

## Farewell to prosperity?

With only three days to go until the "most consequential election of our time" will we wake up on November 4<sup>th</sup> and witness an entirely new chapter in American history - a chapter that places us on a path to the past or one to a prosperous future? That is the \$64,000 question. It's no secret that we Americans have been walking a rickety bridge strung between two ideological cliffs for two decades since the change election of 2000 when our political fate was decided by a decision by the Supreme Court.

Since that time, when the votes of Florida were awarded to George W. Bush, the Left and the Right have been locked in a pitched battle for control of the soul of our nation. That battle was intensified by a dastardly terrorist attack one year later, our entry into protracted foreign wars and recently a dangerous pandemic and civil strife in our cities and towns. We came together for a brief moment in 2001, but that solidarity swiftly disappeared when we separated into two warring camps of ultra-partisans who vowed to give no quarter to each other. Compromise became a dirty word and was synonymous with surrender. The tactics of political opposition turned into political suicide and we all became victims, along with hope.

Eight years of Right-leaning governance turned into eight years on the Left which turned into four more years on the Right. Each period moved us farther and farther apart from one another and did little or nothing to help us find a path that made long-term progress towards a set of mutually-acceptable policies, impossible. The prospect of achieving any semblance of comity, amity and cooperation disappeared and gave way to selfish partisanship...on both sides of the aisle. The sole survivor of our obstructionist ways is the reality that the new America of the next decade will be guided by one thing, the belief that absolute power is the only option open to us.

Under the leadership of an untraditional President we have moved America closer to its traditional roots and its traditional values, but these roots and values are considered antiquated and out of step by half of the country's electorate. We are now standing squarely at an ideological crossroads that looks more like an ideological round-a-bout that once entered offers no exit. Regardless of the choice we make, we will not find an accommodation that will bring us closer together.

America is in peril.

Will we choose a leader with proven managerial expertise (even though some of us may disagree with his decisions) or one who has never held a job in the competitive world and who has never managed anything more than his own checkbook? The fact is that the United States is very much like a major international corporation with over 300 million domestic stakeholders with voting rights. Whether we like it or not our economy drives our prosperity and our balance sheet tells the rest of the world that we are both a welcoming place for investment and a financial force to be reckoned with. Our prosperity makes it possible to redress some of the imbalances in our society by providing jobs and opportunities to those in need, insuring our health and well-being and offering our children a good education, not to mention providing for our security in a dangerous world.

We deserve leaders who understand how capitalism works and how it can be used to maximize a return on Americans' investment of sweat equity that will accrue benefits to all of us. Career politicians who have never run a business and whose very existence has depended solely on others to pay their salaries have little to offer a country that demands sound business decision-making.

To be sure America is more than just a conglomeration of vested business interests, but it is those vested business interests that make the realization of every downstream social need or aspiration, possible. Marxism, socialism and concentrated collectivism that ignore the power of the individual will always fail a people that have been brought up to believe in a system that promises rewards based on initiative.

A true American leader must be willing to acknowledge that fact and must avoid pandering to pipe dreams that promise to *make everybody equal* by placing limits on growth, income redistribution and by punishing those who produce for society.

Americans have never been short on dreams or aspirations and no President can win election or re-election by ignoring those dreams or aspirations. Neither can a candidate win the hearts and minds of our fellow citizens by promising a "long dark winter." This election, however, could be the one that disproves that assertion. Americans have been locked down and forced into a kind of suspended animation for many months, and that sequestration may have sapped our strength and clouded our thinking to the point where we have lost or misplaced our American can-do spirit.

We could in fact be suffering a massive self-confidence deficit that makes us susceptible to the notion that we must be led -- instead of following -- and that there is only one path out of the darkness of our despair and that that path is acceptance of our inability to think and act in our own best interests and submit to top-down driven collectivism.

There is only one candidate that offers that solution, and he is the wrong choice. His name is Joe Biden and he is wrong for today's America and wrong for tomorrow's as well. If you have any doubts, look at his record and his 47-year long work history and votes in the Senate. Then listen to him speak. His words are familiar and we have heard them many times in the past uttered by many other politicians. They are full of promises, but do not ring true. If you have not voted yet, do it soon. We need four more years of sound leadership not four years of empty sounds.

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