

The Brilliant Donald Trump Deserves to Win

by Conrad Black

Almost anyone who has followed the US presidential selection process closely could realise what a brilliant campaign Donald Trump has conducted. He saw that in its self-absorption, the US political class had completely failed to grasp the extent of public anger at the deterioration of almost everything. American public policy has brought about the greatest sequence of disasters since the 1920s, when the liquor business was given to gangsters by Prohibition, followed by the equities debt bubble and the Great Depression.

In the past 20 years, both parties shared in the creation of the housing bubble, which produced the greatest financial crisis since the 1930s, and a decade of war in the Middle East which, despite excellent military execution, Obama has turned into a victory for Iran and an immense humanitarian disaster. Further foreign policy humiliations have included the evaporating 'red line' in Syria, the 180-degree switch in official attitudes to Iran, culminating in a delayed green light to nuclear weapons (if Tehran chooses to wait).

Both political parties share the blame for the admission of 12 million unskilled workers into the US illegally, and for trade pacts with cheap-labour countries that appear to import unemployment. The political class and its media clique conducted business as usual while the welfare, education and justice systems became clogged with migrants, and the national debt of \$9 trillion doubled in seven years. Barack Obama told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that climate change was the greatest threat to America and he and Hillary Clinton refuse to utter

the words 'Islamic terrorism'. (He called the San Bernardino massacre 'workplace-related'.)

There has never been anything remotely like the rise of America from a small number of colonists to the most dominant power in history, and Americans are not philosophical about being held up to ridicule in the world. Nor have they ever tolerated a flatline on the country's prosperity and prospects. Donald Trump, a great public figure – as the developer of famous buildings, an impresario and television host – saw the depth of American outrage at all this and as a non-politician was not complicit in any of it.

He paid for his own campaign and ran against the entire political class, facing 16 rivals for the Republican nomination. He won from the start, piling up astonishing pluralities as the commentariat slowly retreated. They claimed he could not aspire to more than 20, 30, 40 per cent of Republicans, would be sandbagged at the convention, would attract a Ross Perot-like third party to splinter the Republican vote, and would be routed in a horrible landslide by Hillary Clinton. The flabby Republican establishment backed Ted Cruz, an intelligent man who nevertheless told the world that God had commanded he run and who pitched his campaign to the Bible-thumping corn-cobbers with M-16s in the rear windows of their pick-up trucks. The media have remained smugly hostile to Trump, despite warnings that a majority of Americans despise the media too – and that they were just stoking a pro-Trump backlash.

As Trump has moved up, Hillary Clinton has had to move far to the left to hold off Bernie Sanders, a septuagenarian former Stalinist kibbutznik and socialist senator for Vermont. Trump's genius has been to see, when no one else did, that the political class was a spavined paper tiger and the country was afire with rage; to scoop the Archie Bunker (Alf Garnett) vote with blue-collar political incorrectness and his comic talents, which won him the debates; and yet to remain centrist

on everything but illegal immigration and bad trade deals. (Trump and Clinton both went to great lengths to maintain the centrists in control of both parties, against severe challenges from the far Republican right and Democratic left; but almost none of the media, foreign or domestic, has noticed.) The best is yet to come: the last refuge of his opponents is that Trump will be an undignified and frightening candidate. He will be the sane and educated man he is.

Hillary Clinton is carrying more baggage than the *Queen Mary* and Trump will carpet-bomb the country in September and October with a billion dollars of reminders of Benghazi (she slept while her ambassador was murdered), the televised apology to the world's Muslims, the FBI director's non-indictment indictment; the malodorous conflicts of the Clinton Foundation entwined with the Clinton State Department. Even Whitewater is due for a rerun. This is not Norman Rockwell's or Walt Disney's America, and it never was. American presidential politics is a jungle; the nominees are great beasts, but Donald Trump is larger and fiercer. In taking over a major US political party from the outside, he has done something that has never been done before, and he should win.

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