

MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

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WHO ARE WE?

AND WHY ARE WE NOT WHO WE WERE?

AMERICA AT RISK IN ELECTION YEAR 2016

BREXIT, AND BEYOND

AS WE WENT TO PRESS IN JUNE, THE RESULTS OF THE UK REFERENDUM ON WHETHER TO REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) WERE BEING ANNOUNCED, AND AFTER MONTHS OF CAMPAIGNING IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THOSE IN FAVOR OF LEAVING HAD WON. A WEEK OR TWO OF POST MORTEM COMMENTS FOLLOWED AND THEN THE ENGLISH POLITICAL SYSTEM, WITH ITS CUSTOMARY SPEED AND TILT TOWARDS REALITY, TOOK CONTROL. PRIME MINISTER (PM) DAVID CAMERON, WHOSE TORY PARTY HAD SUPPORTED STAYING IN THE EU, RESIGNED AND RETIRED. THE TORIES SETTLED ON A NEW PM, THERESA MAY, WHOM THE QUEEN ASKED TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT, AND WITHIN ABOUT A MONTH IT TOOK SHAPE, STILL TORY BUT WITH A SHUFFLED CAST OF HIGH OFFICE HOLDERS FOR ITS CABINET POSITIONS — NEW FACES IN OLD PLACES.

THE GENERAL EXPECTATION PRIOR TO THE VOTE WAS THAT CAMERON'S TORY PARTY, WHICH HAD WON A SURPRISING PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY A YEAR AGO, WOULD PREVAIL IN THE

EU VOTE. ITS FAILURE WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT ITS CAMPAIGN WAS BASED ON A TRULY FLAWED STRATEGY AND CONDUCT. THE TORY MESSAGE WAS ENTIRELY FINANCIAL, NEGATIVE AND THREATENING AND WAS BUILT AROUND THE THEME THAT WITHDRAWAL WOULD CAUSE THE UK AND ITS CITIZENS TO SUFFER LOSS OF INCOME, TRADE AND JOBS.

WHAT CAMERON'S CONSERVATIVES MISSED WAS THE DEGREE OF DISSATISFACTION WITH EU BUREAUCRATIC CONTROLS AND REGULATIONS THAT INCREASINGLY MARKED THE ENGLISH PEOPLE'S LIVES AND LABOR. THE REAL ISSUE FOR MANY ENGLISH OF ALL CLASSES WAS THAT EU MEMBERSHIP REDUCED THEIR SOVEREIGNTY AND THEIR HISTORICAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS.

“BUREAUCRACY DELIVERS
SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT.”

TIME AND TIME AGAIN IN VOTER INTERVIEWS, WHEN SOMEONE WAS ASKED WHY HE/SHE WOULDN'T VOTE FOR THE EU, THE ANSWER CAME BACK “I'M NOT EUROPEAN, I'M

IN THIS ISSUE, WE CONTINUE AND COMPLETE OUR COMMENTS ON BREXIT FROM OUR JULY ISSUE AND THEN FOCUS ON SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES IN CAMPAIGN 2016'S PERSONALITIES, STYLES AND BACKGROUNDS; AND ON MAJOR ISSUES FACING OUR COUNTRY THAT WILL MOSTLY BE AVOIDED BY BOTH CANDIDATES.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE, WHICH WILL APPEAR JUST BEFORE THE NEW PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION, WE WILL GO BACK IN HISTORY AND CITE STATEMENTS MADE BY FORMER PRESIDENTS IN THEIR INAUGURATION SPEECHES THAT NOW SEEM RELEVANT TO OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS AND EFFORTS.

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ENGLISH”. IT STRAINS BELIEF THAT ANY PARTY IN POWER IN ENGLAND, WITH ITS CENTURIES OF TRADITION, SOVEREIGNTY, FREEDOM, ISLAND CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND WORLD LEADERSHIP, COULD MISREAD A NATIONAL ISSUE AND MOOD AS THOROUGHLY AS THE TORIES DID. BREXIT WAS AS MUCH ABOUT CHAUCER, CHURCHILL, SHAKESPEARE, DICKENS, QUEEN VICTORIA, WATERLOO, DUNKIRK, NOEL COWARD, RUDYARD KIPLING, JURY TRIAL AND COMMON LAW AS IT WAS ABOUT ECONOMIC REGULATION, AND IN THAT SENSE IT WAS TRULY HISTORIC. YOU COULD SEARCH THE COURTS, CORRIDORS AND CONFERENCE ROOMS AT BRUSSELS FOR WEEKS AND FIND NO EVIDENCE OF THE HUMAN TRIUMPH THAT RUNS THROUGH ENGLISH HISTORY. BUREAUCRACY DELIVERS SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT.

BUT BREXIT WAS ALWAYS MORE THAN JUST A BRITISH ISSUE AND THE EFFECT OF THE UK’S NEWLY REGAINED INDEPENDENCE IS LIKELY TO BE FELT IN VARIOUS WAYS THROUGHOUT EUROPE. MARINE LEPEN, THE HEAD OF FRANCE’S FAR-RIGHT NATIONAL FRONT, ANNOUNCED OVER LABOR DAY WEEKEND THAT, IF ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY IN 2017, SHE WOULD CONDUCT A NATIONAL REFERENDUM ON FRANCE’S EU MEMBERSHIP. FRANCE HAS A TWO-STEP ELECTORAL PROCESS, AND IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT LEPEN WILL MAKE IT THROUGH TO THE FINAL STAGE, BUT HER PARTY HAS STAKED OUT STRONG POSITIONS THAT HAVE DELIVERED SURPRISING RESULTS IN RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS.

THE FRENCH PEOPLE ARE NOT IMMUNE TO THE SURGE IN POPULISM THAT IS BEING FELT IN THE UK AND HERE IN AMERICA. IN ADDITION, FRANCE HAS SUFFERED MORE FROM ISLAMIC TERRORIST ATTACKS THAN ANY OTHER EUROPEAN NATION FOR WHICH, BECAUSE OF GERMAN CHANCELLOR MERKEL’S CONTENTIOUS POLICY OF UNLIMITED REFUGEE ADMISSION, IT CAN HOLD ITS OLD ADVERSARY RESPONSIBLE. LIKE FRANCE, GERMAN VOTER OPINION IS CHANGING, AND POLLS THERE SHOW SUPPORT FOR MERKEL’S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAS DROPPED SHARPLY WHILE THAT FOR RIGHT WING PARTIES HAS INCREASED.

ANY WITHDRAWAL OF FRANCE FROM THE EU WOULD NOT BE A ONE-OFF EVENT, BUT WOULD PROBABLY SET IN MOTION A CHAIN OF FURTHER CONSEQUENCES. IF SO, THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF POSTWAR UNIFIED EUROPE COULD BE CHALLENGED BY CIRCUMSTANCES THAT COULD SET BRUSSELS ON A PATH TO IRRELEVANCY. WE THINK THAT THE FIRST STEPS IN THIS CHAIN WOULD BE A CHANGE IN STATUS FOR SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

THIS WOULD LEAVE THE NATIONS OF EUROPE TO THE WEST OF BRUSSELS OUTSIDE THE EU WITH AN INDEPENDENT TRADE STATUS THAT THEY COULD ENJOY WITHOUT SURRENDERING SOVEREIGNTY TO THE REGULATIONS REQUIRED BY MEMBERSHIP IN A SUPRA-NATIONAL ORGANIZATION. ITALY AND GREECE COULD FOLLOW.

IT’S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT, WERE THE DOMINOES TO FALL AS ABOVE, THE LINE OF SEPARATION WOULD SWING EAST FROM ITALY TO EUROPE’S BALKAN FLANK AND ITS MAJOR MIGRANT ENTRY POINTS. IN CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS THIS, ACTUAL WITHDRAWALS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PRODUCE CHANGE. MERELY THE FACT THAT THEIR POSSIBILITIES ARE BEING DISCUSSED BY GOVERNMENTS AND THE MEDIA IS ENOUGH TO CREATE MOMENTUM AND MOVE THE PROCESS ALONG TO A STAGE AT WHICH THE EU MIGHT RECOGNIZE THAT THE COMMERCIAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL GRAVITAS OF THOSE WHO HAVE WITHDRAWN IS GREATER THAN THOSE WHO REMAIN, CAUSING THE BRUSSELS AGREEMENT AND STRUCTURE TO COLLAPSE FROM WITHIN.

OUR OWN OPINION WAS AND CONTINUES TO BE, THAT BREXIT WILL BENEFIT THE UK IN THE LONG TERM. THE BRUSSELS BUREAUCRACY, HOWEVER, SHOULD TAKE NOTICE. THE RESENTMENT IT HAS FOSTERED IN THE UK EXISTS ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE AND MAY SEEK A FORM OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION. BUREAUCRACIES OFTEN EXIST IN A COCOON FORMED BY THEIR OWN LEGISLATION AND RESTRICTIONS. HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT THE PROTECTION OFFERED AND RELIED UPON BY THESE SELF-SERVING MECHANISMS CAN DISAPPEAR — SOMETIMES QUICKLY OR WITHOUT NOTICE. THE EU SHOULD UNDERTAKE SOME BASIC RETHINKING, BUT IT IS NOT LIKELY TO DO SO.

BUT THERE IS MORE TO BE CONSIDERED. THE EU IS AN ECONOMIC CONSTRUCT THAT INCLUDES CURRENCY, TRADE, CENTRAL BANK AND FINANCE FUNCTIONS. IT IS NOT A GOVERNMENT AND, INDEED, THE GOVERNMENTS OF ITS MEMBERS MUST BE ELECTED “THE OLD FASHIONED WAY” — BY POPULAR VOTE. AND THERE EXISTS IN EUROPE NOW AN EXTRAORDINARY POLITICAL/ECONOMIC COINCIDENCE THAT PROMISES TO ROIL AND CONFUSE EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICS IN COMING YEARS.

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EUROPE HAS LONG BEEN DIVIDED GEOGRAPHICALLY INTO TWO REGIONS — THE NORTH WHICH FACES THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND

NORTH SEA; AND THE SOUTH WHICH FRAMES THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. THIS DIVISION HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN LANGUAGE AND PHYSICAL FEATURES, IN THE WEATHER AND FOOD SUPPLY, IN BEHAVIOR AND PERSONALITY AND, SINCE 1517, WHEN MARTIN LUTHER POSTED HIS THESES, IN RELIGION. MORE RECENTLY THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE HAVE BEEN THE MATTER OF REAL ECONOMIC CONCERN WITHIN THE EU, AS SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ITALY AND GREECE HAVE STRUGGLED TO MAINTAIN SOLVENCY. ONE OR MORE RESIGNATIONS WOULD ALTER THE EU MODEL AND FEED SPECULATION OF “MORE TO COME”.

THE UNCOMFORTABLE COINCIDENCE FOR THE EU IS THAT THE STATES ON ITS SOUTHERN RIM ARE ALSO THOSE THAT ARE BEARING THE BRUNT OF THE WAVES OF MIGRANTS DETERMINED TO RELOCATE TO EUROPE FROM AFRICA AND THE NEAR EAST (NE). THE LURE FOR THIS MASS RELOCATION IS EUROPE’S BORDER-FREE INTERIOR WHICH, ONCE REACHED, IS FORCED TO PROVIDE FUNDS, FOOD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, ETC.

HOWEVER WE MAY REGARD THESE TWO EVENTS, THEIR COMBINED EFFECT MAY BE MORE THAN BRUSSELS CAN SUCCESSFULLY MANAGE. BEAR IN MIND THAT TWO VERY DIFFERENT CULTURES ARE INVOLVED AND THAT THE MIGRANTS DIFFER IN LANGUAGE, RACE, ETHNICITY, RELIGION, DRESS, EDUCATION AND CULTURE FROM THOSE WHOM THEY EXPECT WILL TAKE THEM IN. SO FAR, OVER 2 MILLION HAVE ARRIVED AND THERE IS NO SIGN OF ANY LET-UP.

“THE FIT OF THE EU FABRIC HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT LIGHTER AND LOOSER.”

WE DO NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT BREXIT WILL CAUSE A SUDDEN FAILURE OF THE EU. BUT THE UK WAS A LYNCHPIN WHOSE ABSENCE WILL ALLOW GREATER MOVEMENT AND ARGUMENT FOR ITS FORMER FELLOW MEMBERS. THE FIT OF THE EU FABRIC HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT LIGHTER AND LOOSER.

AN INTERESTING EXERCISE FOR VIEWING THE EU DILEMMA IS TO MAKE A LIST OF THE COUNTRIES WHOSE FINANCIAL POLICIES AND RESULTS HAVE FALLEN SHORT OF THEIR EU COMMITMENTS; AND OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY MIGRANTS FOR THEIR LANDING AREAS, TRANSFER ROUTES OR PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS. IF WE NOTE THE NAMES THAT APPEAR IN BOTH CATEGORIES, WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE COMBINED IMPACT OF THESE TWO PROBLEMS AND THE SERIOUS RISK THEY JOINTLY POSE TO THE EU.

THE REAL QUESTION, THEN, BECOMES “HOW WILL EUROPE, AND ESPECIALLY THE EU, DEAL WITH THIS CLASSIC “DOUBLE WHAMMY ?” FOR WHILE THESE CRISES MAY BE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IN THEIR NATURE, THEY MUST BE RESOLVED BY POLITICAL DECISIONS. WE SEEM TO HAVE ARRIVED AT A “GODZILLA MEETS THE WOLF MAN” MOMENT FOR THE EU AND SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR PAINFUL CHANGE.

THE EU ANNOUNCED A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT IT WOULD HOLD A FULL MEETING NEXT MARCH TO DISCUSS MEMBER STATES’ CONCERNS ABOUT THE MIGRANT CRISIS AND TO ADOPT

REGULATIONS TO RESOLVE IT. AS THE TIMING OF THIS EVENT COINCIDES WITH MANY OF ITS MEMBER NATIONS’ POLITICAL ELECTION CYCLES, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DISGUISE THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND EU VALUES.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 21ST CENTURY EUROPE, THERE ARE TWO THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND IN THE WAKE OF BREXIT. THE FIRST IS THAT THE EU WAS FOUNDED ON COMPLIANCE, NOT CONSENSUS. IT REQUIRED UNITY IN ITS ELIMINATION OF NATIONAL COMMERCIAL, TERRITORIAL AND FINANCIAL BOUNDARIES, AS ITS CONCEPT OF A BORDER-FREE INTERIOR COULD NOT HAVE WORKED WITHOUT FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL ITS MEMBER STATES.

ALSO, THE EU WAS A PRODUCT OF A BRIEF AND SPECIFIC MOMENT IN HISTORY — THE PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF POSTWAR EUROPE WHEN WWII’S MULTIPLE HORRORS WERE STILL FRESH IN EUROPE’S MEMORIES AND EVIDENT IN ITS ATTITUDES.

“...IT WILL BE OVERTAKEN BY HISTORY AND ITS ACCOMPLICE, HUMAN NATURE.”

TIMES HAVE CHANGED. THE GENERATION THAT GREW UP IN OUR GREAT DEPRESSION (GD) AND SERVED IN OUR WWII MILITARY FORCES IS PHASING OUT. EUROPE, COMPOSED OF ITS MANY NATIONS AND FIGHTING FOR ITS CULTURAL LIFE AGAINST WAVES OF NON-EUROPEAN MIGRANTS, WILL BE FORCED TO MOVE IN NEW DIRECTIONS; IN WHICH CASE THE POSTWAR VISION OF A UNIFIED EUROPE MAY BE ALTERED OR EVEN DISAPPEAR FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN IT WILL BE OVERTAKEN BY HISTORY AND ITS ACCOMPLICE, HUMAN NATURE.

CAMPAIGN 2016

WE ARE WRITING THIS ISSUE WITH LESS THAN 60 DAYS OF CAMPAIGNING LEFT BEFORE THE PUBLIC GOES TO ITS NUMEROUS POLLING PLACES, CASTS MILLIONS OF VOTES, ELECTS OUR PRESIDENT AND RESETS OUR POLITICAL CYCLE. THE NEXT TWO MONTHS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO OFFER VOTERS PRINCIPLED POLICY ARGUMENTS, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF SERIOUS, NATIONAL ISSUES WHICH WOULD BEST BE SERVED BY PUBLIC EXPOSURE AND RESPONSE.

QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, THIS YEAR’S ELECTION IS BEING CONTESTED BY TWO PEOPLE WHO EVEN BY POLITICAL STANDARDS ARE GENERALLY SEEN AS DEEPLY FLAWED AND POSSESSED OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND HISTORIES WHICH DO NOT MEET THE STANDARDS WE CLAIM FOR “THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE LAND”.

TRUMP’S (DT) MANNER IS ABRASIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND EMPHASIZES STRENGTH AND POWER. HE IS BOASTFUL OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BUT HE IS NOT A PARTICULARLY ARTICULATE SPEAKER AND HIS MESSAGE IS OFTEN BETRAYED BY

MISSTATEMENTS, EXAGGERATION OR, EVEN MORE DAMAGING AND NOTICEABLE, FACTUAL CONFUSION OR INACCURACY.

CHALLENGES ARE OFTEN TAKEN PERSONALLY AND THE REPLY IS THEN ESCALATED TO A LEVEL THAT CAN OFFEND BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND POLITICAL GROUPS. OFFENSE IS EASY TO GENERATE IN A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN; IT CAN MOVE QUICKLY AND WIDELY AND, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF OUR MAINSTREAM MEDIA (MSM), CAN CROSS SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES.

THIS IS NOT HELPFUL TO TRUMP'S CAUSE. HE CLAIMS TO BE AN OUTSIDER, AN AGENT OF CHANGE, NOT A PRODUCT OF WASHINGTON'S WAYS, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN CLEAN THE DC STABLES AND RETURN DECENT GOVERNMENT TO AMERICA. THAT IS A POWERFUL ARGUMENT, GIVEN THE PUBLIC'S WIDESPREAD LOW OPINION OF CONGRESS, AND THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH TO IT. POPULIST MOVEMENTS ARE GAINING NEW STRENGTH AND ACTUALLY SHOWING SIGNS OF THE ENORMOUS POLITICAL POWER THAT REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENTS CEDE TO THEIR CITIZENS, BUT WHICH HAVE LAIN LARGELY UNCLAIMED, UNEXERCISED AND OVERPOWERED IN THE POSTWAR WORLD'S RUSH TO GLOBALISM, GROUP THINK AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS.

ANY LARGE AND/OR VALID SHIFT IN PUBLIC PERCEPTION MUST SUCCEED AT MULTIPLE LEVELS — SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL. IT IS THIS LAST ONE — THE POLITICAL STAGE — TOWARDS WHICH OUR COMMENTS AND CONCERNS ARE DIRECTED AS THE GEARS OF THE 2016 CAMPAIGN ARE LOUDLY ENGAGED AND THE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PROCESS CRANKS UP, SHUDDERS AND ONCE AGAIN STARTS OUT ON THE PATH TO ITS UNKNOWN RESULT AND DESTINY.

TRUMP'S POLITICAL PRESENCE IS IN ITSELF AN ENORMOUS CONTRADICTION. OVER THE PERIOD OF THE NOMINATING PRIMARIES HE PERSUADED CLOSE TO 15 MILLION AMERICANS TO VOTE FOR HIM AND DID SO WITH LITTLE HELP, OR EVEN RECOGNITION, FROM THE REPUBLICAN PARTY'S LEADERSHIP, MOST OF WHOM THOUGHT HE WOULD "CRASH AND BURN", IF NOT IMMEDIATELY, THEN CERTAINLY BY THE NEXT "DEBATE" OR PRIMARY.

THE INITIAL GOP "DEBATE" WHICH TOOK PLACE A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO INCLUDED 17 CANDIDATES — SO MANY THAT THEY HAD TO BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS — A 10 MEMBER "VARSITY" THAT ENJOYED THE MEDIA'S PRIME TIME SPOTLIGHT, AND A "JUNIOR VARSITY" OF SEVEN CANDIDATES WHOSE RECORDS AND PROSPECTS WERE SEEN AS DOWN-SCALE AND WHO WERE ASSIGNED MEDIA COVERAGE IN THE 5:00 TO 7:00 PM TIME PERIOD.

AS WE HAVE SEEN WHEN EVEN SMALLER NUMBERS ARE INVOLVED, POLITICIANS INVARIABLY FAVOR THEIR RIGHTS AND TIMES TO SPEAK OVER THE RULES THAT LIMIT THEM. ANY ATTEMPT TO PRESENT ALL 17 CANDIDATES TOGETHER WOULD HAVE COURTED CHAOS AND MADE IT FAR MORE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR THE EVENTS' MONITORS TO MAINTAIN THE CONTINUITY, PACE AND CONTROL THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESSFULLY REACH BOTH A LIVE AND A MUCH LARGER TV AUDIENCE.

THESE FORUMS ARE NOT JUST POLITICAL PRODUCTIONS.

THEY ARE ALSO "SHOW BIZ" — CREATED, STAGED, PACKAGED AND PROMOTED BY HOLLYWOOD'S AND MADISON AVENUE'S "A" TEAMS. MONEY AND "GLITZ" ARE TONED DOWN, BUT THEY'RE ON HAND. IN THIS MIX THE ROLE OF THE MONITORS IS A VERY POWERFUL ONE. THEY DO NOT JUST RANDOMLY ASK QUESTIONS. THEY HAVE DONE VERY THOROUGH RESEARCH ON THE TOPICS INVOLVED SO THAT THE GENERAL LEVEL OF DISCOURSE COMES OFF AS PROFESSIONAL. BUT THEY ALSO HAVE AN EDITORIAL FUNCTION — I.E., WHICH QUESTION TO ASK WHICH CANDIDATE, HOW FAR AND WHERE TO PRESS IN SEEKING CLARIFICATION OR ELIMINATING "DOUBLE SPEAK" AND IF, WHEN AND HOW TO EMPLOY THE "GOTCHA" QUESTION.

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ENTERING THE PRIMARIES A YEAR AGO, TRUMP COULD TRUTHFULLY CLAIM IN THE LANGUAGE OF HIS CASINOS THAT "THE DECK WAS STACKED AGAINST HIM". HE HAD NO BACKGROUND IN ELECTORAL OR APPOINTIVE POLITICS. HIS MOST PERSISTENT IMAGE WAS A CORPORATE ONE DERIVED EQUALLY FROM HIS EXTENSIVE RECORD OF SUCCESSFUL "DEALS" AND/OR LITIGATION. THE GOP LEADERSHIP RECOGNIZED HIM AS A THREAT TO THEIR HOLD ON POWER AND WANTED NO PART OF HIM. HE HAD OFFENDED SIGNIFICANT VOTING BLOCS IN THE PAST AND SAW NO NEED TO MAKE AMENDS OR CHANGES IN HIS HIGHLY PERSONAL CAMPAIGN STYLE. AND, ALMOST UNBELIEVABLY, EVEN AS THE PRIMARIES ROLLED INTO THEIR FINAL MONTH, NOT ONE OF THE HIGHLY PAID, POLITICALLY ELITE SOURCES FOR NEWS REPORTING OR COMMENTARY ACKNOWLEDGED THE POSSIBILITY, LET ALONE PROBABILITY, THAT HE MIGHT PREVAIL. THIS BLINDNESS ON THE PART OF OUR MSM WAS NOT THE PASSIVE "REPORT BRIEFLY AND MOVE ON" TYPE. RATHER, IT TOOK THE FORM OF A CONTINUING, NEGATIVE ATTITUDE THAT VIOLATED OUR CONCEPT OF A HOPEFULLY BALANCED PRESENTATION BY OUR FEDERALLY LICENSED MEDIA'S USE OF PUBLICLY OWNED FREQUENCIES.

AGAINST THIS BROAD ARRAY OF PAST POLITICAL FAULTS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE FAILURE, WHAT DID TRUMP POSSESS THAT, WEEK AFTER WEEK IN STATE AFTER STATE, ENABLED HIM TO STIR AUDIENCES, ATTRACT THEIR SUPPORT AND COLLECT THEIR VOTES ? HE HAD NO ARSENAL OF PRIOR POSITION PAPERS ON THORNY ISSUES; NOR ANY ELECTORAL VICTORIES, NOR THE ORGANIZATION NEEDED TO PRODUCE THEM. INDEED, HE HAD ONLY ONE ADVANTAGE — HE HAD CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THE EXTENT AND DEPTH OF MANY AMERICANS' DISSATISFACTION WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY.

AT THE ROOT OF THIS POLITICAL ESTRANGEMENT WERE VERY REAL FACTORS SUCH AS ECONOMIC STAGNATION, CONGRESSIONAL DYSFUNCTION, FAILURE TO ENFORCE OUR LAWS, LOSS OF INFLATION ADJUSTED INCOME, MOUNTING EFFECTS OF UNRESTRICTED IMMIGRATION, OUR INCREASING NATIONAL DEBT, GROWING GOVERNMENT REGULATION — AND MORE, MUCH MORE.

MANY OF THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN WITH US FOR THE PAST FIFTY YEARS AND ARE NOT PARTY SPECIFIC, BUT THEY HAVE

BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS OF PRES. OBAMA’S ADMINISTRATIONS. THEY ARE LARGELY CONSISTENT WITH THE “MORE GOVERNMENT” POLICIES FROM THE LEFT THAT HAVE DOMINATED OUR ELECTIVE OFFICES AND BUREAUCRACY OVER THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY. OVER THIS TIME, THEY HAVE CREATED A GROWING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ANGST TO WHICH TRUMP’S CANDIDACY APPEARED AS LONG OVERDUE RELIEF.

AND HERE’S THE SUB-PLOT OF TRUMP’S SURPRISING SUCCESS. POPULIST MOVEMENTS ARE TRANSFORMATIVE AND EVEN MORE SO IN POLITICS BECAUSE OF THEIR EMOTIONAL COMPONENT. THIS ENABLES OUR DISCONTENTED VOTERS TO SEE TRUMP AS SOMEONE WHO CAN AND WILL BRING CHANGE AND RESTORE OUR GOVERNMENT TO A FUNCTIONAL STATE. IF TRUMP’S MESSAGE ONLY REACHED FRINGE GROUPS, HE WOULD HAVE FOUNDERED EARLY ON. INSTEAD, HIS SINGULAR ABILITY TO GAUGE THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR NATION’S DISCONTENT HAS OVERCOME MANY OTHER OBSTACLES.

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THERE IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO BE SAID ABOUT COMMUNICATING HERE. WE OFTEN REFER TO OUR PRESENT ERA WITH ITS REMARKABLE TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS AS AN “AGE OF COMMUNICATION”, BUT IN TRUMP’S RISE TO POLITICAL PROMINENCE, WE SEE A DIFFERENT, NON-TECHNOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION, OR ITS LACK, IN POLITICS.

HIS COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE NO BETTER THAN AVERAGE, BUT HIS MESSAGE IS SUFFICIENTLY TIMELY AND TRUE TO ENABLE IT TO CREATE INTEREST AND HOPE AND TO SPREAD RAPIDLY AMONG THOSE WHO WANT TO HEAR IT. THIS PROCESS IS RETAIL IN FORM; DIRECT CONVERSATION, THIRD PARTY REFERENCE, LOCAL ACTIVITIES, GROUPS, AND MEDIA. IT’S NOT “GLITZY” OR ON THE MSM EDITORS’ “TO COVER” LIST, AND IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY, AS TIME PASSES, THE MIRACLE OF A GATHERING POPULAR FORCE AND, PERHAPS, EVEN A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY.

THE OTHER COMMUNICATION ELEMENT OF NOTE IN TRUMP’S RISE IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THE ABOVE. IT IS AN ALMOST UNEXPLAINABLE NON-EVENT — THE WIDE-SPREAD FAILURE THROUGHOUT OUR MEDIA AND POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO RECOGNIZE AND IDENTIFY TRUMP’S APPEAL AND THE POLITICAL HISTORY THAT SUPPORTS IT.

MANY OF THESE ELITES OF POLITICS, MEDIA AND FINANCE HAVE SPENT THEIR ENTIRE WORKING LIVES IN THE PUBLIC OPINION ARENA. SOME CONTRIBUTE LARGE SUMS OF MONEY TO ONE OR BOTH OF THE MAJOR PARTIES; OTHERS WORK FOR THEM AND DISTRIBUTE THEIR BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN WAYS THAT WILL PRODUCE ELECTORAL RESULTS.

IT SAYS SOMETHING THAT THE “TOP CROP” OF OUR POLITICAL/MEDIA WORLDS WERE SO FOCUSED ON CRITICIZING TRUMP’S LANGUAGE, DELIVERY AND PAST RECORD THAT IT MISSED THE MEANING OF HIS MESSAGE AND THE POWER OF ITS APPEAL.

AND WHAT IT SAYS DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY WHICH HAS, SINCE OUR BEGINNING, REQUIRED A GREATER DEGREE OF OPENNESS THAN OTHER FORMS. THE RECENT MASSIVE GROWTH IN THE SIZE OF OUR GOVERNMENT HAS GREATLY REDUCED ITS TRANSPARENCY AND WE HAVE REACHED A TIME WHEN CLOSED MINDS AND OPEN WALLETS AT THE TOP FURTHER REDUCE THE PUBLIC’S POLITICAL VIEWING SPACE AND OPPORTUNITY.

“...UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND FAILING INSTITUTIONS SILENTLY TRACKING US, LIKE A SHARK ITS PREY.”

FINALLY WITH TRUMP, AS ALSO WITH HILLARY, IT IS THE PERSONAL ELEMENT THAT DOMINATES HIS CAMPAIGN AND HAS GENERATED ITS PUBLICITY. BUT WE SHOULD NOT BE FOOLED INTO THINKING THAT’S ALL THERE IS. BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE MSM’S MULTIPLE SMILING, WAVING AND CLAPPING IMAGES ARE THE SHAPES OF UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND FAILING INSTITUTIONS SILENTLY TRACKING US, LIKE A SHARK ITS PREY.

HILLARY CLINTON

MUCH OF OUR MEDIA COVERAGE HAS REFERRED TO DONALD TRUMP’S INACCURATE AND/OR INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS AS “THE STORY” OF THE CAMPAIGN. THEY CERTAINLY HAVE PROVIDED THE MSM WITH FODDER, BUT HILLARY’S (HRC) ARE JUST AS CAPABLE OF DISTORTING TRUTH AND CONFUSING FACT AS TRUMP’S. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, DELIVERED IN A DIFFERENT WAY AND TONE. WHAT’S SURPRISING, AS THE CAMPAIGN MOVES AHEAD WITH INCREASING INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TWO DESIGNED TO EMPHASIZE THEIR DIFFERENCES, ARE SOME VERY POINTED SIMILARITIES.

NEITHER, IF MEMORY SERVES, ADMITS TO EVER BEING “WRONG”, A WORD THAT HAS LARGELY DISAPPEARED FROM OUR POLITICAL VOCABULARY. TRUMP TENDS TO AVOID IT BY CHANGING THE SUBJECT, DENIAL OR CALLING UPON REMOTE COMPARISONS. WHETHER FOR LACK OF FACTUAL ACCURACY, COMPREHENSION OR EXPERIENCE, HIS FAVORED EXIT ROUTE IS ONE OF AVOIDANCE.

HRC’S PREFERRED DEFENSE OF HER DISTORTION OF TRUTH IS TO CLOUD THE ISSUE IN THE PUBLIC’S MIND BY CHANGING THE LANGUAGE SHE EMPLOYS TO DESCRIBE BOTH THE CIRCUMSTANCE UNDER REVIEW AND THE LANGUAGE SHE USED TO DESCRIBE HER ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES. FOR HER, ALSO, THE WORD “WRONG” IS NOT APPLICABLE TO HERSELF OR HER BEHAVIOR. SHE HAS A LIST OF READY SUBSTITUTES — “MISSPOKE”, “SHORT-CIRCUITED”, “MISTAKE” AND “I WOULD NOT DO IT AGAIN”, BUT “WRONG” IS PERHAPS JUST TOO BRUTAL; IT LEAVES NO WIGGLE ROOM. TO BE FAIR, CLINTON IS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO AVOID ITS USE. MOST POLITICIANS WHOSE CAREERS HAVE BEEN FORMED AND PURSUED DURING OUR MASS MEDIA AGE HAVE HAD THE SAME AVERSION. WITH MULTIPLE MEDIA IMAGES ON DISPLAY EVERY DAY AND THE ABILITY TO RERUN BOTH PICTURE AND SOUND INSTANTLY AT ANY TIME IN THE CAMPAIGN, OUR

POLITICIANS HAVE COME TO SHUN DEFINITIVE LANGUAGE SUCH AS “WRONG” THAT COULD BE REUSED LATER WITH DAMAGING EFFECT BY ONE’S OPPONENTS.

THERE IS ANOTHER FACTOR AT WORK BESIDE THAT OF THE POLITICIAN’S SENSE OF SELF-PROTECTION, AND IT IS CULTURAL IN ITS NATURE. THROUGHOUT OUR CULTURE — IN OUR LAWS, RELIGION, POLITICS, EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT — AMERICAN CULTURE, FROM ITS CENTER TO ITS EDGES, HAS BECOME LESS AUTHORITATIVE, LESS DEFINITIVE AND, CONSEQUENTLY, LESS ABLE/WILLING TO PROCLAIM STANDARDS OF RIGHT AND WRONG. AND NOWHERE IS THIS MORE EVIDENT THAN IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM AND, AT ITS HEART, THE NATION’S CAPITAL.

THE REASONS FOR THIS CULTURAL ALTERATION ARE BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AND FORM A SEPARATE STORY. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, CULTURAL SHIFTS CAN CHANGE VALUES, AND NOWHERE IS THIS MORE APPARENT THAN IN OUR POSTWAR POLITICIANS OF THE LAST TWO GENERATIONS. QUITE SIMPLY, IN A SYSTEM AWASH IN MONEY AND POWER, CONGRESS WANTED ITS SHARE; AND ITS MEMBERS’ ROLE CHANGED FROM BEING ONE OF COLLECTING, DISCUSSING AND PRESENTING CONSTITUENT OPINION FOR THE CONDUCT OF OUR NATIONAL PROGRESS TO VYING FOR FUNDS — CORPORATE FUNDS FROM LOBBYISTS FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT, OR FEDERAL FUNDS FOR PROJECTS OR THEIR SPONSORS AT HOME.

IN THIS ATMOSPHERE ATTITUDES AND POSITIONS CAN EASILY SHIFT. TRUMP HAS BEEN CALLED DOWN BY MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY FOR NOT BEING CONSERVATIVE ENOUGH, AND FOR NOT EVEN BEING A REPUBLICAN BECAUSE HE GAVE MONEY AND/OR VOTED FOR A DEMOCRAT IN THE PAST. THE GOP IS HOME TO VARIOUS DEGREES OF “CONSERVATISM” WHICH HAVE FOUGHT FOR DOMINANCE WITHIN THE PARTY FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS, AND IT’S HARD TO IDENTIFY ANYONE TODAY WHO COULD BRING ABOUT THE HOPED FOR UNITY. RONALD REAGAN CAME CLOSE, BUT CONSERVATIVES GLOSS OVER THE FACT THAT SOME OF HIS PROGRAMS RAN COUNTER TO THEIR GENERALLY ACCEPTED NOTION OF CONSERVATISM.

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IF THERE IS CONSISTENCY TO DT’S INCONSISTENCY, IT IS EQUALLY TRUE IN REGARDS TO HRC. SHE HAS REVERSED HER POSITIONS ON TOP TIER SUBJECTS, MOST NOTABLY TRADE AND THE WAR IN IRAQ, AND WAS FORCED TO MOVE SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE LEFT OF HER PRIMARY CAMPAIGN’S STARTING DIRECTION BY THE POPULARITY OF BERNIE SANDERS’ PROGRESSIVE POSITIONS.

REGARDLESS OF TACTICAL SHIFTS, HOWEVER, WHAT RELENTLESSLY DOGS HRC AND CASTS NEGATIVE SHADOWS ACROSS HER CANDIDACY ARE THE ONGOING REVELATIONS ABOUT HER BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTER, AS HER LACK OF CANDOR AND TRANSPARENCY OVER MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF STATE AND NATIONAL POLITICS CONTINUE TO RAISE QUESTIONS.

DID SHE LIE, OR DID SHE MISSTATE ? DID SHE RECEIVE FUNDS AS A QUID PRO QUO FOR PERFORMING A SERVICE, OR IS THE MATTER JUST ONE OF POLITICAL COINCIDENCE ? DID SHE

BREAK THE LAW, OR MERELY BEND IT ? ARE THE RECORDS SHE HAS OFFERED IN HER DEFENSE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE, OR SELECTIVE ? HAS SHE BEEN ACCORDED FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL PRIVILEGE, OR HAS SHE BEEN TREATED NO DIFFERENTLY THAN OTHERS IN HER VARIOUS OFFICES ?

HERE WE CONFRONT ANOTHER STRIKING SIMILARITY BETWEEN DT’S AND HRC’S CAMPAIGNS. IT IS POSSIBLY THE ULTIMATE POLITICAL IRONY IN WHICH BOTH CANDIDATES CLAIM THE OTHER TO BE “UNFIT” TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. FAR FROM BEING JUST A PASSING COMMENT, “FITNESS” FOR OFFICE (I.E. PERSONAL CHARACTER) HAS BEEN ELEVATED TO MAJOR ISSUE STATUS. AS TIME PASSES AND THE EXCHANGE OF PERSONAL CRITICISM GROWS, THE ENERGY OF BOTH EFFORTS MUST BE DIRECTED TO THIS ISSUE. THE CYCLE WILL THEN RENEW ITSELF AND, IN DOING SO, WILL EMPHASIZE, NOT DISMISS, BOTH CAMPAIGNS’ WEAKNESSES. WITHOUT A TURN-ABOUT BY BOTH CANDIDATES, THE VOTER WILL BE LEFT ONLY WITH MONTHS OF RANCOROUS RHETORIC AND NO CLEAR OR REALISTIC IMAGES OF WHAT THE CANDIDATES OR THEIR PARTIES WILL ACTUALLY UNDERTAKE TO REMEDY THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ILLS THAT PLAGUE US.

IF OUR MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS ARE NOT MEANINGFULLY ADDRESSED IN THE CAMPAIGN AND GO UNATTENDED, OR FAIL TO SHOW IMPROVEMENT, THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ANGER AND SENSE OF BETRAYAL BY GOVERNMENT WILL RISE. THIS WOULD BE A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF OUR PRESENT AND PRIOR ERRORS AND ONE THAT OUR COUNTRY IS ILL-EQUIPPED TO MANAGE. REGARDLESS OF WHICH CANDIDATE IS ELECTED, FOUR MORE YEARS OF DYSFUNCTION AND DIVISION WITHIN OUR SOCIAL AND GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES IS NOT A WORKABLE OPTION.

THE ECONOMIC DILEMMA

THE SINGLE TOPIC MOST FREQUENTLY AND FORCEFULLY MENTIONED BY BOTH CANDIDATES IS THAT OF OUR CONTINUING INABILITY TO DEVELOP A BROAD PROGRAM CAPABLE OF HEALING OUR SELF-INFLICTED ECONOMIC WOUNDS, THE MOST DRAMATIC OF WHICH WAS THE COMBINED COLLAPSE OF OUR FINANCIAL AND REAL ESTATE MARKETS AT THE END OF THE BUSH II PRESIDENCY. IN OUR CURRENT CAMPAIGN THE ECONOMY IS “FRONT AND CENTER”, AND THE WORD THAT WON’T GO AWAY IS “JOBS”. JOBS, JOBS, JOBS ! NEITHER CANDIDATE CAN AFFORD TO BE SEEN AS LESS THAN FULLY COMMITTED TO THE PROSPECT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF ACTUAL, NOT JUST STATISTICAL, FULL EMPLOYMENT, AND, WHILE THEIR CONCERNS MAY BE SIMILAR, THEIR PROPOSED PATHS TO THEIR GOALS ARE VERY DIFFERENT.

THE DEMOCRATIC WAY PROPOSED BY HRC CENTERS AROUND THE EXTENSIVE HIRING THAT WOULD RESULT FROM NEW GOVERNMENT SPENDING PROGRAMS. WITH NEGLIGIBLE INTEREST RATES, MASSIVE GOVERNMENT BORROWING COULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR A WIDE RANGE OF GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT CENTERED UPON AN EFFORT TO REPAIR AND EXPAND THE NATION’S INFRASTRUCTURE OF ROADS, BRIDGES, TUNNELS, ETC. FOR WHICH

SOME COST ESTIMATES REACH THE \$2 TRILLION MARK.

UNQUESTIONABLY, THERE IS MUCH THAT MUST BE DONE. OUR NATIONAL SYSTEM OF TOLL-FREE EXPRESSWAYS INITIATED BY PRES. EISENHOWER HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO DETERIORATE DUE TO MINIMAL AND DEFERRED MAINTENANCE BY BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES TO THE POINT WHERE, AT MANY PLACES, IT IS OVERCROWDED, UNSAFE, OR BOTH.

IN THE VOTE-GETTING GAME “ROADS, BRIDGES AND TUNNELS” ARE MAGIC WORDS BECAUSE EVERYONE USES THEM EVERY DAY. AND THEY ALSO ARE POWERFUL SYMBOLS OF MORE THAN DAILY COMMUTING. LOOK AT THE MAP; THEY TIE OUR CITIES, STATES AND REGIONS TOGETHER! THEY HAVE BEEN A DEFINING ELEMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE FOR OVER A CENTURY SINCE HENRY FORD INTRODUCED HIS MODEL A, HIS PRODUCTION LINE AND HIS VISION OF AN AFFORDABLE, MASS MARKET AUTOMOBILE IN 1908.

SOME PLANS OR THEORIES WORK BETTER AT CERTAIN TIMES THAN AT OTHERS. THE DEMOCRATIC PROGRAM WOULD WORK BETTER AT “OTHER” TIMES BECAUSE IT ENTAILS ADDING TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF MORE DEBT TO OUR PRESENT \$19 TRILLION, ALTHOUGH OUR GOVERNMENT (BOTH THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES) HAS PROVEN ITSELF FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES TO BE INCAPABLE OF RESISTING NEW BORROWING OR MAKING ANY REDUCTION IN OUR PAST OBLIGATIONS.

WE ARE STILL IN THE EARLY STAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN WHERE CANDIDATES TRY TO AVOID USING SPECIFIC FIGURES WHICH CAN QUICKLY BE TURNED INTO TARGETS BY OPPONENTS. HRC INFERS THAT THE JOBS SHE WILL CREATE THROUGH HER INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER PROGRAMS WILL CREATE TAX REVENUES THAT WILL LARGELY SUPPORT THE PROGRAMS’ COSTS AND RETURN THE COUNTRY TO FINANCIAL GOOD HEALTH. THIS SEEMS TO US A FALSE ASSUMPTION, WITH LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS, THAT IGNORES SOME VERY BASIC ELEMENTS OF OUR PRESENT FINANCIAL DISTRESS.

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THE TRUMP ECONOMIC PROGRAM, AS REVEALED IN HIS SPEECH TO THE DETROIT MOTOR CLUB IN EARLY AUGUST, DEPENDS FOR ITS SUCCESS UPON GROWING OUR GDP (GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT), CUTTING CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL TAXES AND RESTRUCTURING OUR TRADE AGREEMENTS TO BRING AS MUCH INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AS POSSIBLE BACK TO THIS COUNTRY. TRUMP’S “PITCH” TO THE VOTER IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS CLINTON’S — THAT, IF YOU ELECT ME, I WILL PUT IN PLACE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL GENERATE ENOUGH GROWTH AND TAX REVENUE TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT, ESPECIALLY THAT OF OUR MIDDLE CLASS WHICH OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS HAS SHOWN AN INFLATION ADJUSTED LOSS OF INCOME.

“SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY, OUR ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND FINANCIAL SOVEREIGNTY ARE SLIPPING AWAY.”

BOTH CANDIDATES HAVE MADE PASSING REFERENCE TO “REDUCING THE DEFICIT” AS A BENEFIT THAT WILL RESULT FROM THEIR POLICIES. NO MENTION HAS BEEN MADE OF ANY INTENDED OR ACTUAL REDUCTION IN OUR NATIONAL DEBT; NOR THE FACT THAT UNTIL THE TIME WHEN WE CAN PRODUCE AN ANNUAL SURPLUS, OUR DEBT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW BY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS EVERY YEAR. SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY, OUR ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND FINANCIAL SOVEREIGNTY ARE SLIPPING AWAY.

BOTH PARTIES’ PLATFORMS CALL FOR GROWTH OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER. FOR HRC, IT IS GROWTH IN BORROWING, SPENDING AND EMPLOYMENT WHICH WILL GENERATE BROAD INCREASES IN WAGES AND CONSUMER SPENDING. FOR THE GOP, ECONOMIC GROWTH WILL DERIVE FROM THE FUNDS THAT ARE RELEASED FOR INVESTMENT BY THE REDUCTION AND/OR ELIMINATION OF CURRENT CORPORATE AND PERSONAL INCOME TAXES. BECAUSE OF THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF OUR INCOME TAX CODE, MOST OF THE BENEFITS OF TRUMP’S PROPOSED TAX CODE REVISIONS WOULD BENEFIT THE CORPORATE SECTOR OR THE TOP PERSONAL INCOME TAX LEVELS.

“IN OTHER WORDS ‘TRICKLE DOWN’ DOESN’T TRICKLE VERY WELL.”

IT SHOULD NOT COME AS A SURPRISE IF THIS APPROACH SOUNDS FAMILIAR. IT HAS BEEN TOUTED AND TRIED BEFORE UNDER DIFFERENT LABELS (I.E., HIGH GROWTH, TRICKLE DOWN, FULL EMPLOYMENT, A RISING TIDE ETC.), AND ITS PERFORMANCE HAS MOSTLY FAILED TO LIVE UP TO ITS SPONSORS’ PROMISES, THE MAIN CONTRADICTION BEING THAT THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS TEND TO CONCENTRATE AND REMAIN AT THE UPPER LEVELS OF OUR INCOME TAX SCALE. IN OTHER WORDS, “TRICKLE DOWN” DOESN’T TRICKLE VERY WELL.

THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR THIS, AND THE FIRST RELATES TO THE WORKINGS OF OUR FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND ITS MARKET CONDITIONS. “TRICKLE DOWN”, WHEN IT WORKS SUCCESSFULLY, DELIVERS SUBSTANTIAL REWARDS TO BOTH THE CORPORATE SECTOR AND TO THE WORKFORCE. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES CERTAIN CONDITIONS OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD ARE REQUIRED — STRONG DEMAND AND A RELATIVELY PEACEFUL LABOR/MANAGEMENT CLIMATE THAT CAN PROVIDE WORKERS WITH WAGE INCREASES AND MANAGEMENT WITH PRODUCTIVITY GAINS.

IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW WIDELY OUR PAST POLICIES HAVE FAILED TO MEET THESE GOALS IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD, OUR ONLY SUCCESS HAVING OCCURRED IN THE AFTERMATH OF WWII WHEN WE WERE UNIQUELY POSSESSED OF THE LABOR, PRODUCTION AND FINANCIAL ELEMENTS NEEDED TO UNDERTAKE GLOBAL RECONSTRUCTION.

THERE IS ONE MORE KEY MARKET CONSIDERATION. AMERICA IS A CONSUMER ECONOMY IN WHICH CONSUMER SPENDING IS BY FAR THE LARGEST FORCE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE AMERICAN CONSUMER, MR. & MRS. JOE SIXPACK, HAVE BEEN FED SOME VERY BAD INFORMATION. THEIR POLITICAL LEADERS FROM

BOTH PARTIES PORTRAY THE AMERICAN DREAM AS A FINANCIAL PURSUIT IN WHICH ONE MOVES UP ON STEPS MARKED “MORE”. AND, NOT TO BE OUTDONE, OUR MSM RELENTLESSLY POINT OUT THAT IN LIFE SUCCESS COMES FROM NOT JUST “KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES”, BUT PREFERABLY FROM LEAVING THEM FAR BEHIND.

THESE ATTITUDES FROM “THE TOP” OF OUR POLITICAL STRUCTURE ARE A FORM OF CULTURAL POISON, BUT THEY HAVE ALSO DONE REAL DAMAGE TO OUR ECONOMY. HOW ? THE ELEMENTS THAT MADE POSSIBLE THE SUCCESSFUL YEARS OF GLOBAL RECONSTRUCTION AND PROFITABILITY DO NOT EXIST TODAY. WE HAVE RISING PRICES; BUT LOWER WAGES, PROFITS, SHRINKING PRODUCTIVITY AND A GREATLY CHANGED WORKFORCE HAVE TRANSFORMED THE WORLD FOR BOTH AMERICAN WORKERS AND MANAGERS. ONE SUCH TRANSFORMATION HAS BEEN THAT THE LURE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM HAS LED THE AMERICAN CONSUMER TO BORROW OVER \$2 TRILLION, A RECORD FOR CONSUMER DEBT!

THIS IS PERSONAL, NOT NATIONAL DEBT; NOR DOES IT INCLUDE THE \$1.3 TRILLION OF STUDENT DEBT THAT NOW HANGS OVER THE FUTURES OF MANY STUDENTS WHO SIGNED ONTO IT WITHOUT KNOWING HOW DEBT CAN REORDER LIVES. THESE LEVELS OF DEBT AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ARE NOT JOINED IN ANY REAL OR LEGAL WAY, BUT THE NATURE OF DEBT IN OPEN ECONOMIES IS SUCH THAT WEAKNESS IN ONE CAN, BY NO MEANS OTHER THAN ASSOCIATION, PRODUCE WEAKNESS ELSEWHERE.

“HUMAN NATURE DOES NOT USUALLY WORK THAT WAY, ESPECIALLY WHEN MONEY IS INVOLVED.”

THERE IS PRESENT, TOO, IN “TRICKLE DOWN” ECONOMIC ARGUMENT THE PRESUMPTION THAT BY SOME COMBINATION OF GOOD WILL AND MARKET MECHANICS, RESULTS WILL BE ACHIEVED THAT WILL PRODUCE PROPORTIONALLY FAIR OUTCOMES FOR ALL INVOLVED. HUMAN NATURE DOES NOT USUALLY WORK THAT WAY, ESPECIALLY WHEN MONEY IS INVOLVED.

AND, EVEN IN THE SMOOTHTEST CIRCUMSTANCES, ISSUES THAT REVOLVE AROUND HUMAN LABOR EXTEND THEMSELVES INTO OTHER AREAS SUCH AS SOCIOLOGY, RELIGION, ETHICS, CULTURE AND JUSTICE. ONE REASON “HUMAN LABOR” RESISTS EASY SOLUTIONS IS BECAUSE OF ITS “HUMAN” FACTOR. WORKERS — WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, PROSPEROUS OR POOR, WHETHER WE REFER TO THEM AS WORKERS, EMPLOYEES, HELP, OR, LESS PERSONALLY, AS NUMBERS OR UNITS — BRING WITH THEM IDENTITIES, OFTEN MARKED BY EXPOSURE TO POLITICAL CORRECTNESS (PC) AND THE DIVISIVENESS OF MULTICULTURALISM (MC), AS WELL AS THEIR PERSONAL HOPES, EXPECTATIONS, NEEDS AND ANCESTRIES. AND, ALL TOO OFTEN, TODAY’S AMERICAN WORKFORCE MUST ALSO STRUGGLE TO DEAL WITH THE UNKEPT PROMISES OF POLITICIANS AND THE DECEPTIVE LANGUAGE OF THE MSM.

ALL OF THESE “HUMAN” FACTORS CAN SURFACE AND CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE EMPLOYER IN MORE WAYS THAN

THEY USED TO. FORMERLY, MANY WERE DEALT WITH IN UNION CONTRACTS AND THE UNIONS SERVED AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT. BUT UNION REPRESENTATION HAS DECREASED IN BOTH ITS NUMBERS AND EFFECTIVENESS SINCE ITS GLORY DAYS IN THE WAKE OF WWII.

PRESSED BY RISING COSTS AND FOREIGN COMPETITION, MANAGEMENT HAS FOUND WAYS TO REDUCE WAGES AND BENEFITS AND TO “SCATTER” ITS EMPLOYEES’ WORK SCHEDULES AND LOCATIONS. STILL, BECAUSE OF THE “HUMAN FACTOR”, EVEN MINOR WORK PLACE CHANGES CAN BECOME MATTERS OF BITTER CONTENTION. TODAY’S EMPLOYER CANNOT AVOID THE MANY MORE “HUMAN” DEMANDS THAT ACCOMPANY THE PEOPLE HE HIRES; NOR THE VAST AMOUNT OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND WORKPLACE REGULATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSES. IS IT SURPRISING THAT AMERICAN HIRING PRACTICES HAVE CHANGED AND SLOWED ? OR THAT A CORPORATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIGHT CHOOSE TO BUY BACK ITS OWN STOCK (AND THEREBY INCREASE THE VALUE OF THE REMAINING SHARES) RATHER THAN OPT FOR THE LONG TERM EXPENSE COMMITMENT OF A NEW PLANT AND ITS STAFFING ?

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OUR CONTEMPORARY INFORMATION “GAME” IS LIKE ANY OTHER SCIENTIFIC, LINGUISTIC OR PHILOSOPHIC SYSTEM IN THAT WHILE IT INCREASES OUR STORE OF KNOWLEDGE, IT ALSO CAN CONCEAL THINGS AND SET TRAPS FOR US.

LET’S GO BACK TO 1945 WHEN THE POSTWAR RECOVERY, WITH ITS HIGH WAGES, PROFITS AND EMPLOYMENT BEGAN AND WHEN FULL EMPLOYMENT, IF MEMORY SERVES, MEANT THAT THE HARD CORE OF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS AMOUNTED TO 3% OF THE POPULATION, DOWN CONSIDERABLY FROM THE 1933 GD HIGH OF 25%¹. A 3% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WITH A POPULATION OF 150 MILLION TRANSLATED INTO 4.5 MILLION AMERICANS OUT OF WORK, WHEREAS OUR PRESENT 5% RATE AND 325 MILLION POPULATION MEANS THAT OUR ECONOMY’S EMPLOYMENT SHORTFALL IS 16.3 MILLION. ADDED UNITS IMPOSE ADDED COSTS.

PERCENTAGE NUMBERS CAN PROVIDE POLITICIANS WITH WAYS TO DISGUISE HARD FINANCIAL FACTS BECAUSE THEY DON’T REPORT ON ACTUAL NUMBERS, BUT RATHER ON THE NUMBERS’ RELATION TO 100. POLITICIANS WHO REFER TO “HAVING MAINTAINED OUR HISTORICAL RATE OF EXPENSE” DO NOT REPORT THAT, WHILE THE RATE MAY HAVE REMAINED THE SAME, THE ACTUAL DOLLAR EXPENSE MIGHT HAVE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY.

FOR INSTANCE, IF WE MAINTAIN OUR 5% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND GROW OUR POPULATION TO 550 MILLION AT MIDCENTURY, WE WILL THEN HAVE A JOBLESS ELEMENT IN OUR SOCIETY OF 27.5 MILLION PEOPLE. BUT THAT IS NOT THE ONLY AREA OF CONCEALMENT. THERE IS ANOTHER TRAP THAT KEEPS US FROM BEING FULLY INFORMED.

ALL OF OUR UNEMPLOYED ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN SOME KIND OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNTS AND LENGTH OF PAYMENT PERIODS CAN VARY. THE ONES WHOSE BENEFITS ARE THE MOST GENEROUS AND LONG-RUNNING ARE

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHOSE ASSISTANCE INCLUDES EDUCATION, HOUSING, MEDICAL EXPENSES AND ONGOING CASH PAYMENTS ON A PER CAPITA BASIS THAT REWARDS LARGE FAMILIES MORE THAN SMALLER ONES.

A PREGNANT EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL ARRIVING THIS YEAR COULD AND WILL EASILY BECOME A GRANDMOTHER BY 2060. OUR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE MAY REMAIN THE SAME, BUT THE ADDED POPULATION NUMBERS AND THE COSTS OF SERVICES THEY RECEIVE WILL EXPLODE.

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POLITICIANS DO NOT MENTION THESE THINGS. HILLARY CLINTON EMBRACES A HIGH IMMIGRATION, OPEN BORDERS POSITION, BUT NEITHER IT, NOR ANY OF HER OTHER ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL INITIATIVES, SUGGEST ANY FORM OF REVENUE/ EXPENSE BALANCE. THIS IS AN ATTITUDE THAT DERIVES FROM OUR EXTRAORDINARY POSTWAR ACCUMULATION OF MONEY AND POWER, AND IT SUGGESTS THAT AMERICA IS SO RICH AND POWERFUL THAT WE ARE NOT BOUND BY THE RULES THAT REGULATE OTHERS. IF YOU THINK THAT HAS A ROMAN RING TO IT, YOU'RE RIGHT. WE HAVE A CONGRESS THAT CAN'T BE BOTHERED TO PASS LAWS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, AND AN EXECUTIVE BRANCH THAT HAS SET ITSELF INCREASINGLY APART FROM OUR CONSTITUTION FOR OVER THE PAST HALF CENTURY.

DONALD TRUMP HAS BEEN LESS SPECIFIC IN STATING HOW HE WILL ACHIEVE HIS ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND FOREIGN POLICY GOALS. HE OFTEN TALKS IN SOUND BYTES RATHER THAN SENTENCES AND, ALTHOUGH HE CAN AROUSE THE ENTHUSIASM OF A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF DISAFFECTED AMERICAN VOTERS, HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT HE DOESN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE OFFICE, THE PEOPLE AND THE TIME WE LIVE IN WILL DEMAND OF HIM.

IT SEEMS FAIR TO SAY THAT, AFTER GOING THROUGH A YEAR'S NOMINATING PROCEDURE AND HOLDING TWO CONVENTIONS, BOTH PARTIES HAVE CANDIDATES WHOM THE NATION'S VOTERS PERCEIVE AS HAVING REACHED A NEW LOW IN OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS, AND THE TIMING OF THIS FAILURE MAKES IT EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT.

AS WE MOVE FURTHER INTO THE 21ST CENTURY, THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING OUR WORLD IS UNCONTROLLED POPULATION GROWTH AND THE NATURAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT ATTACH TO IT. MOST IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING THE QUALITY OF OUR FUTURE LIFE WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONTINUING OUR CURRENT PATTERNS OF EXCESSIVE EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES THAT HAVE SUPPORTED OUR PAST EXISTENCE AND PROSPERITY — WATER, FORESTS, ARABLE LAND, FISHERIES AND THE OCEANS THAT HARBOR THEM, CLEAN AIR, ESSENTIAL MINERALS, WETLANDS AND OUR INNUMERABLE CO-SPECIES THAT COMPRISE OUR LIFE-SUSTAINING GLOBAL FOOD CHAINS. MOST OF THESE QUALITIES OF LIFE WE TAKE FOR GRANTED, ASSUMING THAT BECAUSE WE HAVE ENJOYED THEM IN THE PAST WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE, BUT ALL EXIST IN FINITE AND/OR BALANCED AMOUNTS WHICH

CANNOT WITHSTAND FOREVER OUR EXCESSIVE EXPLOITATION OR POLLUTION.

BUT WHAT IS THE POLITICAL CONNECTION ? JUST THIS; FOR THE LAST CENTURY OUR WORLD HAS BEEN ONE OF TURMOIL — WAR AND PEACE, BOOM AND BUST AND THE GLOBAL CLASH OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE EXPERIENCED A TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOSION THAT HAS CHANGED IN A BRIEF HISTORICAL MOMENT THE WAYS IN WHICH WE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY, AND HOW WE VIEW EACH OTHER.

THE OVERRIDING TRUTH FOR HISTORIANS AND POLITICIANS IS THAT, WHILE THIS PERIOD OF TRANSFORMATION BEGAN AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND HAS CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT, OUR AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERS FROM BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT HAVE CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE ITS CONSEQUENCES AND THE WAYS IT WILL THREATEN OUR PRESENT WAY OF LIFE.

NO ONE SECTOR OR GROUP IS MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN ANY OTHER FOR THESE FAILURES. THE CONSERVATIVE CAPITALISM OF THE RIGHT AND THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENTS ON THE LEFT HAVE FAILED EQUALLY IN NOT IDENTIFYING AND EXPLAINING TO THE PUBLIC THE CHANGES THAT ARE TAKING PLACE AND WHAT RESPONSES WE, AS A SOCIETY, MUST MAKE.

BUT IT IS NOT JUST OUR CORPORATE AND ELECTED GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS THAT HAVE FAILED US. OUR RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL AND MEDIA INSTITUTIONS, ALL OF WHOM WE HAVE ALLOWED AND ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK OUT ON OUR BEHALF, HAVE BEEN AS UNWILLING AS OUR COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL MANAGERS TO BREAK THE SILENCE. AND EVEN WORSE, WHEN INDIVIDUAL VOICES WITHIN THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE RAISED, THEY ARE MOSTLY UNSUPPORTED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS AND OFTEN SILENCED.

THE TRANSFORMATION THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE LAST CENTURY HAS OFFERED OUR MAJOR SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE GREATER RELEVANCE WHICH THEY HAVE DECLINED IN FAVOR OF DOGMA. WHAT IS PARTICULARLY SAD ABOUT OUR INABILITY TO RESPOND TO OUR SOCIETY'S WARNING SIGNALS IS THAT NO GENIUS OR BREAKTHROUGH VISION OF THE FUTURE WAS NECESSARY — RATHER JUST THE OPENNESS THAT COMES FROM OBSERVATION AND AWARENESS.

“...CLEARLY VISIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE WASTELAND PATIENTLY AWAITS US.”

OUR WORLD IS HOME TO MANY SPECIES SOME OF WHICH ARE STILL UNKNOWN TO US. OUR HUMAN LINE HAS COME DOWN FROM THE TREES OF THE RAINFOREST AND HAS LEFT BEHIND THE SAVANNAH. WE ARE NOW PASSING THROUGH AN AREA OF MOSTLY SMALL VALLEYS AND ROUNDED HILLS. AHEAD, NOW CLEARLY VISIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE WASTELAND PATIENTLY AWAITS US. WE NEED NOT HURRY. GIVEN OUR PRESENT STATE AND LEADERSHIP, WE WILL BE THERE SOON ENOUGH.

THE BURIAL GROUND FOR OUR DREAMS AND PRINCIPLES

WE ARE ENGAGED IN AN ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL NATIONAL ELECTION THAT WILL DETERMINE OUR COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FOR FAR LONGER THAN THE 4 YEAR TERM OF THE WINNER. UNFORTUNATELY, BOTH CANDIDATES LACK THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES THAT OUR PRESIDENCY DEMANDS AND IT IS NO STRETCH TO VIEW OUR PRESENT POLITICS AS THE PLACE WHERE OUR EARLIEST DREAMS AND UNIQUE PRINCIPLES GO TO DIE.

WE HAVE LISTED BELOW RANDOM TOPICS THAT REFLECT THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DISSATISFACTION THAT PLAGUES OUR SOCIETY. THEY HAVE BECOME MAJOR ISSUES — ONES WHICH, AS WE CONTINUE TO BE SUBJECTED TO A CAMPAIGN BASED ON PERSONAL ATTACKS, WILL UNFORTUNATELY NOT BE INCLUDED FOR DISCUSSION OR PRESENTED FOR VOTER CONSIDERATION.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

HERITAGE INSURANCE HOLDINGS INC. IS A RELATIVELY NEW INSURANCE COMPANY IN FL WITHOUT ANY EXPERIENCE OF MAJOR PAYMENTS DUE TO NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS HURRICANES, FLOODS, FIRES, ETC. ITS CEO, BRUCE LUCAS, IN JUNE ASKED HOMEOWNERS FOR A 15% PREMIUM INCREASE WHILE RAISING HIS COMPENSATION ALMOST 400% TO \$27.3 MILLION, 50 TIMES MORE THAN THE LEVEL OF SOME LARGER AND LONGER ESTABLISHED COMPANIES. HERITAGE CONTRIBUTED TO GOV. RICK SCOTT'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND RECEIVED AN UNUSUAL AWARD OF \$52 MILLION. IN THE WORDS OF A CORAL GABLES ATTORNEY REPRESENTING POLICYHOLDERS, "IT'S NOT RIGHT."² BUT IT'S NOT UNCOMMON, EITHER.

IRS

WHO WATCHES THE WATCHDOG ? "A NEW REPORT FROM THE TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION REVEALED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT "ERRONEOUSLY" PAID OUT \$15.6 BILLION THROUGH THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) IN FISCAL YEAR 2015." THE EITC IS FAR MORE THAN A TAX CREDIT, AS IT ALLOWS LOW INCOME FILERS TO BE PAID IN CASH AND HAS BEEN FAVORED BY ITS CONGRESSIONAL AND IRS SUPPORTERS AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING FUNDS TO ILLEGAL ALIENS. AND HERE'S THE "KICKER". ONCE ELIGIBLE FOR EITC, OUR TAX LAW ALLOWS A FILER TO AMEND HIS/HER TAX RETURNS FOR THE THREE PREVIOUS YEARS AND CLAIM CREDIT, EVEN IF THE FILER WAS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THOSE YEARS ! IN THE CASE OF AMNESTIED ILLEGAL ALIENS, ACCORDING TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO ACCESS MORE THAN \$24,000 IN SUCH CASH PAYMENTS VIA THE EITC.³

IN 1913 WHEN THE IRS WAS FOUNDED AND OUR NATIONAL INCOME TAX FIRST LEVIED, OUR FEDERAL TAX CODE WAS 400 PAGES LONG. TODAY IT RUNS TO OVER 74,000 PAGES

AND OUR NATIONAL DEBT IS 75% THE SIZE OF OUR ECONOMY.⁴

EDUCATION

OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM HAS BECOME A MINEFIELD OF SOCIO-SENSITIVE ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AROUND WHICH OUR LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL POLITICIANS MUST TREAD CAREFULLY. FOR EXAMPLE:

FIFTY YEARS AGO CONGRESS CREATED A NATIONAL STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM WITH THE LOFTY INTENTION OF ENCOURAGING COLLEGE ATTENDANCE THROUGH LOW COST LOANS. IT NOW HAS OVER \$1.3 TRILLION OF GOVERNMENT BACKED EDUCATIONAL LOANS OUTSTANDING. TRUTH IS THAT IT HAS BECOME A RICH PROFIT CENTER FOR BANKS AND OTHER LOAN SERVICE BUSINESSES AND HAS TRAPPED MANY STUDENTS INTO A LIFE OF MOUNTING DEBT, A NATIONAL DEFAULT RATE OF 11.8%⁵ AND LOW CREDIT RATINGS THAT POSTPONE HOMEOWNERSHIP, MARRIAGE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. THIS PROGRAM GAVE ITS STUDENT BORROWERS THE IMPRESSION THAT IT ASSURED HIGH PAYING FIRST JOBS THAT IN TOO MANY CASES HAVE NOT BEEN AVAILABLE OR WERE ONLY THE PRODUCT OF YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM.

AS RECENTLY AS 25 YEARS AGO THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF A STUDENT'S DEBT WAS \$9,300, WHILE TODAY IT IS OVER \$35,000⁶, ALMOST FOUR TIMES AS MUCH. SOME STUDENTS WHO HAVE EMPLOYED ROLL-OVER METHODS TO EXTEND THEIR STUDIES HAVE EMERGED WITH LOAN BALANCES OF OVER \$200,000, WITH NO JOB OR THE ABILITY TO MAKE REQUIRED PAYMENTS OF PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST.

CANDIDATE CLINTON HAS MADE EXPANSIVE STATEMENTS THAT, IF ELECTED, SHE WOULD MAKE ALL EDUCATION FREE AND PAY OFF STUDENT LOAN DEBT, WHICH SOUNDS LIKE ALL EDUCATIONAL COSTS WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT — A MASSIVE BAIL-OUT THAT WILL BE CHARGED TO THE AMERICAN TAX PAYER. THIS IS A TOPIC THAT IS SO INFLAMMATORY AND HOSTAGE TO EMOTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES THAT WE DO NOT THINK EITHER CANDIDATE WILL EMPHASIZE IT, BUT IT MAY SHOW UP AS A QUESTION IN ONE OR MORE OF THEIR DEBATES.

THERE ARE OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR CURRENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS THAT DISTURB OR IGNORE OUR CULTURAL CONSCIENCE. A 2015 SURVEY OF 1,100 AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REVEALED THAT ONLY 18% REQUIRE STUDENTS TO TAKE A COURSE IN AMERICAN HISTORY OR GOVERNMENT.⁷

ANOTHER DIFFICULT CONTRADICTION IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS THAT, WHILE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES HAVE RISEN IN THE LAST DECADE, COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS SHOW THAT GRADUATING STUDENTS ARE MOSTLY UNPREPARED TO ACHIEVE ACADEMIC SUFFICIENCY AT COLLEGE OR WORK PLACE LEVELS.⁸ THIS WIDESPREAD FINDING HAS CAST DOUBT ON THE VALUE OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL DEGREES AND IS ESPECIALLY PAINFUL FOR THOSE WHO SEEK TO ENTER THE WORK FORCE WITHOUT FURTHER EDUCATION BEYOND THAT LEVEL.

ADD TO THESE THE GROWING TENDENCIES FOR ACADEMIA TO SHAPE ITSELF IN THE CORPORATE MOLD AND TO

AVOID THE WIDER TASK OF EDUCATION — THE PREPARATION OF THE STUDENT MIND TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN OUR WORLD. OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM IS BESET BY EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME AND ITS OWN MAKING, BUT IT IS CERTAIN NEITHER CANDIDATE WILL MENTION THEM.

OUR FADING BLUE PLANET

OUR OCEANS COVER MOST OF OUR PLANET'S SURFACE AND PROVIDE US WITH FOOD AND THE WEATHER PATTERNS THAT BRING CLOUDS, WIND AND WATER TO OUR LANDMASSSES. WE ONLY HAVE ONE OCEAN SYSTEM; THERE ARE NO NEW MODELS OR REPLACEMENTS AVAILABLE TO US. AND YET WE, THE HUMAN SPECIES HERE ON EARTH, HAVE INCREASINGLY ABUSED OUR OCEANS OVER THE PAST CENTURY. THIS IS NOT AN AMERICAN PROBLEM; IT IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM, BUT, GIVEN OUR POSITION AS SUPERPOWER (ONCE BUT NO LONGER SOLE), WE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN IT UPON OURSELVES TO LEAD BY OUR OWN ACTIONS AND TO MOVE THE UN AND OTHER COMMERCIAL OR POLITICAL ENTITIES TO JOIN US.

THE VARIETIES OF OCEAN ABUSE THAT WE HAVE PERMITTED AND COMMITTED ARE NUMEROUS. WE POLLUTE CHEMICALLY, SONICALLY, BY REFUSE FROM OUR STREAMS AND RIVERS AND FROM COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY FLEETS. MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH WE ENGAGE SUCH AS MINERAL EXPLORATION, COMMERCIAL FISH PROCESSING PLANT /SHIPS AND MILITARY WEAPONS TESTING DESTROY AND/OR DISORIENT MARINE SPECIES OF ALL KINDS AND SIZES IN LARGE AREAS EXTENDING OUT FROM THEIR USAGE. VAST DELTAS FORMED BY THE WORLD'S GREAT RIVERS AS THEY EMPTY INTO THE OCEANS ARE DEAD ZONES FOR MANY MILES BECAUSE OF THE POLLUTANTS FROM THE LIVES OF HUMANS THAT THEY CARRY WITH THEM. SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREAT RIVERS SERVE AS OPEN SEWERS, CLOGGED WITH HUMAN, AS WELL AS INDUSTRIAL, WASTE.

PLASTIC, WHICH IS ALMOST NON-BIODEGRADABLE, IS THE clearest signature of our economy and our age. IT IS THE PRIME PROVIDER OF STRUCTURE FOR THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH — A TEXAS-SIZED ACCUMULATION OF FLOATING PLASTIC, GLASS, WIRE, WOOD, PAPER, RUBBER AND METAL OFF OUR PACIFIC NW COAST CREATED BY THAT OCEAN'S MAJOR, COUNTERCLOCKWISE, CIRCULAR CURRENT. OUR POLITICAL, COMMERCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITIES SAY THAT WE DO NOT HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED TO DISPERSE AND DISPOSE OF THIS PHENOMENAL EXAMPLE OF NEGLECT. OUTER SPACE ? OF COURSE ! BUT CLEANING UP OUR OCEANS ? NOT POSSIBLE !

POPULATION AND RESOURCES

HERE, AS ELSEWHERE AROUND OUR GLOBE, THESE TWO CAPABILITIES ARE GRAPH LINES GOING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS — UP FOR POPULATION AND DOWN FOR NATURAL RESOURCES MANY OF WHICH ARE NON-RENEWABLE. OUR AMERICAN POPULATION OF 325 MILLION NOW ADDS ONE PERSON EVERY 12 SECONDS AT WHICH RATE IT WILL DOUBLE EVERY 50

YEARS — A SIGNIFICANT STATISTICAL ACCELERATION FROM 74 YEARS IN 1950.⁹ THIS VERY BASIC ARITHMETIC, SO CLEARLY AND BRIEFLY STATED, HAS FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR ECONOMY AND WAY OF LIFE WHICH, UNTIL RECENTLY, MANY AMERICANS DID NOT RECOGNIZE. MANY STILL DON'T. IS THIS IRONICALLY SOME KIND OF NEGATIVE, OR REVERSE, AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM ?

THE INESCAPABLE TRADE-OFF FOR TAKING NO INTEREST IN, NOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR, OUR UNCONTROLLED POPULATION GROWTH IS THAT ITS NUMBERS DIMINISH THE NATURAL (AND NATIONAL) RESOURCES WHICH THE HUMAN SPECIES REQUIRES TO SUSTAIN ITS LIFE FORM ON EARTH. THIS MEANS THAT WITHOUT EXCEPTION EVERY LIFE WE ADD DRAWS DOWN THE AMOUNTS OF ARABLE LAND, CLEAN AIR AND WATER, FOOD CHAIN SPECIES, FORESTS AND THE MANY MINERALS THAT HAVE ENABLED OUR WEALTHY ECONOMY AND WAY OF LIFE, FIRST EXPRESSED IN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND NOW IN OUR PRESENT CONSUMERISM.

THE EXAMPLES ARE MANY; LET'S LOOK AT ONE. THE US STARTED LIFE AS AN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY AND, EVEN AFTER ITS CONVERSION TO AN INDUSTRIAL BASE IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES, MAINTAINED ITS CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE FOOD FOR OURSELVES AND HAVE ENOUGH LEFT TO BE A MAJOR EXPORTER AND FORCE IN THE GLOBAL FOOD MARKET. WE ALSO KEPT STOCKPILES OF GRAIN, DAIRY AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS WHICH WE DREW UPON TO PROVIDE RELIEF FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN HUMANITARIAN DISASTERS.

TODAY, WE IMPORT SOME ITEMS WE USED TO EXPORT, OUR GLOBAL EXPORTS ARE DOWN, AS ARE OUR STOCKPILE LEVELS. IN SHORT, OUR FOOD PRESENCE FOR GROWING, MARKETING AND RELIEF DONATIONS HAS BEEN NOTABLY DIMINISHED. THIS MAY COME AS A SURPRISE; BUT IT SHOULDN'T. JUST LOOK AT OUR POPULATION FIGURES.

POPULATION REDUCTION DOES NOT COME EASILY BECAUSE ADDED POPULATION UNITS, WHETHER BY LEGAL OR ILLEGAL MEANS OF ENTRY, EMBED THEMSELVES AND IMMEDIATELY START THE UNCONTROLLED PROCESS OF GEOMETRIC GROWTH REPRODUCTION. THIS LED DR. ALBERT BARTLETT, THE LATE DISTINGUISHED PHYSICIST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, TO ASK:

“CAN YOU THINK OF ANY PROBLEM IN ANY AREA OF HUMAN ENDEAVOR ON ANY SCALE, FROM MICROSCOPIC TO GLOBAL, WHOSE LONG-TERM SOLUTION IS IN ANY DEMONSTRABLE WAY AIDED, ASSISTED OR ADVANCED BY FURTHER INCREASES OF POPULATION; LOCALLY, NATIONALLY OR GLOBALLY?”¹⁰

IF THIS QUESTION IS ADDRESSED TO OUR POLITICAL, CORPORATE, RELIGIOUS AND ACADEMIC LEADERS, IT IS USUALLY DEFLECTED WITH A GLIB OR DISMISSIVE REPLY. BUT OURS IS NOT A TIME FOR GLIBNESS; WE SHOULD WELCOME, NOT DEFLECT, ANY AND ALL QUESTIONS CONCERNING POPULATION, AS PRESENT PROJECTIONS FOR US POPULATION IN 2050 RUN FROM 500 TO 600¹¹ MILLION.

THE MOST DRAMATIC FAILURE OF OUR THINKING (OR NOT THINKING) ABOUT OUR INCREASINGLY DIVERGENT POPULATION AND RESOURCE GRAPH LINES IS THAT AS A PEOPLE WE CANNOT REALIZE THAT MANY OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES THAT OUR NATION AND PLANET DEPEND UPON TO SUSTAIN HUMAN AND OTHER LIFE ARE FINITE. THEY HAD A BEGINNING AND THEY WILL HAVE AN END; AND THE ACCELERATING RATE AT WHICH WE DRAW UPON THEM MOVES US EVER CLOSER TO THEIR EXHAUSTION.

THIS PROCESS WILL NOT END IN A SUDDEN “NOW THEY’RE HERE; NOW THEY’RE NOT” MOMENT. RATHER, DIFFERENT RESOURCES AROUND THE WORLD WILL GROW SCARCE AND THEN DISAPPEAR AT DIFFERENT TIMES, BUT SPREADING SCARCITY AND MORE EXPENSIVE ACCESS WILL RAISE PRICES. PRODUCERS AND MARKETERS WILL ATTEMPT TO PASS THEIR ADDED COSTS (AND ENLARGED DOLLAR PROFIT MARGINS) ON TO CONSUMERS.

THE RESULTING DEEP, SOCIAL/ECONOMIC UNREST WILL UNDERCUT EXISTING POLITICAL REGIMES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE FORCES UNLEASHED WILL BE ABLE TO BE CONTROLLED BY OUR 20TH CENTURY INSTITUTIONS —THE UN, THE EU, THE WORLD BANK, THE FEDERAL RESERVE OR OTHER CENTRAL BANKS “OF LAST RESORT”, OR OUR NUMEROUS TRADE TREATIES. ALL WILL TRY, BUT THEIR MANAGERS AND CHARTERS WILL BE FACED WITH CONDITIONS WHICH WERE UNIMAGINABLE AT THEIR FOUNDING AND WITH POLITICAL CHOICES WHICH THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO CONFRONT. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, IT IS MAN’S MIND AND MUSCLE THAT, SILENTLY OR LOUDLY, MOVE THE HEAVY GATES OF HISTORY WHICH SWING ON HINGES OF CHANCE, CIRCUMSTANCE, HUBRIS AND ERROR.

POPULATION, HOWEVER, IS SUBJECT TO OUR CONTROL. BUT WILL WE TAKE ACTION ? WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN 200 YEARS ? ONE THING WE CAN BE SURE OF — THERE WILL BE NO DISCUSSION OF POPULATION, NO MENTION OF IT, IN CAMPAIGN AMERICA 2016. AMERICA IS NOT ALONE IN ITS SILENCE, AS NO OTHER “DEVELOPED” NATION IS COMMITTED TO POPULATION CONTROL, ALTHOUGH BOTH INDIA AND CHINA ESTABLISHED SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS OVER A GENERATION AGO WHICH WERE SUBSEQUENTLY ABANDONED FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

SOCIAL SECURITY

AND, FINALLY, A TRUE VETERAN ISSUE OF OUR POLITICAL WARS THAT CAN NEITHER BE HONORED NOR DISCHARGED, IS OUR NOW 80-YEAR-OLD SOCIAL SECURITY (SS) SYSTEM. CREATED BY FDR DURING OUR GD, IT WAS THEN CONSIDERED BY MANY IN THE GOP TO BE A FORM OF SOCIALISM. IT WAS MOST CERTAINLY INNOVATIVE AND A CONCEPT THAT REQUIRED CHANGES IN OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL THINKING.

IN TIME, AS ITS BENEFITS BECAME APPARENT, IT SLIPPED INTO OUR MAINSTREAM VIEW OF LIFE, LOST ITS THREAT STATUS (EXCEPT TO THOSE ON THE FAR-RIGHT) AND BECAME THE FOUNDATIONAL PIECE OF SOCIAL LEGISLATION OF OUR TIME, REMOVING THE THREAT OF OLD AGE POVERTY FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS AND PROVIDING SENIORS AND OUR ECONOMY WITH THE BENEFITS OF EXTENDED STABILITY AND BUYING POWER.

SADLY, OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS COULDN’T RESIST THE SUBSTANTIAL SUMS THAT AMERICAN WORKERS PAID INTO THE SS TRUST. THEY LOOTED THE MONEY THAT WAS THERE AND LEFT IOUS IN ITS PLACE. THIS AND OUR ECONOMY’S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS NOW INDICATE THAT, UNLESS CHANGES ARE MADE, THE SS TRUST WILL BE INSOLVENT BY 2034.

SS HAS BEEN A MATTER OF CAMPAIGN COMMENT FOR SEVERAL DECADES. MOSTLY, THOSE RUNNING FOR OFFICE HAVE DISCUSSED HOW THEY MIGHT MAKE MINOR STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS TO IT OR TO ITS COLAs (COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS). SOME HAVE CLAIMED THEY WOULD OVERHAUL IT AND MAKE IT SOLVENT AGAIN, LEAVING OUT SPECIFICS BECAUSE ANY CHANGES THAT WOULD PUT IT ON A FIRMER FOOTING WOULD BE LIKELY TO OFFEND POWERFUL CONSTITUENCIES.

SS IS THE LARGEST ITEM IN OUR NATIONAL BUDGET AND REPRESENTS ABOUT 25% OF OUR NATIONAL SPENDING. IT PROVIDES OVER 80% OF THE INCOME OF SENIORS WITH INCOMES BELOW \$23,600 WHO COMPRISE THE BOTTOM 40% LEVEL OF OUR NATIONAL INCOME DISTRIBUTION SCALE.¹²

OUR SS PROBLEM IS OUR OWN MADE-IN-AMERICA, HOME-GROWN, HORROR SHOW PRODUCED BY THE CONGRESSES WE HAVE FUNDED, SUPPORTED AND ELECTED. IT HAS NO CONNECTION TO ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, INTERNATIONAL TRADE, LEGAL OR HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION, FUNDING, JUDICIAL OR MILITARY BODIES. IT IS OUR OWN; WE MADE IT AND IT WORKED; IT BENEFITED THE NATION AND ITS CITIZENS. AND THEN CONGRESS SPENT THE MONEY ON A POLITICAL SHOPPING TRIP.

FROM NOW UNTIL ITS ANTICIPATED INSOLVENCY IN 2034 SS’S CONTINUING CASH DEFICITS ARE EXPECTED TO AMOUNT TO \$2.8 TRILLION AND TO INCREASE OUR NATIONAL DEBT BY THAT AMOUNT.¹³ BUT OUR TWO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES WILL, MOST LIKELY, PAY LITTLE ATTENTION AND WILL MAKE ONLY VAGUE AND PASSING REFERENCE, IF ANY, TO IT SUCH AS “SAVING SS”. THERE WILL BE NO NUMBERS OFFERED AND NO COMMITMENT TO THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES NEEDED TO RETURN SS TO SOLVENCY.

SS HAS BEEN CALLED “THE THIRD RAIL OF AMERICAN POLITICS — TOUCH IT AND YOU DIE.” THE PRESIDENT CANNOT FIX SS; ONLY CONGRESS CAN DO THAT, BUT THE PRESIDENT CAN DRAFT LEGISLATION AND SEND IT TO CONGRESS TO BE ACTED UPON. WE ARE AT A POINT WHERE, UNLESS GOVERNMENT “TOUCHES” SS, A GROWING NUMBER OF AMERICA’S SENIORS WILL FACE WRENCHING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP.

ELECTION DAY

IN OUR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY ELECTION DAY IS AMERICA’S POLITICAL MIRROR. WHAT LOOKS OUT AT US IS THE IMAGE FORMED FROM OUR OWN EFFORTS AND ACTIONS. THERE IS NO SLIPPAGE, NO ERROR. IN WAYS NOT ALWAYS FAIR OR LEGAL, WE ELECT A CANDIDATE/PARTY TO TAKE CONTROL OF OUR GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS. AS THE INTEGRITY OF OUR POLITICAL PROCESS HAS DECLINED, WE HAVE TRIED TO LAYER OVER OUR

FAILURE WITH RHETORIC THAT PURIFIES HOW WE FORM AND CONDUCT OUR GOVERNMENT, BUT NO MATTER HOW OR WHERE WE SEEK IT, THERE IS AS LITTLE PURITY IN POLITICS AS THERE IS IN THE HUMAN CONDITION.

OUR PRESENT POLITICAL POLARIZATION RESULTS FROM BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT SEEKING DOMINANT POWER WITH LITTLE ACTIVE OR MEANINGFUL COMPETITION. THIS NEED TO FULLY DOMINATE COMBINES ELEMENTS OF INSECURITY WITH VAST POWER IN WAYS THAT HISTORY HAS SHOWN CAN BE DESTRUCTIVE.

ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE AND SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF AMERICA'S POLITICAL LIFE THAT WE HAVE DESTROYED IN OUR POSTWAR PUSH FOR POLITICAL DOMINANCE WAS OUR SUPPORT OF CENTRIST THOUGHT AND ACCOMMODATION. QUITE PLAINLY, DEMOCRACY (OR AT LEAST THAT KIND OF DEMOCRACY OUR FOUNDERS INSTITUTED) CANNOT ENDURE WITHOUT A VIABLE POLITICAL CENTER.

“...NEITHER THE RIGHT NOR THE LEFT CAN CREDIBLY PRESENT THEMSELVES AS ARCHITECTS OF POLICY.”

LACKING SUCH A CENTER, OUR SYSTEM WILL BE SO STRETCHED AND STRESSED BY BACK AND FORTH CHANGES OF POWER THAT OUR FOUNDATIONS WILL BE SUBJECT TO ATTACK OR COMPROMISE. OUR DEMOCRACY REQUIRES A CENTRAL FORCE THAT VALUES POLITICAL TOLERANCE OVER PURITY. WITHOUT IT NEITHER THE RIGHT NOR THE LEFT CAN CREDIBLY PRESENT THEMSELVES AS ARCHITECTS OF POLICY.

LOOKING TO NOVEMBER, THE AMERICAN VOTER COULD NOT BE FACED BY A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO MORE DIFFERENT CANDIDATES, FOR IN ADDITION TO THEIR POLITICAL OUTLOOKS, THEY ARE STRIKINGLY DISSIMILAR IN LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, CAREERS, GENDER, TEMPERAMENT, BEHAVIOR, APPEARANCE, TONE AND THAT CATCH-ALL PHRASE FOR PUBLIC FIGURES, STYLE.

AND YET WITH ALL THESE DIFFERENCES IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO THINK THAT THE POPULAR VOTE WILL BE FAIRLY CLOSE. THE COUNT IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE IS SOMETHING ELSE AND, WITH THE GROWING AMOUNT AND POWER OF MSM ACTIVITY, THE WINNER IS INCREASINGLY DETERMINED BY THE RESULTS IN A HANDFUL OF KEY STATES. THIS HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE A NEGATIVE FACTOR IN OUR COUNTRY'S POLITICAL PROCESS. WE NOW HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY NECESSARY TO CONDUCT NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS ELECTRONICALLY WITH ALMOST INSTANT RESULTS, AND SHOULD PUT IT TO USE.

WE COULD COME UP WITH SUFFICIENT SECURITY FOR THE NEW VOTING/TABULATION PROCEDURE, BUT THIS MAY PROVE TO BE A STUMBLING BLOCK, AS BOTH PARTIES HAVE HISTORIES OF IRREGULAR PRACTICES AND ENTRENCHED CONSTITUENCIES THAT MAY RESIST ANY SUBSTANTIAL REFORM MEASURES. STILL, SECURE VOTING WITH PROMPT RESULTS THAT STARTS LOCALLY AND WORKS UP TO STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS IS A WORTHY GOAL. THE TIME FOR THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE HAS COME AND

GONE. IT SHOULD BE ABOLISHED, BUT THAT WOULD REQUIRE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WHICH IS ANOTHER PROCESS THAT IS PRACTICALLY EXCLUDED BY OUR PRESENT POLARIZATION AND LEGISLATIVE DYSFUNCTION.

TRUMP OR CLINTON ? REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT ? WHICH WILL IT BE ? DISREGARDING THE PRIMARY CONTESTS, WE ARE STILL IN THE EARLY STAGE OF THIS “FIRST EVER” KIND OF CAMPAIGN WITH SOMEWHAT LESS THAN TWO MONTHS REMAINING.

TRUMP WAS LIKE A WILDLY SPINNING COMPASS IN THE PRIMARIES AND EVEN FOLLOWING HIS NOMINATION. HE HAS MADE STATEMENTS THAT WERE RECKLESS, FACTLESS AND SOMETIMES TRUTHLESS AND WHICH SEEMINGLY HIS EGO FAILED TO ALLOW HIM TO CORRECT. IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A MAJOR COURSE CORRECTION, HE CHANGED HIS CAMPAIGN DIRECTORS TWICE AND ADOPTED A LESS FLAMBOYANT AND MORE ISSUE-FOCUSED STYLE BY USING THE TELEPROMPTER AND STAYING WITH ITS MESSAGE. WE WILL SEE WHETHER THIS NEW PERSONA WILL BECOME PERMANENT AND WHETHER HE CAN MAINTAIN A SENSE OF EQUILIBRIUM WHICH WILL ALLOW MORE VOTERS TO VIEW HIM AS WORTHY OF OCCUPYING THEIR WHITE HOUSE. TRUMP WILL HAVE TO ESTABLISH BALANCE IN HIS CAMPAIGN SPEECHES — BOTH IN THEIR CONTENT AND THEIR DELIVERY.

LIKE TRUMP, CLINTON AVOIDS BEING SPECIFIC ABOUT HOW SHE WILL DEAL WITH THE NATION'S GROWING LIST OF URGENT PROBLEMS. SHE IS GIVEN TO BROAD PROMISES AND ASSURES THOSE WHO LISTEN AND WANT TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR LIVES AND OUR COUNTRY WILL BE MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED BY A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION HEADED BY HER. SHE IS EQUALLY VAGUE, AND OFTEN TO A LEVEL OF EVASIVENESS AND DENIAL, ABOUT THE MANY CHARGES OF FINANCIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST FOR HER FAMILY AND FOUNDATION, FOR HER MISHANDLING OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AND FOR HER INAPPROPRIATE BLENDING OF HER PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL INTERESTS.

VOTERS HAVE BEEN ALERTED BY MEDIA SOURCES THAT THE CONTENTS OF ADDITIONAL EMAILS WILL BE RELEASED AS THE CAMPAIGNS BUILD TOWARD ELECTION DAY, THEREBY ADDING AN EXTRA ELEMENT OF SUSPENSE. AND CONCERNS HAVE BEEN RAISED ABOUT HER HEALTH. THE QUESTION THAT CANNOT BE ANSWERED NOW IS WHETHER THE ACCUMULATION OF THESE NEGATIVE IMPACTS WILL BE ENOUGH TO NOT ONLY FURTHER DAMAGE AND DESTROY HER CREDIBILITY, BUT ALSO TO CAUSE VOTERS IN LARGE NUMBERS TO EITHER VOTE FOR TRUMP OR A THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE OR NOT VOTE AT ALL.

THERE IS A WIDE CONSENSUS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THAT THIS ELECTION IS UNIQUE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONAL AND POLITICAL NEGATIVES ATTACHED TO BOTH CANDIDATES. MANY VOTERS SENSE THAT WE HAVE REACHED THE END OF “A RACE TO THE BOTTOM”, THAT NEITHER NOMINEE SHOULD OCCUPY THE OVAL OFFICE, NOR WILL EITHER PARTY BE ABLE TO DELIVER ON ITS CAMPAIGN PROMISES.

FOR NOW, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS BEING ASKED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A WILDLY ERRATIC AND UNCONVENTIONAL BUSINESS PERSON WITH NO POLITICAL EXPERIENCE WHOSE

POSITIONS HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO FREQUENT CHANGE, OR EVEN REVERSAL; OR A CAREER POLITICIAN WITH NUMEROUS ETHICAL, AND PERHAPS LEGAL, CHALLENGES WHO HAS BEEN RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT ON THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM SINCE THE END OF HER HUSBAND'S PRESIDENCY IN 2001.

THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO DOUBT THAT TRUMP WILL BE THE AGENT OF CHANGE THAT HE CLAIMS TO BE AND, LIKEWISE, THAT HILLARY CLINTON WILL CONTINUE AND BUILD UPON OBAMA'S POLICIES AND RECORD WHICH, OVER THE COURSE OF HIS TWO TERMS, MOVED STEADILY TO THE LEFT, AS HAVE CLINTON'S IN BOTH HER PRIMARY AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS.

IN A CONTEST SO LOADED WITH PERSONAL NEGATIVES, THE NEXT ERROR, REVELATION OR MISSTATEMENT COULD TIP THE BALANCE. IN THE MEANTIME, THE VOTER MUST PONDER: WILL IT BE THE FREE-WHEELING, ERROR-PRONE POLITICAL NEWCOMER? OR THE "YOU KNOW ME, AL", STEADY HAND-IN-THE-TILL PARTY-LINER ? AND THEN THERE IS THE ULTIMATE RISK FOR AMERICA — THAT, REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS, THE LOSER WILL ATTEMPT TO CHALLENGE THE DECLARED RESULTS. ANY SUCH EFFORT COULD DO REAL DAMAGE TO OUR DEMOCRACY AT THIS TIME.

IT IS NO SECRET TO EITHER POLITICAL PARTY THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS DISAPPOINTED AND OFFENDED BY THE DETERIORATION OF OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ELECTED OR APPOINTED TO DIRECT THEM. EVERYONE IN THE CONGRESS KNOWS HOW DEEPLY VOTER DISSATISFACTION RUNS. THE QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED BY THIS ELECTION IS "HOW WIDE IS IT?"



ECD 9/20/16

END NOTES

¹WIKIPEDIA.ORG

²[INSURER PAYS CEO \\$27 M . . .](#) , PALM BEACH POST 6/28/16

³[IRS PAYS OUT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO ILLEGAL ALIENS.](#) FAIR IMMIGRATION REPORT, JULY/AUGUST 2016

⁴[WALTERS KLOWER, COMMERCE CLEARING HOUSE, 2013 VIA PETERSON FOUNDATION](#)

⁵[RISING STUDENT LOANS FUEL HUGE INDUSTRY,](#) BLOOMBERG NEWS BY JANET LORIN VIA PALM BEACH POST 12/26/15

⁶[STUDENT STRUGGLES WITH SIX-FIGURE LOAN, NO DEGREE,](#) PALM BEACH POST 11/22/15

⁷[SURVEY BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI BY KATHLEEN PARKER](#) THE WASHINGTON POST, 11/26/15

⁸[GRADUATION RATES ON RISE . . .](#) , MOTOKO RICH, NY TIMES VIA PALM BEACH POST 1/4/16

⁹[NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH \(NPG\) EMAIL,](#) 7/7/16

¹⁰[DR. ALBERT BARTLETT WWW.ALBARTLETT.ORG](http://DR.ALBERTBARTLETT.WWW.ALBARTLETT.ORG)

¹¹[USA — ONE BILLION IN 2075, CURRENT TREND OF US POPULATION GROWTH, 2016](#) POPULATION-ENVIRONMENT BALANCE, 2000 P St. NW, SUITE 600, WASHINGTON, DC 20036 WWW.BALANCE.ORG

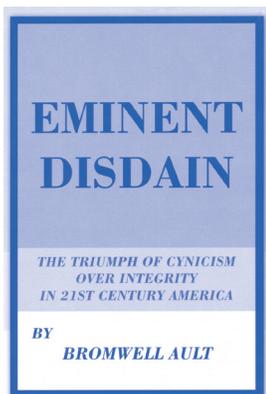
¹²[TRUSTEES: SOCIAL SECURITY IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE,](#) PETER G. PETERSON FOUNDATION, EMAIL 7/26/16

¹³IBID.

EDITOR'S BIO

MR. AULT IS RETIRED FROM BUSINESS, A GRADUATE OF YALE UNIVERSITY, AND THE AUTHOR OF: [A RETAIL FOOD STUDY](#) (LA ROCHE & Co. NYC, NY 1957) WHICH DESCRIBED THE EMERGENCE AND GROWING DOMINANCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IN AMERICAN FOOD RETAILING; [EMINENT DISDAIN: THE TRIUMPH OF CYNICISM OVER INTEGRITY IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICA.](#) ; AND [WHO LOST AMERICA? CAN AMERICA'S DEMOCRATIC IDENTITY AND GOVERNMENT SURVIVE OUR ETHICAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FAILURES?](#)

IN MEMORIAM
JACK C. TAYLOR
1922-2016
WWII US NAVY PILOT ON CARRIERS ESSEX
AND ENTERPRISE; FOUNDER AND SOLE
OWNER OF ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR;
PHILANTHROPIST; A GREAT AMERICAN AND AN
INSPIRING HUMAN BEING.



THE AUTHOR'S MOST RECENT BOOK, [WHO LOST AMERICA?](#), DEALS WITH TOPICS COVERED IN MoC ISSUES 19 THROUGH 27. BOTH IT AND HIS FIRST VOLUME, [EMINENT DISDAIN](#), ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE PUBLISHER AUTHORHOUSE, AT 888-280-7715 OR AT AUTHORHOUSE.COM.

