Blind Faith, Subterfuge and not “Real Issues” will decide US Presidential Elections

Voter behaviour is not really so complicated. I once even took a course in it; about all that I can remember is that the “incumbent and name recognition is all that really matters” in getting re-elected, especially for a US President.

Regardless of who is the pick for vice president, or whether or not Joe Biden is a Republican at heart with a bad case of both venality and dementia and Trump cannot make truthful statements, the November election is therefore kind of a “toss up”—at least at first impression.

Trump is larger than life, whether or not that is a good thing. This worked in his favour last time round, as the outsider candidate against the tainted Hillary Clinton, pillar of the political establishment, the sort who gives representing a relatively left-leaning party a bad name.

But this time the US is not electing a new president, it is holding what is effectively a referendum on the incumbent. In 2016 the primary motivation was voting either FOR Trump or FOR Hillary. This time a significant portion of the population will be voting AGAINST Trump, just because it’s him, and his main task will be get these people to stay at home, rather than vote for Biden, even if they have to hold their noses to do so.

But with so many Republicans having a problem with Trump, and Democrats having a problem with Sloppy Joe Biden, there will be less interest in engaging WITH, rather than AGAINST, either candidate. If voters act on hate alone, Biden will walk it.

But the long campaigning season will probably end with a weary populace ignoring the real issues and voting on the basis of blind faith – that regardless of things like issues and facts, someone, somehow, is going to make their lives better before the whole political system collapses around them.

Schoolyard Bully

I am dumbfounded at how Trump can blatantly and unapologetically pander to Christians and they eat it up!!! He is reported to have made a statement that if the states don’t open the churches this weekend there will be consequences!!!

Trump has many supporters in the South, where they are keen on States’Rights. But Facebook and other social media sites are repeating his nonsense, and throwing their endorsement to Trump.

Maybe the man is the genius he says he is after all. He is definitely playing them - what can Facebook do, censor Trump or claim that such statements go against community standards?

He has been a genius at one thing for his entire life - getting his own way, and just for the hell of it, regardless of what is right or well-advised. Like the rich kid who learns how to twist his parents in knots, Trump is godlike in his ability to manipulate. He will use any trick in the book, and make up some new ones.

This may end up being what the election is actually about. The more Trump lies and cheats and gets away with it, the more the disadvantaged and the crooked, who have fallen by the wayside when playing by the rules, will think he offers hope. The rest of America will then decide whether that is really the world they want to live in for the next four years, in the midst of a succession of crises they often have wilfully unreal ideas about to begin with.

As one new American, before the new immigration rules set in, shared, “Trump is not that evil; I don’t think he is...
Godlike. He is just a compulsive dude with a character. He is simple but knows how to bargain for profits. Why everyone is after him, it’s funny; I have never seen Americans liking their president ever, as they like Trump.”

Us against them Versus them against Us

Of course this means Trump won’t campaign by the rules either. Other people made those rules, the same people many Americans blame for taking away their jobs and being soft on their enemies. Trump will do whatever he has to do, whatever the cost, ignoring little things like the Constitution, Rule of Law and facts. His latest stunt is to question whether Biden’s VP running mate is qualified to stand for the office, based on her parent’s origins. That is really catering to his base, as he knows only too well that she is in no way disqualified for the office, but many people wish she was.

Barack Obama was subject to so much rumour about his own origins that he actually displayed his birth certificate (saying Honolulu, Hawaii, 4th August 1961, i.e. after it had become part of the US) at a press conference. These allegations were never based on fact, but allowed some voters to dress up prejudice as hoped-for fact. Trump joined these allegations, saw they worked, and has been finding new ways to make prejudice seem justified ever since.

Constitutional law experts say Harris' parents are beside the point. The 14th Amendment grants citizenship to all people born in the US, and Article II Section 1 of the Constitution says that to be eligible for the vice presidency and presidency a candidate must be natural-born US citizen, at least 35, and a resident of the United States for a minimum of 14 years.

But the Constitution embodies the establishment, and Trump doesn’t consider himself part of it. Many of his supporters feel betrayed by it, their needs and values having been relegated to secondary status, or worse, because they and their friends were never asked to write the Constitution.

Trump has lied to his base like he has lied to everyone else. He does it every day, shamelessly. Remember building a wall and making Mexico pay for it, incarcerating Hillary, paying off the debt and stopping wars, let alone the more recent ones about COVID-19 response.

But what is escaping critical attention is that the current man in the White House represents the character and morals of the masses of people who make up the country. They won’t admit openly to being everything America pretends it isn’t, which is why Trump is being hammered in the polls, but they will be voting in mass for his re-election.

Their core values are the same: family, Church, flag and job security, as if these are the answer to everything in themselves, no actual performance or policy is needed. The vast majority of these voters must feel that they are now being taken care of—for most, that means less government, affordable education and healthcare. If Trump makes an about-turn, such as introducing Medicare for all at a price, he will be hoeing in high cotton as the presidential election nears.

Blind faith in the system versus blind faith in anything other than the system may not be the best choice to have, as countries which have had revolutions understand. But both sides are gambling that this is how the voters will see it, and that they will choose their faith over the other, and then prosecute it for four years with the same religious fervour so that reality doesn’t come and bite too hard.

Bubbling under the Radar

Trump may support a small state, but he did a clever move extending Federal Unemployment benefits by executive order, albeit not to the previous level of 600 dollars per week on top of any State benefit. He realised that he had no time to waste, especially in the wake of the economic havoc of COVID-19.

Congress went on recess so as not to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, as they knew there was going to be too much pork included in any legislation they would attempt to pass. This could be interpreted as meaning they were outsmarted by Donald Trump, and only one such victory will embolden his supporters to believe there will be many more, which they will interpret as victories for them.

Trump’s base of support has closed ranks even more over his monument policy, which makes it a crime to tear down historic monuments. One cannot trash history just because times have changed. I may not like your monument, but let’s talk about it.

When the first Democratic debates were held Joe Biden was not most people’s first choice, but I wondered if he had
the best chance, since he was old and white and had been VP under Obama. This claim to fame would help him gain
the black vote en masse, or so he thought.

But this has become a moot issue since Biden scolded black leaders, claiming they would not be black if they voted
for Trump.

That did not go over well with a voter group which as a whole finds Trump a lowlife, but does not expect to be
lectured by a senile “old honky”. Blacks also realised long ago that if they have an equally strong voice within both
parties they are more likely to be heard, not taken for granted by the one they support and then ignored, because
electorally not worth the effort, by the other. If Biden doesn’t get that, how many other voter groups will he risk
alienating between now and November?

Biden is the sort of Democrat blacks once deserted his party for being full of – a scion of white privilege, darling of
War on Crime (meaning war on blacks, as is Harris), closet racist and blind servant of Wall Street and the Military-
Industrial Complex. Maybe this is the real reason he is supposedly polling ahead of Trump in key Electoral College
States, even Ohio.

However, those with not-so-short memories will remember that the last round of polls before the 2016 election gave
Hillary Clinton a commanding lead, and the DNC and mainstream media were so confident of her success they had
already printed up the front pages of the newspapers announcing her victory. What makes the pollsters so confident
that they will not be even more wrong this time?

Trump bashing Biden’s policies and the Democratic National Committee’s platform may soon take all the wind out of
Biden’s sails, precisely because it is so easy to bash Trump that it has less effect on the voters. Trump’s policy of
America First is also proving consistent, and this is the one campaign promise few people expected him to keep. This
does put Trump in the small category of politicians who actually keep their promises, however ironic that is.

The return of no point

As for the election, only God knows what will happen. It is perfectly possible that the Deep State controls the voting
machines by now and the mail-in ballots too! Democrats in Florida are still protesting about the voting machines used
there when George W. Bush beat Al Gore by a tiny margin. As James Baker pointed out at the time, they tested the
machines before the election and had no complaints. So either there was nothing wrong with the machines, or the
count was distorted by those machines. I know which one my money is on. What people are not willing to wake up
and accept is that America needs another system, not the two party system, as which now supposedly exists. It is an
illusion that Republican and Democrat are the only choices, when members of these two parties stay in Congress for
decades and little if anything changes.

In 1905 Mark Twain wrote his War Prayer, a short story or prose poem described as “a scathing indictment of war,
particularly of blind patriotic and religious fervour as motivations for war.” In the days of the Vietnam War, when
both war and politics had meaning, this was seen as sarcasm. Now it is a commentary on what the US political
system has become, because people are incapable of engaging with real issues because they do not wish to know the
truth about their country.

*Henry Kamens, columnist, expert on Central Asia and Caucasus, exclusively for the online magazine “New
Eastern Outlook”.*