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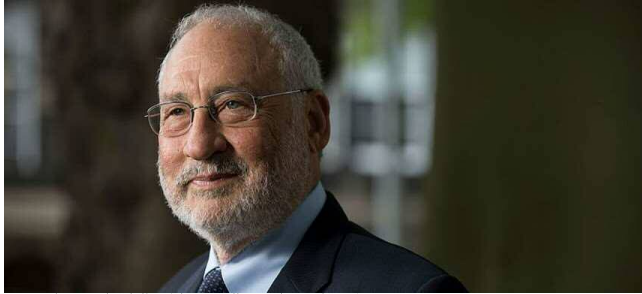
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Economist Joseph Stiglitz. (photo: Colin McPherson/Getty)

Joseph Stiglitz: US Coronavirus Response Is Like 'Third World' Country

By Larry Elliott, Guardian UK
23 April 20

Joseph Stiglitz attacks Donald Trump, saying US on course for second Great Depression

Donald Trump's botched handling of the Covid-19 crisis has left the US looking like a "third world" country and on course for a second Great Depression, one of the world's leading economists has warned.

In a withering attack on the president, Joseph Stiglitz said millions of people were turning to food banks, turning up for work due to a lack of sick pay and dying because of health inequalities.

The Nobel prize-winning economist said: "The numbers turning to food banks are just enormous and beyond the capacity of them to supply. It is like a third world country. The public social safety net is not working."

Stiglitz, a long-term critic of Trump, said 14% of the population was dependent on food stamps and predicted the social infrastructure could not cope with an unemployment rate that could hit 30% in the coming months.

"We have a safety net that is inadequate. The inequality in the US is so large. This disease has targeted those with the poorest health. In the advanced world, the US is one of the countries with the poorest health overall and the greatest health inequality."

Stiglitz said Republicans had opposed proposals to give those affected by coronavirus 10 days' sick leave, meaning many employees were going to work even while infected. "The Republicans said no because they said it would set a bad precedent. It is literally unbelievable."

He added: "The safety net is not adequate and is propagating the disease. There is very weak unemployment insurance and people don't think they can rely on it."

During an interview with the Guardian to mark the paperback publication of his book *People, Power, and Profits*, Stiglitz was asked whether the US might be heading for a second Great Depression.

"Yes is the answer in short," he said. "If you leave it to Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell [the Republican Senate majority leader] we will have a Great Depression. If we had the right policy structure in place we could avoid it easily."

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Larry Elliott, Guardian UK
23 April 2020



Stiglitz said that as a result of Trump's mismanagement, the White House office responsible for pandemics had been closed, funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had been cut, and the US had gone into the crisis without enough testing kits, masks and protective gear. Encouraged by Trump, some parts of the US were determined to reopen in a way that would facilitate the transmission of the disease and lead to a fresh outbreak, he added.

"In those circumstances it won't be the government enforcing the lockdown, it will be fear. The concern is that people are not going to be spending on anything other than food and that's the definition of a Great Depression.

"We were unprepared but, even given the degree of unpreparedness, Trump's decision to make this about politics rather than about science has meant we have responded far more poorly."

Stiglitz said that if Trump were defeated in the presidential contest in November and the Democrats took control of both houses of Congress there was a chance of the US moving in a more progressive direction, but he warned Republicans would fight dirty in order to cling on to power.

"There is voter suppression and gerrymandering. The Republican party knows it's a minority party and there is a no-holds-barred struggle going on to make sure a minority party rules America."

Stiglitz said the current crisis would force countries to make themselves less vulnerable, and this would lead to shorter supply chains and a greater emphasis on self-sufficiency in food and energy.

He added that the complexity of modern production methods meant autarky was not feasible but added: "Fighting global pandemics and climate change require global cooperation. It's just that the president of the United States doesn't understand that.

"I hope we emerge from this with the perspective that multilateralism is even more important than we thought. It can't just be a corporate-driven globalisation. We have to make it more resilient."

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Comments

We are concerned about a recent drift towards vitriol in the RSN Reader comments section. There is a fine line between moderation and censorship. No one likes a harsh or confrontational forum atmosphere. At the same time everyone wants to be able to express themselves freely. We'll start by encouraging good judgment. If that doesn't work we'll have to ramp up the moderation.

General guidelines: Avoid personal attacks on other forum members; Avoid remarks that are ethnically derogatory; Do not advocate violence, or any illegal activity.

Remember that making the world better begins with responsible action.

- The RSN Team



RickD  2020-04-23 09:06

Of course anything coming out of this administration, filled with sycophants, heading by an ignoramus, will be far less than efficient.

  +14



wwway  2020-04-23 09:32

Uganda is doing way better than we are. America has been a self righteous, bigoted, arrogant country for decades. I often wondered when it would be taken down a few notches and what would have to happen to do it. Unfortunately, Americans don't appear to be doing much self reflection. Especially the political and particularly the religious right. Why? The political right wants dictatorship and the religious right wants the Rapture, the second coming of Christ. Funny how that's not gonna happen but the political right will get its dictatorship.

  +14



wrknight  2020-04-23 10:01

The U.S. is rapidly degenerating to a third world country.

  +13



Robbee  2020-04-23 12:35

Quoting wrknight 2020-04-23 10:01:

The U.S. is rapidly degenerating to a third world country.

- we squander our resources on oligarchs who run cartels and monopolies

our business modelistomaximize profit/good over societal welfare/evil

in 2017 effective 2018, without a single dem vote, repukes enacted a tax cut for oligarchs and their corporations - in effect, a business stimulus package whereby government SPENDS over

RSN: Some Progressives Are In Denial About Trump's Fascist Momentum
Norman Solomon, Reader Supported News
23 April 2020



FOCUS | Strange Attractors: On Being Addicted To Trump And His Press Conferences

Rebecca Gordon, TomDispatch
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Zack Beauchamp, Vox
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Matt Drudge Draws Trump's Ire, Setting Off A Potentially Substantial Split Between The Conservative Media Power Player And The President

Paul Farhi, The Washington Post
21 April 2020

a trillion bucks a year more than it takes in

naturally oligarchs mostly spend this dividend buying-back their own shares, in order to boost their stock price and award themselves payday wealth

the only reason we can call ourselves the richest country on earth is that we have so many oligarchs!

truly we are the richest third-world country on earth!

we are "rich" in a hundred million workers who are wage slaves living from paycheck to paycheck! with high rates of stress! high blood pressure and heart disease - who mostly don't vote - but those who do largely ignore their self-interest - perhaps a legitimate reason to vote?

bernie addressed his primary campaign to these folks and, perhaps other than latinos? poor folks largely ignored bernie?

why don't poor folks vote in huge numbers?

why don't young folks vote in huge numbers?

alexandria in 2028!



elizabethblock 🗨️ 2020-04-23 14:02

+6

I remember - and this is decades ago! - a friend coming back from visiting Philadelphia and describing homeless men warming their hands over fires in 55-gallon drums. Third World in the USA.

And things have only gotten worse.

I wonder if the previous Depression was marked by the meanness that characterizes this one.



librarian1984 🗨️ 2020-04-23 11:12

+24

Anyone who's traveled abroad knows the US has been creeping toward Third World status for decades -- but not for everyone.

After numerous recent disasters many citizens have been abandoned and who in their right mind trusts our elections?

While many are thrown in jail for minor offenses and without due process, the 1% get away with assault, theft and worse.

Millions lost their homes in the 2008 calamity but banks were bailed out -- even though THEY were the perpetrators.

Our infrastructure is in tatters, roads and bridges crumbling, thousands of water systems unsafe and our schools, which used to be the best in the world, a cruel joke -- when they're not deadly.

Our health care *IS* Third World, the only developed country without some form of single payer. JFK spoke of the need for a government-run health system FIFTY YEARS AGO, yet half a million families still go bankrupt every year due to medical bills -- while maternal, infant and male mortality go UP year after year.

Police kill citizens with impunity while monies that should go to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' instead go to a rapacious military-industrial-intelligence complex and one of, if not THE, most corrupt governments on the planet.

I agree with this article but not its total focus on Trump. He may be the most glaring example, but this betrayal of US has been going on since just after WW2, and in hyperdrive since Reagan.



Observer 47 🗨️ 2020-04-23 12:15

+3

Agree about everything you say, including the bogus election process. So...what's left? Is there a way out? Voting blue in November won't get us anything if the outcomes are rigged, as they surely, obviously were in 2000 and 2004. Do you think it will come to torches and pitchforks? Civil war?



HarryP 🗨️ 2020-04-23 13:06

+6

Since WW2, there have been four (five if you include JFK, but who never got around to it)) attempts to establish a national health care program, all by Democratic presidents - Truman, Johnson, Clinton & Obama. Two (Truman & Clinton) were shot down by the AMA with help from the Republican Party. (In the 1930s, FDR's proposal suffered the same fate.) Two succeeded (Johnson & Obama), but in the light of Republican opposition, they had to be limited.

The focus deserves to be on the Republicans and particularly on the incumbent who happens to be a Republican. Trump has done everything possible to destroy Obamacare. He still hasn't forgiven McCain. Now he wants the Supreme Court to do the deed for him. He's also gone after LBJ's Medicaid. After that, should he succeed, he will go after Medicare. You can bet on it.

If the US health care system resembles that in the Third World, we know which party is responsible.



#jwb110 2020-04-23 13:03

+6

The US has been a Third World country by definition at least since the Bush2 administration. We owe more than we could ever pay back. We owe more than is produced by any industry that still created good for sale. With the present administration, I think that we can safely say that we are now a Banana Republic. Real Progressive thinking is the only way out. That seems outside the realm of the present administration and the GOP in general.



#Salty 2020-04-23 17:19

+2

I've been left progressive for 60 years, and I know that the Republican effort to cut back on funding for the health system and schools and nearly everything that might take a dollar from the pockets of the wealthy has kept most of the US in relative poverty. Cutting taxes for the rich is central to this problem, too, as well as military spending. And I know it's de rigueur to blame Trump for the failure to deal with Covid 19 effectively, but he, alone, is not the only ones to blame. I believe that the economic fallout of our closures will be worse than the effects of this coronavirus. The rich and the upper middle class will ride this through, but the working class and the poor will suffer and perhaps die by the millions. It seems to me that we are all too willing to give up our constitutional freedoms to save our own skins. In my county, Santa Cruz, ALL people in public are now required to wear masks. This has a chilling effect on our human relations, an unfriendliness that will scar us for decades, and seems like overkill to me. (Pun intended.) How many people are we saving by our closures and our masks? We'll never really know. How many will be ruined or starved or killed as a result of our present shutdowns? We'll never know that either. I lived through The Great Depression of the 30's and it was horrible. Something to think about.

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