

An assessment of Richard Haass's recent warnings: Extreme right poses threat to American political system



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Richard Haass, one of the prominent political figures in the United States and the President of the Council on Foreign Relations, has issued a warning regarding the decline of American power on the occasion of his departure from this think tank. In an interview, he emphasized that the real danger is at home, with the rise of extremism and the weakening of democracy. Iran Daily has discussed these warnings with Rahman Qahramanpour, a

strategic analyst and translator of books such as "Political Order and Political Decay" and "Identity" by Francis Fukuyama.

IRAN DAILY: What are the recent positions of Richard Haass and his warnings about the declining power of the United States?

QAHRAMANPOUR: Considering various analyses of the US' decline in power, there is an ongoing discussion about China simultaneously gaining power. This raises an important question about why China is rapidly becoming powerful. Some believe that it is not China becoming powerful, but rather America losing

its international standing. One of the factors contributing to this decline is the emergence of the Trump phenomenon in the US political arena. Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential elections unleashed social forces in the country that had previously lacked representation in power. Prior to that, these right-wing and extremist ideologies couldn't enter the government because the political system in the country is presidential. Therefore, out of necessity, they were leaning towards the Republican Party. On the other hand, the main body of power within the Republican Party was predominantly conservative, not extreme right-wing. Even

prominent families like the Bush family in the Republican Party were conservative, not extreme right-wing. However, since Trump became president, extreme right-wing elements found representation and became powerful within the government. Contrary to some expectations, Trumpism did not fade away as a passing trend. The division in American society, which was revealed with Trump's victory, still exists, and the policies of Joe Biden and his Democratic administration have not been entirely successful in addressing this divide. Therefore, critics in the US, like some Democrats and figures such as Richard Haass

and Fukuyama, consider this societal division as the main threat to the country. It is important to note that Fukuyama's critical analysis does not imply the decline and fall of American civilization. His main argument is that the US used to have a bureaucratic and well-structured system of governance, which has now weakened significantly. In fact, these are warnings to American authorities and decision-makers. Richard Haass's main point is that the US needs to address its internal problems to remain powerful. Otherwise, simultaneous with its decline in domestic power, the US' international standing would also weaken further.

What are the main manifestations of these internal problems?

One of the main manifestations is the political and social divide within the US, which stems from the rise of extremists or right-wing ideologies. This phenomenon could gradually marginalize moderate Republicans and strengthen extreme factions within the Democratic Party as well. Another important manifestation is the decline of the middle class in the US. The middle class is crucial to sustaining democracy, and as it weakens economically and socially, individuals separated from this class tend to lean towards extreme right-wing ideologies. This is why Trump still has significant followers in American society. Therefore, the growth of

extreme right-wing ideologies poses a serious threat to the US' political system.

Mr. Haass has also stated that the US has become the greatest threat to global security. Does this mean that the country is an external threat to the world?

I don't think Mr. Haass means that the US deliberately creates instability in different parts of the world. From Haass's perspective and that of some other American critics, as the US' internal power weakens, it cannot effectively maintain the international order that it has been upholding since World War II. Consequently, when the US is preoccupied with internal issues, it may contribute to increased instability and insecurity in different parts of the world. Some argue that Russia acted on this assessment of the US' weakened power when it attacked Ukraine.

Are these warnings regarding the state of political management being taken into account by American decision-makers?

We don't have a clear answer to whether these criticisms are receiving attention or not. However, currently, there are two approaches within the US. Democrats and the Biden administration believe that through multilateralism and cooperation with allies, along with strengthening the middle class, the US can maintain its international standing. On the other hand, Republicans, particularly those aligned with Trump,

still believe that by rejecting globalization, making alliances and opponents more transparent, the US should be empowered.

Republicans, especially Trump's followers, believe that the US should focus on nationalism and toughening stances against rivals and opponents to regain its strength. The dominance of one solution over the other depends on the political trajectory of American society.

Therefore, these positions can be considered as an election warning to the American people. If the conservatives win in the upcoming presidential elections, will the US' weakening process accelerate?

Haass had a famous quote after Donald Trump's victory in the elections, stating that governing a country is different from running a campaign. While his audience may include the American people, these warnings are primarily about the long-term situation and the political governance and management in the country. Haass knows that regardless of whether a Democrat or Republican candidate wins in the next elections, these problems, such as a divided society and a weakened middle class still persist. Haass believes that the continuation of domestic problems implies further weakening of the US' position and power in the international system. Therefore, the main audience for Haass's warnings is the American political system.

First presidential elections under new Constitution of Uzbekistan

Early voting of the presidential elections has started in Uzbekistan on June 28 and it will last until July 5, as the elections will take place on July 9, while, a sum of 19.66 million voters registered in presidential elections in the country. The decision on early voting was announced by the current President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on May 8, 2023 following the results of a referendum on a new version of the Constitution (in accordance with Articles 110 and 128 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as Article 66 of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan).

This will be the first election after the amendments to the Constitution come into force. Now the president is elected for seven years on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

In total, four candidates are running for the post of head of state:

from the People's Democratic Party - Ulugbek Ilyasovich Inoyatov; from the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Business People - the Liberal Democratic Party (UZLiDeP) - Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev; from the Social Democratic Party "Adolat" - Robahon Anvarovna Makhmudova;



and from the Ecological Party - Abdushukur Khudoikulovich Khamzaev. In turn, the Milliy Tiklanish party decided not to nominate its own candidate for participation in the presidential elections, supporting the candidacy of Mirziyoyev. The program of the candi-

date for president of Uzbekistan from the People's Democratic Party Ulugbek Inoyatov says that his main goal is to form a democratic social state in the country that meets the criteria of social justice, social equality and democracy. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a presidential candidate from

UZLiDeP, presented the New Uzbekistan Strategy, which provides for reducing poverty by at least two times by 2027, developing the digital economy, deepening reforms in the judicial and legal sphere, increasing life expectancy, and improving public administration.

The candidate for the presidency of Uzbekistan from the social democratic party "Adolat" Robahon Makhmudova in her program offers a social democratic model for building a "fair civil society", providing for a democratic legal, social state and prosperity for all. The presidential candidate from the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan Abdushukur

Khamzaev in his election program focuses on overcoming the risks caused by climate change and the tragedy of the Aral Sea. He emphasizes that the problems of land and water resources, the reduction of biodiversity, the deterioration of atmospheric air, the accumulation of industrial and domestic waste require more serious attention from the state.

To organize early presidential elections in Uzbekistan, 10,784 polling stations have been organized, including 56 in 39 foreign countries at embassies and other representative offices of the republic. According to the Electoral Code, a voter

who does not have the opportunity to be at his place of residence on election day has the right to early voting. According to the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as of July 1, 2023, a sum of 376,623 voters exercised their right to early voting as 275,592 people voted on the territory of the republic, 101,031 - abroad, including at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At the 55th polling station, established at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Iran, fellow citizens staying in this country used their constitutional right and began to take part in the early voting process.

