

Chomsky: Overturn Of “Roe” Shows How Extreme An Outlier The US Has Become



Noam Chomsky

An *NPR/Ipsos* poll released in January revealed that the overwhelming majority of Americans believe that U.S. democracy is [“in crisis and at risk of failing.”](#) What the poll does not disclose, of course, is the anomalous situation of the United States in comparison to other democracies. For starters, the U.S. is a very conservative and militaristic country, with a two-party system and a political culture that overwhelmingly favors powerful private interests over the common good. Indeed, in many respects, it operates more like a reactionary plutocracy than a democracy. For instance, the U.S. is the only wealthy country without a universal health care system. It spends more on health care than any other high-income country but has the lowest life expectancy. The U.S. is also a global outlier in terms of gun ownership, gun violence and public mass shootings. Income and wealth inequality is also higher in the U.S. than in almost any other industrialized country, and the U.S. also has the distinction of spending less on children than almost any other wealthy country. Moreover, as evidenced by the recent decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the United States Supreme Court acts for the most part as an agent of reaction.

Indeed, the U.S. is a “highly unusual society, in many ways,” as Noam Chomsky states in the following interview about the economic and political organization of the U.S. polity and the shockingly reactionary rulings of the Supreme Court on guns and abortion.

Chomsky is the father of modern linguistics, a leading dissident and social critic, and one of the world's most cited intellectuals. His work has influenced a variety of fields, including cognitive science, philosophy, psychology, computer science, mathematics, childhood education and anthropology. He has received numerous awards, including the Kyoto Prize in Basic Sciences, the Helmholtz Medal and the Ben Franklin Medal in Computer and Cognitive Science. He is the recipient of dozens of honorary doctorate degrees from some of the world's most prestigious universities, and is the author of more than 150 books.

C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, as gun massacres continue to plague U.S. society, the question that naturally pops into mind is this: Why is the U.S. government so uniquely bad among developed countries at tackling issues in general that affects people's lives? Indeed, it is not just gun violence that makes the U.S. an outlier. It is also a big outlier when it comes to health, income inequality and the environment. In fact, the U.S. is an outlier with regard to its overall mode of economic, political and social organization.

Noam Chomsky: We can begin by taking note of an important date in U.S. history: June 23, 2022. On that date, the senior Justice of the Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas, issued [a decision solemnly pronouncing his country completely unhinged, a threat to itself and the world.](#)

Those were not of course Justice Thomas's words, speaking for the usual 6-3 majority of the reactionary Roberts Court, but they capture their import: In the United States, people may carry a concealed weapon for "self-defense," with no further justification. In no functioning society have people been living in such terror of their fellow citizens that they need guns for self-defense if they're taking a walk with their dogs or going to pick up their children at their (properly barricaded) nursery school.

A true sign of the famous American exceptionalism.

Even apart from the lunacy proclaimed from on high on that historic date, the United States is a highly unusual society, in many ways. The most important are the most general. In your words, "its overall mode of economic, political, and social organization." That merits a few comments.

The basic nature of the modern state capitalist world, including every more or less developed society, was well enough described 250 years ago by Adam Smith

in Wealth of Nations and in the Madisonian framework of the Constitution of what was soon to become the most powerful state in world history.

In Smith's words, the "masters of mankind" are those with economic power — in his day, the merchants and manufacturers of England. They are the "principal architects" of government policy, which they shape to ensure that their own interests are "most peculiarly attended to," however "grievous" the effects on others, including the people of England but more severely those subject to its "savage injustice" abroad. To the extent that they can, in every age they pursue their "vile maxim": "All for ourselves, nothing for other people."

In the Madisonian constitutional framework, power was to be in the hands of "the wealth of the nation," men (women were property, not persons) who recognize the rights of property owners and the need to "protect the minority of the opulent against the majority." The basic principle was captured succinctly by the first chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay: "Those who own the country ought to govern it." His current successors understand that very well, to an unusual extent.

Madison's doctrine differed from Smith's description of the world in some important respects. In his book *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, Madison scholar Lance Banning writes that Madison "was — to depths that we today are barely able to imagine — an eighteenth-century gentleman of honor." He expected that those granted power would act as an "enlightened Statesman" and "benevolent philosopher," "pure and noble," "men of intelligence, patriotism, property and independent circumstances ... whose wisdom may best discern the true interests of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations."

His illusions were soon shattered.

In very recent years, the reigning doctrine in the courts has been a variety of "originalism" that would have judges view the world from the perspective of a group of wealthy white male slaveowners, who were indeed reasonably enlightened — by the standards of the 18th century.

A more rational version of "originalism" was ridiculed 70 years ago by Justice Robert Jackson: "Just what our forefathers did envision, or would have envisioned had they foreseen modern conditions, must be divined from materials almost as

enigmatic as the dreams Joseph was called upon to interpret for Pharaoh.” That is a saner version than the Bork-Scalia-Alito et al. current version because of the highlighted phrase.

The contortions about “originalism” are of no slight interest. There’s no space to go into it here, but there are a few matters that deserve attention, just keeping to the most dedicated adherents to the doctrine — not the saner version ridiculed by Justice Jackson, but the very recent and now prevailing doctrine, which Jackson presumably would have regarded as too absurd even to discuss.

One issue has to do with the role of historical tradition. In Alito’s decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, he stresses the importance of relying on historical tradition in determining whether rights are implied in the Constitution (and Amendments). He points out, correctly, that the treatment of women historically gives little basis for according them rights.

In plain words, the history in law and practice is grotesque.

In his decision allowing people to carry concealed weapons to defend themselves in the hideous country he takes the U.S. to be, Thomas also referred to the importance of historical tradition, but he had little to say about it and the actual history undermines his allusions.

In the very important 2008 *Heller* decision, overturning a century of precedent and establishing his new version of the Second Amendment as Holy Writ, Justice Scalia explicitly ignored the entire historical tradition, including the reasons why the Framers called for a well-organized militia. The actual tradition, from the beginning, shows that the Second Amendment was largely an anachronism by the 20th century.

Even putting aside the problem of interpreting Pharaoh’s dreams, the recently established originalist doctrine appears to be rather flexible, though there are some uniform features, as we have seen again in the past few days: The doctrine can be adapted to yield deeply reactionary outcomes that infringe radically on essential human rights.

Justice Thomas emphasized that consistent thread in his concurring opinion in Alito’s decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*. He wrote that “in future cases, we

should reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*." These are the cases in which the court upheld the right to privacy in personal life, specifically the right to contraception, same-sex sexual relations and same-sex marriage. As Justice Kennedy put it in his majority opinion in *Lawrence*, what is at stake is the right of people "to engage in their [private] conduct without intervention of the government."

Thomas agreed with Alito that his majority opinion overturning *Roe v. Wade* did not in itself reach as far as Thomas's projections, which have a good record of being later affirmed. We will soon see.

These issues are of great importance today, as the court is arrogating to itself extraordinary authority to determine how society must function, a form of judicial supremacy that not only has little constitutional basis but should not be tolerated in a democratic society.

The long-term McConnell strategy of packing the courts is casting its dark shadow over American society, not to speak of the prospects for survival.

Turning to the broader social context, one critical feature of the United States is the unusual power of the masters of mankind, by now multinational corporations and financial institutions. It is of great significance that the masters include the wide-ranging energy system: fossil fuel producers, banks and other financial institutions, and corporate law firms who devise legal strategies to ensure that the interests of their paymasters "are most peculiarly attended to." Their interests are further safeguarded by NATO, the self-described "defensive alliance," which, when not rampaging somewhere, must fulfill its general post-Cold War mission: "to guard pipelines that transport oil and gas that is directed for the West," and more generally to protect sea routes used by tankers and other "crucial infrastructure" of the energy system (NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, 2007).

There have been many changes in the past 250 years of course, but these basic principles hold steady. And with consequences of overwhelming importance, right now.

We need not review the evidence showing that we are at a unique moment in history. Decisions that must be made right now will determine the course of

future history, if there is to be any. There is a narrow window in which we must implement the quite feasible measures to avert cataclysmic destruction of the environment. The masters of mankind in the world's most powerful state have been hard at work to close that window, and to ensure that their exorbitant short-term profit and power will remain untouched as the world goes up in flames.

That may sound over-dramatic, too apocalyptic. Perhaps it does sound that way, but unfortunately it is true and not overstated. It is also no secret. We can gain some insight into the process in the lead story in *The New York Times* a few days ago. Energy and environment correspondent Coral Davenport reports the near consummation of the long-time campaign of the fossil fuel industry and its minions in Washington to prevent the government from instituting regulations that would impede its primary goal of profit (with ensuing cataclysm), relying on the Roberts Court to give its imprimatur.

We can dismiss the legalistic chicanery and the comical professions of high principle. The facts are plain and simple. The success of the project of destroying organized human life on earth in the near future is a testimony to the unusual power of the masters of mankind in the U.S.

The project is more ambitious than protection of the immediate interests of the energy system. The Supreme Court will soon deal with the case of *West Virginia v. EPA*, which has to do with "the federal government's authority to reduce carbon dioxide from power plants — pollution that is dangerously heating the planet." But that's only a start, Davenport reports.

Other cases are wending their way through the courts, exploring various legal strategies to achieve the longer-term goal: to prevent the EPA and other regulatory agencies from enacting measures that are not explicitly legislated. That means just about all measures, since Congress cannot possibly reach decisions on the specific contingencies that arise, or even inquire into them. To do so requires the kind of intensive expert analysis by regulatory agencies and interaction with the public that the project of the masters seeks to ban. The project translates into *carte blanche* for private power to do as it wishes. In spirit, this is an extension of the reigning extremist version of originalism and has the same result of favoring the interests of the masters and consigning the rest to deserved oblivion.

It is worth looking into the sources of this unusual power of “those who own the country,” which manifests itself in many ways. One factor is that as the native scourge was eliminated, the conquered territories were viewed as a kind of “blank slate,” with no existing framework of feudal structures. The feudal system, with all its horrors, did assign people some kind of place, however awful, with some rights.

Starting from fresh in a conquered country, individual settlers were on their own. They did have ways to benefit, many at least. The conquered country offered unparalleled advantages: rich resources, vast territory, incomparable security. And like other societies, the U.S. has been blessed with an intellectual class that is eager to extol its real or imagined virtues while suppressing inconvenient reality.

To be sure, for the truly totalitarian mind that is never enough, as we see in current GOP initiatives to suppress books and teaching that might be “divisive” or cause discomfort to (white) students — that is, all of history, everywhere.

The masters are highly organized and have many institutions devoted to their needs, apart from the state that they largely control: trade associations, chambers of commerce, the Business Roundtable, American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), many others. When Thatcher and other neoliberal ideologues preach that there is no society, only individuals subject to the market, they understand well that the rich and privileged are exempt.

The efforts of the masters to atomize the rest are pursued with true passion. The traps of mass consumerism are one mode. Another is harsh suppression of labor organizing, the primary means of self-defense during the industrial era. In keeping with the unusually powerful role of the masters, the U.S. has an unusually violent labor history, adopting new modalities during the Reagan-Clinton imposition of the neoliberal programs that have torn society to shreds, not only in the U.S. The independent farmers of the genuine Populist movement of the late 19th century and their dream of a “cooperative commonwealth” met the same fate.

We should not, however, discount the successes. The 19th century struggles to create an independent labor movement based on the principle that “those who work in the mills should own them,” and to link it with the powerful Populist

movement, were crushed, but not without a residue.

The struggles continued, with significant successes. Those years also saw the rise of mass education, a major contribution to democracy with the U.S. far in the lead — hence, not surprisingly, a target of the neoliberal assault on rights and democracy. The militant labor movement of the 1930s, rising from the ashes of Wilsonian suppression, led America to social democracy while Europe was succumbing to fascism — processes now being reversed under neoliberal assault. The popular movements of the 1960s forged the way to the establishment of freedom of speech as a substantial right, to an extent unparalleled elsewhere, along with civilizing the society over a broad range. The achievements have been targeted by the neoliberal reaction, but not destroyed.

The struggle never ends.

The U.S. is unusual in other ways. It is, of course, a settler-colonial society like all of the Anglosphere, the offshoots of Britain, which was the most democratic society of the day, and also most powerful and violent. These features carried over in complex ways to the daughter societies. Despite the efforts of the Framers to contain the threat of democracy, popular pressures expanded it, sufficiently so that the great statesmen of Europe, like Kissinger's hero Metternich, were deeply concerned about "the pernicious doctrines of republicanism and popular self-rule" spread by "the apostles of sedition" in the liberated colonies, an early version of the "domino theory" that is a ubiquitous feature of imperial domination. King George III was also concerned that the American Revolution might lead to erosion of empire, as it did.

The U.S. has been by far the wealthiest and most powerful state of the Anglosphere, surpassing Britain itself, which was reduced to a "junior partner" of its former colony as the British Foreign Office lamented after World War II when the U.S. took the mantle of global hegemony, displacing Britain and virtually eliminating France. U.S. history reflects that power. It's hard to find another society that has been almost continuously at war — almost always aggressive war — since its founding.

A major — arguably the major — reason for the revolution was to overturn the British Royal Proclamation of 1763 that prevented the colonists from attacking the Indigenous nations beyond the Appalachian Mountains. The colonists had

other ideas in mind, including notorious land speculators like the founder of the country, George Washington, known to the Iroquois as “the town destroyer.”

The brutality of the conquests was hardly a secret. The first U.S. secretary of war, General Henry Knox, described what his countrymen were doing as “the utter extirpation of all the Indians in most populous parts of the Union” by means “more destructive to the Indian natives than the conduct of the conquerors of Mexico and Peru.” It was soon to become far worse, though not without efforts to conceal it beginning with Jefferson’s infamous passage in the Declaration of Independence denouncing King George for unleashing “the merciless Indian savages” against the peaceful colonists, who wanted only their “utter extirpation.”

On the side, the U.S. picked up half of Mexico in what President/General U.S. Grant called one of the most “wicked wars” of aggression in history, greatly regretting his participation in the crime as a junior officer.

The task was viciously consummated by the end of the 19th century. By then the U.S. was turning to other exercises of violence and subversion too familiar to recount, to the present moment.

All of this has its impact on the prevailing culture. In the light of history, it becomes a little less shocking to see that even after the Uvalde massacre, almost half of Republican voters, mostly from rural traditional white Christian sectors, think that we must accept such horrors as the price of freedom.

The gun culture has other roots of course, some of which we have discussed. There is much more, some brought out in an incisive report by journalist and political analyst Chris Hedges, based partly on his own experience growing up in the rural America that has been crushed by neoliberal globalization, leaving guns as the last residue for men of some illusion of dignity and social role.

We should add that it is still possible to access Hedges’s outstanding work. Most of it was in regular programs on RT, which is now cancelled under the suffocating censorship designed to protect Americans from any awareness of what Russian leaders may be saying or thinking. Some fragments are permitted, those that can be twisted to show that Putin intends to conquer the world. Those versions receive triumphant exposure, but not, say, the regular negotiation offers, which, while not acceptable, might provide an opening for a diplomatic settlement of the kind that the U.S. government has been dedicated to undermine.

It's been repeatedly said that the U.S. political system is broken and observers decry political polarization in today's Congress. In what sense can we speak of a broken political system when the elites seem to have a strong grip on the policy agenda?

We can put the matter somewhat differently. A political system is broken insofar as the policy agenda is largely in the hands of some sector of power, typically “those who own the country” and therefore have the right to govern it to ensure that their own interests are properly attended to and that the minority of the opulent are well protected.

One effect of the neoliberal assault on the social order has been to amplify the grip of the masters over the political agenda, a natural consequence of the concentration of unaccountable economic power, which is, indeed, impressive. A rough measure is given by the Rand Corporation study that we have discussed earlier, which found that since Reagan opened the doors to highway robbery, almost \$50 trillion have been “transferred” from the working and middle classes to the super-rich. That has proceeded alongside of the tendency towards monopolization that results from deregulation, spurred further by the highly protectionist measures of the “free trade agreements” of the Clinton years.

Harvard economists Anna Stansbury and Lawrence Summers attribute the sharp concentration of wealth in the past 40 years primarily to the assault on labor, initiated by Reagan (and Thatcher in the U.K.), carried forward in Clintonite neoliberal globalization. In their words, “Declining unionization, increasingly demanding and empowered shareholders, decreasing real minimum wages, reduced worker protections, and the increases in outsourcing domestically and abroad have disempowered workers with profound consequences for the labor market and the broader economy” — and as an immediate consequence, a stronger grip by the masters on the policy agenda.

The decline of functioning democracy is not limited to the U.S. The impact on the social order of 40 years of bitter class war — the operative meaning of “neoliberalism” — is starker in the U.S. because of the relative weakness of the social protections that are the norm elsewhere, even such elementary matters as maternal care, found everywhere apart from the U.S. and a few Pacific islands. The most dramatic of these social failures is the scandalous privatized health system, with almost twice the costs of comparable societies and some of the worst

general outcomes. (The rich are spared.)

Specific illustrations are startling. One recent study found that the “fragmented and inefficient” U.S. health care system was responsible for 212,000 COVID deaths in 2020 alone, along with over \$105 billion in extra medical expenses in addition to the nearly \$440 billion of extra expenses in normal years, all avoidable with universal health care.

These deficiencies go back many years, despite the very substantial improvements of the New Deal policies that have been under neoliberal attack. The pandemic has brought to light starkly the lethal nature of the business model that has been imposed during these destructive years. The outcome is aptly described by political economist Thomas Ferguson:

the pandemic shined a terrible, unforgiving light on how fragile a globalized world really is. “Just in time” production, off-shoring, transnational supply chains, and the hollowing-out of firms as they degraded workers into external contractors with lower wages and fewer benefits produced fatally brittle social systems. As the pandemic spread and transnational supply chains broke down, the cumulative impact of more than a generation of steady government cuts in taxes, safety nets, education, and—above all—health care became overwhelming. Virtually every country became paralyzed for a while. In the United States, the United Kingdom, and many developing countries, I think we will eventually recognize that the pandemic actually broke their social systems. As pandemic relief fades from memory and the gruesome toll of delayed deaths, long Covid, substance abuse, and mental health problems climbs higher and higher, the true dimensions of the havoc the pandemic wrought, not least on the U.S. labor force, will stand out more clearly.

Ideologues whose arrogance far exceeds their understanding have played a very dangerous game with the international social order for the past 40 years, not for the first time in human history. Those who gave the orders — the masters of mankind — may exult about their short-term gains, but they too will rue the havoc they have wrought.

The polarization you mention is very real, but the term is somewhat misleading. The Republican Party has been going off the rails ever since Newt Gingrich took control of Congress in the Clinton years. A decade ago, political analysts Thomas

Mann and Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute observed that the growing polarization is “asymmetric.” The Democrats have not shifted greatly, but “The Republican Party has become a radical insurgency—ideologically extreme, scornful of facts and compromise, and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition.”

By then, Mitch McConnell, the real evil genius of the radical insurgency, had firm grasp of the reins. The course to destruction of democracy took a further leap forward under Trump and has since reached a quite astonishing level.

The Texas Republican Party, which is at or near the radical extreme of the GOP, has just called virtually for secession. Its June 2022 Convention determined that Biden “was not legitimately elected,” so Texas is free to ignore decisions of the federal government. Going further, the Texas Republican Party condemns homosexuality as an “abnormal lifestyle choice,” calls for schools to teach that life begins at birth, and roundly condemns any restriction on guns, arguing that those under 21 are “most likely to need to defend themselves” and may need to quickly buy guns “in emergencies such as riots,” while claiming that red flag laws violate the due process rights of people who haven’t been convicted of a crime.

Texas may be leading the radical insurgency, but not by much. Some 70 percent of Republicans hold that the 2020 election was stolen and that Trump is the legitimate president. Half of Republicans believe that “top Democrats are involved in elite child sex-trafficking rings.”

A large majority think that “the Democratic Party is trying to replace the current electorate with voters from poorer countries around the world,” and there are other fantasies that would be hard to believe in a normal country.

That’s the Republican voting base, after half a century of refinement of the Nixon “Southern strategy.” The leading idea is to divert attention of voters from GOP dedication to the reinforcement of the Vile Maxim to “cultural issues” that can be exploited to make political capital of the justified resentment and anger elicited by the policies being instituted, the class war of the neoliberal years.

Admiration of this achievement of the masters is somewhat tempered by the fact that the new GOP was pushing an open door. By the 1970s, the Democrats had pretty much abandoned concern for working people and the poor, openly becoming a party of affluent professionals and Wall Street: the Clintonite party

managers and the kind of people who attended Obama's lavish parties.

There is, then, polarization. The Republican leadership became a radical insurgency while across the aisle the leadership found their own more moderate ways to join the class war.

That's the leadership. The public, as usual, has not been silent. On the Democratic side, there has been a revival of New Deal-style social democracy, sometimes beyond, invigorated by the impressive work of Bernie Sanders. On the Republican side it has, unfortunately, descended to a form of Trump worship, reminiscent to an extent of the Hitler worship of 90 years ago.

A new report from researchers at Yale and Columbia Universities shows that the U.S. has fallen behind on climate goals, thanks to four years of Trump in power. Yet, the Biden administration itself is falling quite short on the climate crisis. With that in mind, and given the nature of the U.S. political system, how do we move forward in the fight against global warming?

This is the most important issue of all, for reasons it should be unnecessary to review. To repeat, there are still opportunities to save us from our folly, but the window is not wide, and it is rapidly closing.

The Trump years were an utter catastrophe for the world. Furthermore, the GOP became a denialist party well before Trump, ever since the Koch energy conglomerate brought a quick end to its brief recognition of reality under McCain. The last Republican primary was in 2016, before the Republican Party was taken over by Trump. The candidates were the cream of the crop of the GOP. At the time they were not only all opposed to Trump but were scandalized by him.

Uniformly, the candidates said that what is happening is not happening, with two exceptions. Jeb Bush said that maybe it is but it doesn't matter. Ohio Gov. John Kasich was alone in saying that of course global warming is happening, and humans have a significant role. He was praised for that, but mistakenly, because of what he added. Yes, the climate is being destroyed, but we in Ohio will continue to produce and use coal freely and will not apologize for it.

That's the GOP before Trump took it over. It's the GOP that is likely to be running the most powerful state in history very soon.

Under activist pressure, Biden adopted a climate program that was inadequate given the severity of the crisis but was a long step beyond anything that had preceded, and if implemented, would have had some positive effects and granted some time to move beyond. McConnell obstructionism put an end to that, with the help of a few right-wing Democrats, primarily coal baron Joe Manchin, the leading congressional recipient of fossil fuel funding.

More generally, all of the positive Biden programs, mostly crafted by Sanders, met the same fate. Discussion of this tragedy for the country mostly focuses on the few Democrat collaborators, but the real story is GOP obstruction. Quite unfairly, Biden is criticized for the failure to implement his program. Yes, he could have done more, but the blame falls on the radical insurgency.

The political factions dedicated to destroying organized life on Earth — not an exaggeration — are only apparently “the principle architects of policy.” Behind them are the masters of mankind. The Koch conglomerate intervention was a vulgar illustration. The processes are more pervasive.

One major program is reaching a dread consummation, as discussed earlier. It received a shot in the arm from the increase in gasoline prices, the major contributor to inflation, accelerated by Putin’s criminal invasion of Ukraine. The euphoria in the executive offices of the fossil fuel companies is matched only in the offices of weapons producers. They no longer have to face the annoyance of fending off environmental activists. They are now praised for pouring poisons into the atmosphere and urged to do more, accelerating the march to destruction.

In a sane world the reaction would be different. We would seize the opportunity to move more rapidly to sustainable energy to save coming generations from a miserable fate. The temporary problem of inflation is severe, and can be overcome for those suffering from it by fiscal measures, and beyond. Options reach as far as turning the fossil fuel producers into a public utility. Robert Pollin has shown that they could literally be purchased by the government for a fraction of the sums that the Treasury Department poured into compensating financial institutions for losses during the early stages of the pandemic.

That’s hardly unprecedented. Second World War measures came close to that in practice. That was of course total war, but today’s crisis is even more severe, far more so in fact.

There are recent precedents. In 2009, the U.S. auto industry was on the verge of collapse. The Obama administration virtually nationalized it, paid off its losses, and returned it to the former ownership (with some new faces) so that it could continue with what it had been doing before.

There was another possible choice, had there been popular backing: Turn the industry to a new task. Instead of creating traffic jams and poisoning the atmosphere, produce what the country needs — efficient mass public transportation based on renewable energy, a better life for all and for the future. And a different ownership was imaginable: perhaps the workforce and community, something resembling democracy. There are many options. We are not limited to those that cater to the existing energy system and the grim fate that it is designing for the human species, quite consciously, with meticulous planning.

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