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Skwire's First Law [1]

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I would like to introduce you to Skwire's First Law [3]:

> Politicians are asshats.

We should note that there is no Skwire's Second Law.

In somewhat more detail:

> And I want to talk about how Skwire?s law?though simply expressed?is not merely a sigh of exasperation, a political version of ?boys will be boys.? It?s a manifesto condensed into three words.
>
> Saying that politicians are asshats means that you acknowledge the deep truths of public choice theory. It means that even if the occasional politician supports a policy you like or gives a speech you admire, you know enough not to turn him or her into a hero. We can debate, as my friends and I have on Facebook, whether asshats become politicians or politicians become asshats. I don?t think that debate much matters, because I think both parts of it are true. Politics is a machine that turns good people and good ideas into bad ones, and turns bad people and bad ideas into worse ones.
>
> Politics is a system that attracts not only people who want to help, but people who want to control. And once those people?good or bad, helpful or controlling?are in the system, they use it to further their ends. And that means that they will take money from people most of us wouldn?t shake hands with. And that means that they will tell us that they do not believe in spying on the American people or in a government that operates in secrecy, while they continue spying on the American people and locking up or hounding anyone who questions that secrecy. And that means they will tell us they want to help care for the helpless while they make it illegal for charities to feed the starving. And that means they will tell us they are deeply concerned about unemployment while they raise more and more barriers to entry-level jobs. And on and on.
>
> None of this is accidental. None of this is a flaw in the system. This is how politics works. And this is why politicians are asshats.

This is clearly and obviously true in its entirety. However, we do have this problem that there are some things that must be done. There are even some things that must be done that must be done by government: they simply require the monopoly of force and legal pressure that government alone can provide. There are even some thing that it is highly desirable that government should do: the provision of certain public goods comes to mind, the intervention necessary to deal with certain externalities perhaps.

But the fact that governments are led by politicians, that politicians are asshats, means that we want government only to be doing those things that both must be done and can only be done by government. We'll get on with the rest of our lives, that vast majority and very extensive part of the rest of our lives,

entirely free from the influence of asshats.

If you would be so kind that is.

It's been remarked that pre-1914 the only regular contact with the State the average Englishman had was with the local bobby and the postman. Sounds about the right sort of level really, although now that we know how to privatise the postman perhaps even that was too much.

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