

High Hope for a Change in the USA

by Janet Jagan – October 11, 2008

The US Presidential campaign is moving into high gear as the date of the November elections comes closer. The Wall Street crisis which eventually led to a \$700 billion rescue by the US Congress apparently gave a boost to Democratic candidate Barack Obama and this was enhanced by the Vice Presidential debate between Republican Sarah Palin and Democrat Joe Biden. Usually, not that much attention is paid to this debate, only one, to three between the Presidential candidates.

However, on this occasion, the choice of the Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin as John McCain's running mate has caused a great deal of interest, both positive and negative. A massive television audience listened to that debate. I was one of the listeners. I found the Republican Party Vice Presidential candidate to be a very attractive woman with a winning smile, which she used frequently, street smart, glib but quite shallow. It made me wonder how Mc Cain could have picked such a person to be his running mate. I believe many, many others wondered at his wisdom and ability to make sound choices and judgment on the basis of his selection of Sarah Palin. If he wanted a woman VP candidate, there are many to choose from – all much better equipped for the job than Palin. There are women governors, mayors, members of the House of Representatives and Senate and many serving in high places that have excellent requirements in other areas of American life.

But why did he pick Palin? If nothing else, it is an indication of very poor judgment and American voters want someone at the helm of government whose judgment they can rely on. Also, there is always the possibility of the Vice President becoming President if something happens to the President. Can anyone, in their wildest imagination think of Sarah Palin as President? A really dreadful possibility if McCain were to win – but it looks now that Obama is pretty far ahead in the polls!

At the VP debate last week, Senator Joe Biden came out as the easy winner. His knowledge and experience were in dynamic contrast to the shallowness of Palin's utterances. She carefully, one might even say, astutely, avoided deeper concepts that she could not handle like deregulation on Wall Street and climate change. She overdid her references to Alaska, showing the limitations of her vision.

I thought Biden superb when he remarked about the self description by Mc Cain of being a "maverick." Said Biden – he is no maverick and gave some examples. I ran to my dictionary to be sure about the term and then I understood how emphatic Biden was on that point A maverick is a "masterless" person. Obviously, Mc Cain is not such a person – he is a Republican and the Republicans – are now in power and their man is President George Bush who has ruled for 8 years. He has made a terrible mess of the USA at so many levels – economic with poverty, and unemployment growing and with the collapse of the banking system that required a bail-out of \$700 billion, plus the loss of homes by hundreds of thousands of Americans, plus the costly and dangerous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which have brought such condemnation and hatred to the USA worldwide. Not to be forgotten are the many violations of human rights that have arisen over Guantanamo Bay and the awful US practice of rendition plus the use of torture on prisoners. And it is generally accepted that the War on Terror has failed. Mc Cain's Party has always supported its President!

In the Presidential race, Barack Obama has risen in status and popularity due to many factors – his promise of genuine change, his choice of the VP candidate, his demeanour, his way of dealing with criticisms and his behaviour in important matters. Take the Wall Street crisis. McCain, in an attempt to show his GREAT concern, announced that he would leave his campaigning and return to Washington to influence and help resolve the situation. Obama took no such dramatic, publicity-aimed stance, but continued his campaign and made a visit to Washington as a Senator, to take a position on proposals to solve the crisis. He didn't "grandstand" as did McCain, and won more respect for his calm and careful appraisal of the financial crisis. Eventually McCain had to give up his promise to stay in Washington – he was labeled a nuisance – and go back to the campaign trail. Thus did the two show up their personalities and capabilities in this crucial national problem.

The Tuesday Presidential debate, again, showed Obama as the best of the two candidates. He was clear and forthright in his answers, but the debate was soured by the incessant bickering of the two candidates. My impression was that Obama would have come out stronger if he had ignored McCain's jabs. Also, in my opinion both failed to take acceptable positions on Pakistan, and both reflected the strong Washington undercurrent that tends towards military solutions, rather than the use of the United Nations – as did President Bush. Sadly, the United Nations appeared to be out of the vision of the two candidates.

All over the world, the US elections are being followed closely and it appears that those who wish for a peaceful world and the peaceful solution of conflicts are hoping for a Democratic Party victory. Within the USA, at this point in time, it appears that the Democratic Party Presidential candidate Barack Obama will win. However, nothing is certain until the actual count of votes takes place. We can only hope for an end to the Republican regime that fostered a warmongering President, and a start on the change so much desired in the USA and everywhere.

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