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The party's over: Republicans and Democrats are both finished

- Trump's election and his increasing comfort in shifting from right to left prove that the Republican and Democratic parties as we know them are finished. Never before have we seen the leadership of both major political parties so
- humbled. Here's how this power vacuum will play out in the coming elections.
- **COMMENTARY**

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SECUBO



Stick a fork in the Democrats and Republicans.

Wednesday night's latest round of deal making between President Donald Trump and Democratic congressional leaders is the latest evidence that the major political parties have lost all semblance of real power.

Never before have we seen the leadership of both major political

parties so humbled. That power vacuum is currently enabling the president to act without any loyalty to his own party, while working with whomever he pleases on whatever issues he wants. It's why we have a Republican congressional leadership, headlined by a Senate Majority Leader with an 18 percent approval rating in his

promises to repeal and replace Obamacare. And it's why the Democratic Party is getting more and more embarrassed as its highly-experienced-but-failed 2016 presidential nominee continues to weaken the brand by going on a national tour

blaming everyone else for her election loss.

own home state, that could not deliver on its party's seven-year-long

None of the above would have been possible before then-candidate Trump eviscerated a crowded field of 16 more experienced GOP regulars in the 2016 primaries. It wouldn't be possible before Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent who only registered as a Democrat months before the primaries, came extremely close to upsetting long-held party plans to nominate Hillary Clinton. (Now that same Senator Sanders is leading a march away from Democratic Party orthodoxy and fully advocating single payer health care, with a third of the Democrats in the Senate happily marching away with him.)

"Somewhere, George Washington's ghost must be smiling wide with those wooden teeth of his. It was Washington who warned against the formation of political parties and urged the nation to choose leaders for reasons that transcended partisan politics."

Even at the state level, we're starting to see party power dwindling, with outsiders like Kid Rock and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson being seriously considered as candidates. So much for moving up the ranks in politics and waiting your turn.

It's important to remember this didn't start with President Trump or Senator Sanders. Barack Obama proved the party hierarchy and seniority system was on the wane when he stepped over Hillary Clinton in 2008 to win the Democratic presidential nomination and the presidency after just two years in the U.S. Senate.

But even prior to that, the parties were becoming less discernible from each other, aside from a few wedge issues like abortion and gun control.

They pull donations from the same entities with just a few exceptions, and have similar track records when it comes to enduring challenges like controlling the debt, reining in health care costs, or improving the infrastructure, despite their rhetoric to the contrary. That corruption, or perceived corruption, played a big role in Donald Trump's successful "drain the swamp" campaign.

influence, pushing for conservative priorities like tax reform and a ban on immigrants from several Muslim countries tied to terrorism, even as he also makes deals with Democrats on the debt ceiling, DACA, and maybe even Obamacare.

We all know just how loudly and angrily the left has been reacting to

Now, Trump is continuing to exploit the breakdown of major party

President Trump in general. But in case there's any doubt about how the partisan right is responding to the Trump team's moves lately, there shouldn't be. They're infuriated. But there's also seems to be an understanding that there's little they can do about it. Somewhere, George Washington's ghost must be smiling wide with

the formation of political parties and urged the nation to choose leaders for reasons that transcended partisan politics. His cabinet members, especially Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, didn't listen. But it's happening now. Of course, this will not result in the total disappearance of party titles in elections — at least not yet. Too much of the election

those wooden teeth of his. It was Washington who warned against

infrastructure in too many states relies on major party nominees dominating the ballot choices. But several states, like California, already have statewide primary elections where the top vote-getters regardless of their party are the ones who go before the voters in general elections. That's why Senator Kamala Harris faced off against another Democrat last year in the general election. We could see more states going this way, thus making it less important to hook up with one party or another just to get on the ballot. So what does this mean going forward?

For now, lost party influence will continue to enable Trump's generally hard-to-define policy leanings. He'll easily shift between

the right and the left as it suits him with more freedom than perhaps any other president in 100 years. Republicans and Democrats will likely begin to decide on a case-by-case basis when to support the president, when to oppose him, and when to simply keep quiet. And that means the long-coveted positions like Speaker of the House and majority leader will become less important. Looking to 2018 and the next presidential election, expect more outsider candidates to throw their hats into the ring without

established party members being able to do much about it. Supporters of President Trump are likely to challenge incumbent Republicans in several primaries. And there are many who believe the Democrats might even get more serious about recruiting outsiders and celebrities for the 2020 race against President Trump. The important thing to remember is that all the craziness we're seeing in Washington these days is not just the result of this

president's personality or some new level of political anger across the country. An old order that's been in place for generations that kept a lid on the kind of chaos we've seen in recent months has crumbled. These are uncharted waters for sure, but they may not lead to such bad results. After all, the partisan political structure in place for so

government that's grown well beyond its usefulness. Love or hate it, it's time to face this new reality: The Democratic and the Republican parties as we know them are finished and the politicians, the people who give them money, and the people who

long has brought us numerous wars, \$20 trillion in debt and a

cover them need to adjust accordingly. Commentary by Jake Novak, CNBC.com senior columnist. Follow him on Twitter @jakejakeny.

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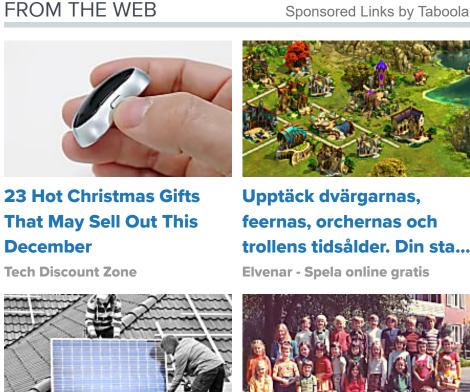
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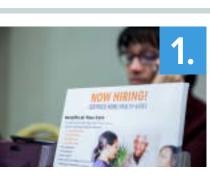
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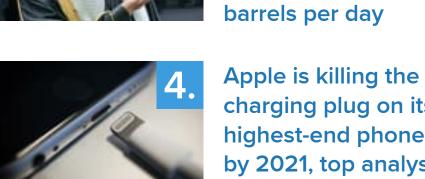
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