

Debating down into the VP mosh pit



by Kenneth R. Timmerman

Hillary Clinton's strategy is clear. She believes she wins if she can convince just enough African-American, Hispanic, and White female voters that Donald Trump is a wealthy white racist, who cheats on his taxes and treats women like dogs.

That's it. She's given up on any uplifting vision of the future – rightly so, because all she has to offer is four more years of the failed Obama-economy.

I never thought I would see the day when two normally decorous politicians as Tim Kaine and Mike Pence would climb down into the mosh pit and give us a mud-slinging display such as we saw at Tuesday night's VP debate.

I suppose that it helped that Tim Kaine had the CBS News "moderator," Elaine Quijano, firmly on his side, ready to swat at Pence whenever he poked his head up out of the muck.

Even [commentators on the left](#) found Quijano lacking, although their complaint was that she allowed Mike Pence to avoid "direct questions about Donald Trump's history of bigotry and fraudulence," not that she was Tim Kaine's partner in tag-teaming Pence.

The real question, of course, is do the voters care? And the second question is, can we possibly know the answer to that before the votes are cast and counted?

Fox News and CBS News ran morning after segments with graphs purporting to show the response of independent voters to specific statements during the debate.

In the [Fox News version](#), which had separate lines for Republicans, Democrats and Independents, Pence scored a big hit when he blasted his opponent for running a campaign based on insult. When he trotted out Hillary Clinton's "basket of deplorables" comment, the favorable response of Independents and Republicans was off the charts.

In the CBS News version, which tracked independent voters in Virginia separated by sex, both men and women dialed down their support of Pence during the same segment.

Later in the morning, CBS News replaced that video with an Ohio focus group led by GOP-leaning pollster, Frank Luntz, which produced the same results and the same graph that Fox News had displayed. [Luntz commented](#): "Voters are saying something very clear: stop the negativity. Give us some substance."

Luntz is right. The bickering and feistiness, which has been a Donald Trump call-sign, has begun to weary voters – especially when a petulant Tim Kaine tries to mimic it. It's time now for both candidates to move to their positive vision for the future.

In the case of Donald Trump, this is a future of economic growth, lower taxes and more responsible government regulation. It is a future where U.S. corporations that have outsourced factories and jobs voluntarily return to America to rebuild our country, because of Trump's plan to slash corporate tax rates from 35% to around 15%.

In the case of Hillary, this is a future of higher taxes on "the rich" – that is, anyone who produces wealth and jobs – in order to spend, spend, spend on new government programs that she claims will benefit everybody else. (She doesn't address

the sticky problem Margaret Thatcher once warned about: what happens when you run out of other people's money?)

Overseas, the two candidates provide an equally stark contrast. Donald Trump wants to restore respect in U.S. leadership by rebuilding our military and putting U.S. interests before those of other countries. Hillary wants us to continue "leading from behind," a strategy that produced the disasters of the Libyan revolution and the Syrian civil war, where hundreds of thousands of innocents have died while the U.S. president plays golf.

Mrs. Clinton has pledged to overturn the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United* in her first one hundred days. Really? By waving a magic wand? Donald Trump has pledged to appoint Supreme Court judges that respect the constitution and who believe in the sanctity of life.

In virtually every aspect of national policy, the contrast between the two candidates is stark. We didn't see those very real contrasts in the vice-presidential debate. And the voters tuned out.

Perhaps it's time for our national media to start doing their job by helping to steer voters to places where they can learn for themselves the policies of the two candidates, without the media spin.

Oh, sorry, I forgot. An educated electorate is no longer part of the mission statement of the national media. Earth to Lester Holt, Martha Raddatz, Anderson Cooper & company: The "deplorables" can read.

And that's why Donald Trump will win in November. We have had enough of your phony mosh-pit politics.

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