

Choice in November - Nader v. Twiddle Dee or Twiddle Dum

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Region: [USA](#)

Global Research, June 04, 2008

4 June 2008

Each election cycle, hope springs eternal. Candidates promise change and voters buy it. Intelligent ones. People who know better or should. The current campaign highlights it. A surge is building for Obama, not for what he is. For what people think or hope he is - a populist, progressive, man of the people, a new course for America.

After the final June 3 primaries and "rush of superdelegates," according to The New York Times, they're stuck with him. The Times reports that he crossed "over the threshold (to) the 2118 delegates needed to be nominated...." Obama marked the occasion as his chance to "bring a new and better day to America (as) the 'Democratic' nominee for president of the United States of America."

It's not how John Pilger sees him. In a recent article, he calls him America's "great liberal hope." He compares his campaign to Bobby Kennedy's in 1968 and says: "Both offer a false hope that they can bring peace and racial harmony to all Americans." Kennedy spoke of "return(ing) government to the people" and giving "dignity and justice" to the oppressed. "Obama is his echo" with familiar promises of change, charting a new course, sweeping government reforms, addressing people needs, and "ensur(ing) that the hopes and concerns of average Americans speak louder in Washington than the hallway whispers of high-priced lobbyists."

He claims to be an up from the grassroots activist. In fact, he cashed in on opportunism all the way - to the Illinois Senate in 1996. Then after failing to win a US House seat, it was up a notch to the Senate in 2005 after his November 2004 election. He promised hope but delivered betrayal. He's beholden to power and doesn't relate well to ordinary constituents who backed him, including his black community base.

If he's nominated and wins in November, Marc Crispin Miller's "Fooled Again" will apply but in this case to promises made, then broken. Miller's book refers to the stolen 2004 presidential election. Kerry won big, Bush remained president, Kerry admitted to the author he knew he'd been had, then disavowed he ever said it in reverse "profile of courage" fashion.

An Obama victory will go Lincoln one better. It'll prove that the electorate can be fooled "all of the time" - at least enough of them to matter. And that leaves out election fraud in an age when:

- candidates are pre-selected;
- big money owns them;

- independents are shut out;
- the media ignore them;
- they keep people uninformed;
- issues aren't addressed;
- voter disenfranchisement is rife;
- machines do our voting;
- losers are declared winners; and

— not just for president. It's democracy American-style, a long-standing tradition, and Chicagoans know it well. They remember an earlier mayor urging people to "vote early and often." They also recall the pol who "want(ed) to be buried in Chicago (when he died) so (he could) stay active in politics."

In an age of technological wonders, why not. The Democrat machine is so entrenched, it hasn't had real opposition since Republican mayor "Big Bill" Thompson lost to Democrat Anton Cermak in 1931. And the Daleys (father and son) practically own the office it's controlled for 40 of the last 53 years with no visible contender in sight and a new generation upcoming.

On the national level, it's just as bad - a one party state according to Gore Vidal: the Property or Monied Party with two wings. Ralph Nader calls them a "two-party (twiddle dee v. twiddle dum) dictatorship." So do others, yet most people buy the rhetoric and ignore the evidence. The criminal class in Washington is bipartisan. Democrats are interchangeable with Republicans. Differences between them are minor. Not a dime's worth to matter. Whoever wins in November, the outcome is certain. Voters again will lose. They'll get the best democracy money can buy but none of it earmarked for them.

Wars of aggression won't end. Repressive laws won't be repealed. Corruption will stay deeply embedded. Privatizing everything will be de rigueur. Monied interests will be hugely rewarded. Militarizing and annexing the continent will go forward. Voter interests will go largely unaddressed. And promises made will again prove empty. Here's a sampling from the Nader-Gonzales '08 web site. It mentions "Twelve Issues that Matter for 2008," where the candidates stand on them, and Nader, Obama/Clinton and McCain columns showing "on" or "off" the table:

- National health insurance: Nader on; the others off; Nader favors a single-payer, government-funded, "private delivery, free choice of hospital and doctor, public insurance system;" the need is critical at a time health care costs are soaring; many can't afford them; millions are uninsured; millions more underinsured; and Democrats and Republicans are dismissive and beholden to providers that fund them;

- Wasteful military spending: Nader on; the others off; America spends more on defense and security than all other nations combined - a conservatively estimated annual \$1.1 trillion with all military, homeland security, veterans, NASA, debt service and miscellaneous related allocations included at a time the country has no visible enemies; it threatens world security and the nation by heading it for fiscal insolvency or worse;

— No to nuclear power and yes to solar: Nader on; the others off; Nader opposes Big Oil subsidies and ones for nuclear, electric, coal mining and biofuel interests; he advocates a sustainable energy policy that includes renewables like wind and solar;

— Corporate crime and welfare: Nader on; the others off; the issue - hundreds of billions to corporate coffers; taxpayers fund them; hundreds of thousands “injured and sickened each year by preventable corporate-bred violence;” unsafe products; medical negligence; harmful pollution; public corruption and financial fraud; politicians ignore it; so will the three leading contenders; ordinary people are acutely affected;

— Open presidential debates: Nader on; the others off; independents are shut out; free, fair, and open elections aren’t possible; real democracy is denied; big money assures it; the criminal class is empowered; and people are left out;

— A carbon pollution tax: Nader on; the others off; he fears the planet is overheating; calls the danger great; greenhouse gases must be curbed; and making them more expensive is how;

— Changing Middle East policy; ending two illegal wars; Palestinian repression as well: Nader on; the others off; he proposes rapidly withdrawing troops from Iraq; setting a six month timetable; resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict equitably; ending the Gaza siege; supporting a two-state solution; and being forthrightly committed to Middle East peace;

— Impeaching Bush/Cheney: Nader on, the others off; he cites constitutional law experts saying the president and vice-president are guilty of at least “five categories” of “high crimes and misdemeanors;” they should be impeached and removed from office; Congress is responsible; failing to act affronts the Constitution, international law and citizenry;

— Repealing anti-labor Taft-Hartley law: Nader on; the others off; it harmed workers for 60 years; it undermined the landmark Wagner Act of 1935 that guaranteed labor the right to bargain collectively on equal terms with management for the first time ever; those rights no longer exist; restoring them is essential;

— Enacting a Wall Street securities speculation tax: Nader on; the others off; speculation is rampant; multi-trillions of dollars are involved; public welfare is harmed; instability increased; the economy damaged; and “free market” deregulation allows it; it favors wealth over people;

— Ending ballot access obstructionism: Nader on; the others off; he favors “one federal standard for federal ballot access” in all states; it must be simple and fair to all candidates; efforts to exclude independents must be stopped; current laws obstruct democratic governance; they further disenfranchise voters; and

— Ending corporate personhood; the Supreme Court granted it in 1886; it gave corporations the same constitutional rights as people and allowed them to grow to their present size and dominance: Nader on; the others off.

Nader’s site states that “these twelve issues represent the tip of the political iceberg.” But they show how big money controls both parties. Without change, democratic governance is impossible, and that, for Nader (in a May 31 Wall Street Journal interview), is today’s “central” political issue - “the domination of corporations over our elections, and over so

many things where commercial values used to be verboten -commercializing childhood....universities (nearly everything). What's happened in the last 25 years is an overwhelming swarm of commercial supremacy (and) Obama has bought into that."

Obama's Record - The Measure of the Man

He preaches change but supports the status quo. He's beholden to power as a stealth DLC member that's essential for any Democrat aspirant. It makes him gallingly disingenuous, deceitful to voters, and "safe" for corporate supporters who back him. He says individual donors supply most of his funding, that he gets none of it from lobbyists, and that they won't crowd out working Americans if he's elected.

In fact, big money owns him. He raises over \$1 million a day. Wall Street lords love him. So do corporate law firms; other finance, insurance and real estate interests; the health industry; communications and electronics firms; various other businesses; and the Center for Responsive Politics reports that his top five donors are corporate lobbyists - the same ones he claims to take no money from.

He preaches opposition to NAFTA and wants it renegotiated. It's a "charade" says Nader. "There's no way he'll touch NAFTA or WTO." His health care plan puts insurance companies in charge and lets Big Pharma price-gouge consumers. He's beholden to corporate interests. "If he wins, his appointments will give "lobbies and PACs (what they) want." He knows how Washington works; was fully briefed to be sure; and he "made his peace with that." He's a political animal like the others. Big money is comforted, and why not. No one gets top Washington jobs unless they're "safe." For president, it's practically a blood oath, and Obama qualifies.

Nader dissects his record. He's party line all the way, not a "transforming leader," and his running mate, Matt Gonzales, goes further. He calls his voting record "uninspired." Appalling would be more descriptive. While still in the Illinois legislature, he opposed the Iraq war. Then as a 2004 US Senate candidate, he switched and claimed "There's not that much difference between my position and George Bush's...." When elected, he proved it. He supported every defense budget and war supplemental and as president will "expand and modernize the military." He voted to confirm Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State despite her falsifying justification for war. There's more. He:

- supports Homeland Security funding; like the Patriot Act, it centralizes unprecedented military and law enforcement authority under the executive; it subverts constitutional rights and furthers global dominance in the name of "national security;" it created the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) that functions like a national Gestapo;
- backed reauthorizing the Patriot Act in July 2005 with its police state provisions;
- campaigned in 2006 for Joe Lieberman against anti-war candidate Ned Lamont;
- supports permanent occupation of Iraq; stops just short of saying it; refuses to back a timetable for withdrawal; and wants to add 100,000 combat troops to the military;
- caved to Israeli Lobby pressure; receptive to attacking Iran, removing Hugo Chavez, but says he'll talk to them first; then maybe not; he's double standard on most issues - rhetoric to voters; assurances to backers;

- in a May 23 speech, showed deference to Miami’s Cuban exile community; one source described him as “electrifying;” a year ago he supported ending the embargo; no longer unless Cuba becomes a willing client state;
- voted with Republicans for the Class Action Fairness Act (CAFA); it gives federal courts jurisdiction over fairer state ones for many class-action lawsuits over \$5 million; corporations wanted it; Obama obliged;
- equivocates on controversial issues like “No Child Left Behind;” it’s a corporate scheme to privatize education and end a 373 year tradition; he says the law “demoralizes our teachers (but) the goals of this law were the right ones” – translation: he supports ending public education;
- opposed an amendment capping credit card interest rates at 30%; it was wholly inadequate but would have set a precedent to lower them further;
- acted so much like Republicans, he’s one of them on most issues:
- supporting medical providers in wrongful injury cases;
- letting mining companies strip mine everything; practically steal government lands to do it; and cheat taxpayers out of public revenues;
- voted for the Bush administration’s 2005 Energy Policy Act in spite of criticizing it in campaign rhetoric; it was drafted in secret; provides huge industry subsidies; \$6 billion to Big Oil and Gas; and a cornucopia of other industry handouts;
- backs nuclear power; loose industry regulation; \$12 billion in subsidies; and numerous other benefits to promote a dangerous technology;
- harmful biofuels production and other agribusiness interests, including multi-billion dollar subsidies;
- opposes universal single-payer national health care, the hundreds of billions it would save, and the huge need for it among tens of millions of uninsured and underinsured;
- claims opposition to NAFTA, but campaigned in 2004 for more deals like it;
- voted against a 2005 Commerce Appropriations Bill amendment; it would have disfavored offshoring jobs by stopping companies doing business abroad from denying workers organizing rights, minimum wages, and other protections;
- assured AIPAC he’s uncompromisingly pro-Israel; supports continued annual funding; and backed off from earlier promises about a just end to the conflict;
- supports the death penalty and brutish prison-industrial complex; it affects his people mostly in the world’s largest gulag;
- voted for repressive immigration legislation; it enhances border security; (selectively) penalizes employers; deploys National Guard troops to the border; and imprisons and deports undocumented workers without due process;
- voted to confirm Robert Gates as Defense Secretary, John Negroponte as Director of

National Intelligence, and Michael Chertoff as Secretary of Homeland Security - a deplorable roguish threesome;

- voted against the Military Commissions Act of 2006 but supports kangaroo court military tribunals for Guantanamo detainees;

- appointed billionaire Penny Pritzker as his campaign finance chairperson; she and her family were involved in predatory lending schemes, including subprime ones; she also served on the Board of the failed Pritzker family-owned Superior Bank in Hinsdale, IL; because of poor lending practices, sloppy bookkeeping and likely fraud, it cost the FDIC \$700 million and depositors \$65 million;

- equivocates but his rhetoric and body language are clear; he supports the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act (S. 1959); it's called the "thought crimes" act; it passed the House overwhelmingly last October and awaits final resolution in the Senate;

- firmly opposes impeaching Bush and Cheney, and

- on June 1 matched John Kerry with his own reverse "profile of courage" act; he resigned from Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ; it followed "controversy" over Reverend Jeremiah Wright's nobility; he spoke truths too "uncomfortable" for Obama to embrace; he demurred at first and now is firm; political opportunism outweighs righteousness as prime time campaign 2008 approaches;

This is the same JFK/RFK incarnate, a fresh new face, the "great liberal hope," the smooth-talking campaigner who understands who butters his bread. The same goes for Clinton and McCain. Never for Nader, and it's why he's disdained. He's beholden to people, not entrenched interests; the rarest of political candidates - an anti-politician who says what he means and means what he says and has lifetime achievements to prove it. From his web site:

- one of the 20th century's 100 Most Influential Americans according to Time magazine;

- over four decades of public service; organized millions of citizens; and formed over 100 public interest groups;

- from his 1965 "Unsafe at Any Speed" book (the first of many plus numerous articles), he helped "create a framework of laws, regulatory agencies, and federal standards that have improved the quality of life for two generations of Americans;"

- he was instrumental in enacting OSHA, the EPA, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Safe Drinking Water Act;

- in 1969, he founded the Center for Study of Responsive Law; staffed mostly by students, they became known as "Nader's Raiders" - activists on numerous consumer issues;

- he also founded the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), Center for Auto Safety, Public Citizen, Clean Water Action Project, Disability Rights Center, Pension Rights Center, Project for Corporate Responsibility, and Multinational Monitor on corporate practices internationally;

— for the last decade, he’s been in three presidential races for a common purpose - to empower people over privilege; and

— his achievements are impressive - safer cars, healthier food, cleaner air and water, and safer work environments; yet he’s only scratched the surface and at age 74 keeps working for the public interest and social justice.

He’s what everyone in government should be, but few ever are. It’s why he’s shut out, largely ignored, even insulted like the Journal did on May 31. Disdainfully, it called him a “spoiler” despite its half opinion page interview - but for its low readership Saturday edition with a disparaging dour (somewhat threatening) image to highlight it.

He’s denied participation in presidential debates, and in 2000 was threatened with arrest and expelled from the grounds for even showing up. He’s kept off ballots, and in 2004 filed suit. He charged the DNC with conspiring to keep him from taking votes from John Kerry and trying to bankrupt his campaign by suing to deny him ballot entry in 18 states. It’s how independent candidates are treated when they’re prominent figures like Nader. It reflects the sorry state of democracy and tyranny of a “two-party dictatorship;” of money over people; of empowered interests over public service; of the common good nowhere in sight. It’s a process begging for change, the heart of Nader’s activism, and reason he’s running - to spread the word at the most perilous time in world history. If not here, where? If not now, when? If not him or others like him, who?

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