. Republicans who fluctuate between moderate and conservative lend credence to such criticisms. If politicians were to stop playing political games, voters would at least know whom they are up against.

Readers will appreciate Sowell’s refreshing honesty, as well as his painstaking efforts to draw connections between America’s present crises and past crises that have plagued countries all over the world. *Dismantling America* is a must-have for any American who feels ill-equipped to debate the Progressive agenda. It is full of all the necessary evidence to prove that progressivism has failed time and time again. Also, because *Dismantling America* is comprised of short essays, the book is an easy and quick read.

As Sowell proves without a doubt that America is toeing the line of tyranny and economic collapse, readers may feel discouraged, but they may take comfort in the words of Thomas Sowell: “The trajectory of our course leads to a fate that would fully justify despair. The only saving grace is that even the trajectory of a bullet can be changed by the wind.”

[Dismantling America](#), by Thomas Sowell, New York: Basic Books, 2010, 339 pages, hardcover.



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