AMERICA'S BIZARRE CAMPAIGN

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Category: Opinions

Richard Gwyn, Toronto Star, 30 October 2012

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What could be more politically bizarre than that Mitt Romney would not be a presidential candidate at all today had he, while running for the Republican nomination, said what he's now saying.

Back then, Romney positioned himself far to the right to appease the populist Tea Party. He denounced President Barack Obama for committing himself to pulling out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and for failing to intervene in the Syrian civil war. Today, he agrees with Obama on Afghanistan, and on Syria, and on just about all of his foreign policy.

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As bizarre, but this time encouragingly, if entirely by accident, the dominance of money in American politics has been severely dinted.

Money still matters. Combined, the two parties will spend close to an unbelievable $6 billion. But it no longer buys much.

Corporate leaders and bankers have poured money into Super PACs to win support for tax cuts and to smear Obama as a socialist. But not a scrap of evidence exists that their outpourings have changed a single vote.

Instead, the only time votes have changed in any numbers during the entire, absurdly prolonged, contest was when Obama performed so poorly in the first TV debate. In lockstep, Romney has moved himself as far as he could from Wall Street, constantly saying he will cut taxes for the middle class and make sure the well-off pay the same share of taxes as they did before.

The encouraging consequence of this, if entirely accidental, is that the polarization of American

politics, so worrying to commentators, has largely evaporated.

Only temporarily. If Romney does win, he will of course go right back to where he once was — doing good for the rich, bad to the poor.

That will just multiply the meaninglessness of the whole affair. The real truth, which no one can bring themselves to say, is that slow economic growth is the new norm for the United States.

Romney, as president, therefore will struggle in exactly the same way Obama has throughout almost all his presidency.

Romney's tax cuts won't generate any new economic activity — corporations already have more money than they know what to do with. And slow economic growth and the resulting slow revenue growth will make it as difficult for him to reduce the deficit as it has been for Obama.

In short, for all Romney's chatter about "real change," itself a steal from Obama's call four years back for "change," as president he would be almost indistinguishable from Obama.

Amid this gloom, there is one shaft of light. The pundits keep saying that the reason Obama is in trouble is because jobs are scarce.

Not so, or far less so than is widely assumed. A recent CNN poll found that 54 per cent of Americans put the principal blame for today's economic misery upon George W. Bush and the Republicans. Ordinary Americans are a good deal smarter than they're given credit for.

So what's deciding everything? Simply, and obviously, that first TV debate when Obama was so listless, almost seemed irritated he had to sing for his supper, while Romney, even though lying through his teeth, came across as moderate but also as engaged and energetic.

That's a pretty thin reed for Americans to use to make the most important decision any citizen can make about their country, namely who should run it. This is true most particularly because there is so little difference between Obama and Romney and because, anyway, neither can make much difference to the way the U.S.'s future will unfold.

Mind you, I'd still for vote Obama. He's so much the smarter of the pair.

ANCA should have endorsed Obama in spite of broken promises

Arminé Guledjian, The Armenian Reporter, Washington, DC, Friday November 02, 2012

While I understand ANCA's disappointment with the Obama administration, I am deeply troubled that ANCA would not endorse the President vs. Mitt Romney. A broader view of the world necessarily leads one to conclude that a Romney presidency will be detrimental to Armenia. I can write a thesis about this topic but will stick with the few points below:

1) Romney and his foreign policy advisors are antagonistic towards Russia. While I'm not saying

Russia is an ideal country, it is, has been, and will be an ally of Armenia.

2) Romney and his foreign policy advisors are more likely to bomb Iran mainly to prove they are "tough." I believe this type of action and talk will make Iran more unified in its opposition to the west, and will destabilize the region even further. Any bombs dropping on Iran are bad for Armenia.

3) Romney and his foreign policy advisors will support Azerbaijan more strongly than any Obama representative has done or will do. The key reasons being: 1) as a beacon of opposition to Iran, 2) oil and pipelines, and 3) in the case of Nagorno-Kharbagh, merely as an opposition to Russia.

4) The Romney team has adopted a very aggressive and warlike stance towards Syria. Involving the United States directly into an armed conflict in Syria, including bombing, will destabilize the region even further and is negative for Armenians in Syria as well as Armenia itself.

One look at the foreign policy advisors surrounding Romney, one can see the trouble Armenia is in if they are elected to office. In this world circumstance we find ourselves in now, neither candidate will use the word Genocide. Obama's "Metz Yeghern" was as close as we're going to get in the next 4 - 8 years. But until that day, we should strive to secure the security, economic and social wellbeing, as well as existence of Armenia. By not publicly stating that ANCA does not support the foreign policies of the proposed Mitt Romney foreign policy team and thereby, by default, endorses President Obama, ANCA itself puts Armenia into harms way.

This is why I am deeply disappointed in ANCA both as an American and as an Armenian.