



Lecture: Oxford 2055

The Persistence of Institutions and Global Cooperation

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February 2025

In a 1985 speech at Kansas State University, then Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" O'Neill said, "People who talk about the good ole days have either forgotten about the past or never lived through it in the first place."¹ Standing in front of you today, you may wonder why I would bring up a quote from 70 years ago. When Speaker O'Neill gave his speech that line was heartily cheered. I received a similar response when I quoted him at my campaign kickoff for the Missouri 8th District seat of the US House of Representatives in 2025. My decision to run for Congress was one of stubborn resistance during the Great Constitutional Crisis in America, under the late Donald Trump, which you may have learned about in undergrad through the lens of the United Kingdom. If not, which is certainly forgivable based on the isolationism of the US during the time, I will try to explain it as briefly as possible.

A quarter century ago was a dark time for the United States. I was reminded of that darkness while fishing in the twilight hours on my ranch in Montana. Each generation faces its crises, yours will as well. In those times, it is imperative to cling to and preserve our institutions, like the Congress I was honored to serve in for so many years. Though I know that your parliamentary system varies from the US, there are many

¹ "Thomas P. 'Tip' O'Neill, Jr., U.S. Rep., Massachusetts and Speaker of the House Landon Lecture." Kansas State University, April 22, 1985. <https://www.k-state.edu/landon/speakers/thomas-oneill/video.html>.

correlations that you will find relevant. The liberal foundations that sustain both of our systems tarry on through victory, stagnation, and adversity. When it seems there is no path, these institutions will find or create one, just like that river I was casting in. I trusted the Constitution, even when the future seemed unstable, terrifying, and unpredictable.

The 120th Congress was faced with the most volatile and insecure United States the globe had seen since the first Civil War. My colleagues and I reached into the annals of American history for answers, not because we sought to "Make America Great Again," but because we recognized the truth behind O'Neill's words. Those of us who *had* lived through the history had forgotten it, and those of us who had not believed the lie that America harbored a nostalgic and preferable past. Standing at the precipice of the US War of Civil Dissolution we finally consulted history, and the public embraced, no, they **ordered** progress. They demanded their government recognize that power resides with the People, and mandated a move forward, not back.

February of 2025 is now remembered as the Month of the Technocratic Chainsaw. Trump and the now exiled, bionic Elon Musk, embarked on what earnest media in the era referred to as "Silicon Valley's speed-over-safety mindset" or "Move fast, break things." ² Break things they did, by the end of the year the country had devolved into a recession due to complete isolation from the international community, coupled with the wanton gutting of the American social safety net. The landscape resembled your nation's Troubles in Northern Ireland, a conflict

² Sabin, Sam. "Musk's 'Move Fast, Break Things' Ethos Threatens U.S. Security." Axios Media, February 9, 2025. <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/09/elon-musk-doge-federal-it-national-security>.

that Tip O'Neill encouraged toward resolution with Nobel laureate and Good Friday architect John Hume³ Like during the Troubles, desperation, hunger, and unemployment left many Americans angry and with free time, inspiring the rise of militias.⁴ Then the statehouses started passing Bills of Secession.

You are probably acquainted with the Year of Blood and Barter in my country, it is a tragedy we will never forget, like the 9-11 of our parents' or grandparents' generation. The true division, violence, and economic devastation of the Civil Dissolution stands as a stark reminder of how the US would exist if we ever forsook our institutions again. The 2026 mid-term election and the shift of the Supreme Court that year saved many lives and ultimately the nation. That is what I am here to purvey, the sanctity and necessity of US foundational establishments like the separation of powers between the three branches and the supremacy of the Congress. Again, I concede your parliamentary system does not employ a strict separation of powers and here the executive maintains the most power, but the story I share is why that did not and could not work in my country.

America's Founders deliberately vested more power in Congress than the other two branches because the representatives were directly elected and were supposed to be candidly accountable to the citizenry. The American electorate finally acknowledged during Trump's second term that their power had been usurped by wealthy elites. That is why we saw the uprising

³ Hamber, Brandon. "John Hume and Tip O'Neill." Ulster University International Conflict Research Institute, June 24, 2014. <https://peaceblog.ulster.ac.uk/about-hume-and-oneill/>.

⁴ Butler, Trisha M. "The Troubles of Ulster: Empire, Culture War, Hyperpolarization, and Violence." Theta Delta- Phi Alpha Theta History Journal XIII (May 2023): 25-40.

that resulted in constituent-led legislation. One law that this system yielded was the "Power: Not for Sale Act" of 2027 which banned former elected and public officials from lobbying, ended foreign lobbying, and restricted direct donations from lobbies and corporations.⁵ Another was the "Just Like Us Act" (JLUA) of the same year which made it illegal for any elected or appointed individuals in the three branches, including the Cabinet and all senior staff, to hold stocks while in office.⁴ JLUA also expanded the Presidential Conflicts of Interest Act requiring the President and Vice President to become completely detached from any outside ownership and wholly reliant on their position for subsistence during their term. You may have noticed, but US voters certainly have, these laws have occasioned far less interest in the positions, but much higher quality candidates.

The Great Constitutional Crisis originated through the Trump administration's adoption of the Unitary Executive Theory. The White House applied the theory so stringently that it resulted in a dictatorial nature that saw the president successfully impeached for treason and removed from office with many others in his administration. The five presidents who have served since have been sure to adhere to the enumeration of powers in the Constitution. The public did not tolerate the mechanization of their representatives to the point of being a voiceless cog in Trump's regime. The 120th Congress and subsequent sessions have been the most powerful and constituent-reliant cohorts since the inception of the nation. This is the eventual outcome of Trump's disgraced example and civic power, but we cannot forget the Supreme Court (SCOTUS). The Court of

⁵ Warren, Elizabeth. "Anti-Corruption and Public Integrity Act." Elizabeth Warren United States Senator for Massachusetts. Accessed March 2, 2025.
https://www.warren.senate.gov/download/master-summary-of-anti-corruption-act_-final.



Final Appeal here in the UK is separated to the same extent as our highest US Court.

The 80% turnover in Congress during the 2026 midterms was astronomical, a complete shock to the system, only to be eclipsed by the disruption of the highest court of the land. SCOTUS' complete reformation was paramount in ending the Dissolution. The realignment of the Court and a complete overhaul of congressional leadership is likely the only reason the states repealed their writs of secession. Extreme devolution and decentralization to the state level left many red states helpless and abandoned. Destitution and unemployment of citizens during the economic downturn merged with the willingness, or perhaps desperation, of their state representatives. Once this momentum reached critical mass, they believed secession was their only option. Luckily, by 2027 Americans started to see light at the end of the tunnel and grew hopeful, abandoning a disparate attempt at balkanization. The reformed SCOTUS' decision in *United States v. Kentucky et al.* (2027) upheld the precedent of *Texas v. White* (1869) which nullified the Bills of Secession and confirmed the unified federation once again.⁶ I do not have to tell anyone in this room that we still have a long way to go to heal, especially in the recovery of our international relationships. That is why I stand before you today, in humility, to bridge the gap between our nations and resurrect our once extraordinary alliance.

During the United States' turmoil in the 2020s one of the most devastating and impactful consequences of the Trump regime was our departure and alienation from our allies on the world

⁶ "Texas v. White." Oyez. Accessed March 2, 2025. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1850-1900/74us700>.

stage. Americans have suffered greatly since the 2024 election, but more importantly, they have learned from it. We have spent the better part of three decades rebuilding domestically so that we can be a productive member of the world order. The United States has also been supportive of the multi-polar international establishment and institutions like the Global Criminal Court. We have likewise assisted in the training and technological progression of the European Union Armed Forces, signed the Zero Tolerance Nuclear Weaponization Treaty, and contributed to the Environmental and Climate Crisis Mitigation Fund while accepting a record number of refugees and immigrants in 2054.

The world has long been a collective of interconnected countries that, for better or worse, impact each other in tangible and inevitable ways. The US was the leader of the liberal world order between the Second and Third World Wars. I vapidly reject any notion or nostalgia of unipolar hegemony but posit that the United States still has so much to offer the global order and is motivated to engage and benefit the world community in a larger capacity. Much like O'Neill suggested in that same 1985 lecture, the United States has been committed for decades to never revisit the archaic strategy of funding clandestine military missions.⁷ My country has shown sustained and faithful commitment to diplomacy since the 30s and our Congress has been fully devoted to executive oversight in foreign relations in line with our Constitution.

US foundational establishments like the separation and shared powers between the three branches and the supremacy of the Congress are what preserved and protected the country during

⁷ "Thomas P. 'Tip' O'Neill, Jr., U.S. Rep., Massachusetts and Speaker of the House Landon Lecture."



and in the aftermath of the Great Constitutional Crisis. These foundations are resilient, reliable, and sacrosanct, I am grateful the American people know that now. I hope with my all that they cling to it in perpetuity. Liberal fundamentals are just as sacred and necessary such as pluralism, universality, and peace.⁸ These values, steeped in globalism and cooperation are why I am here today. Just as I placed faith in the US Constitution in 2026, I place my faith in liberalism, the United Kingdom, and the greater global community. Just like that river in Montana, we **will** find a way; we will make a path. These institutions are only as good as the individuals that populate them, we have to do it together.

Thank you, it has been an honor to address you today.

⁸ "Values." Liberal Party USA, February 2024. <https://www.liberalpartyusa.org/values>.

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