



Presidential Elections: Myths and Deceits

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Every aspect of this year's US Presidential election has been fraught with myths, distortions, fabrications, wishful thinking and invented fears.

We will proceed to discuss facts and fictions.

Electoral Participation

The mass media, parties and candidates emphasized the '*unprecedented voter turnout*' in the elections. **In fact, 48% of the eligible voters abstained.**

Prof. James Petras (right)



In other words, nearly half of the electorate did not vote. There were many reasons, including widespread disgust at both major party candidates and the weakness of 'third parties'. This includes disappointed Bernie Sanders supporters angry over the Democratic Party's cynical manipulation of the primary nomination process. Others were unable to vote in their neighborhoods because US elections are held on a regular workday, unlike in other countries. Others cast protest votes against economic programs or candidates reflecting their distrust and sense of impotence over policy. Eligible voters generally expressed reservations over the gap between campaign promises and post campaign policies. These political attitudes toward elections and candidates are deep-seated among those who 'stayed home'.

In contrast among registered voters (53% of the electorate) over 90% cast their ballot. Ultimately, the presidential elections were decided by just half of the eligible voters with the winning candidate receiving about 25% eligible votes. This is not a robust mandate. Furthermore, Clinton may have 'lost' with the plurality of popular votes, since the US Presidency is ultimately decided by the '*Electoral College*'. In this case, Trump secured more states earning substantially more Electoral College votes, while the losing candidate's votes were more concentrated in big cities and large coastal states.

The Myth of the Trump Revolution

Trump's campaign displayed the typical demagoguery of US politicians. In previous campaigns Barack Obama's promised to work for peace, domestic prosperity, social justice and immigration reform. Once elected, Obama reneged on his pledge and continued to wage the old wars and launched new ones (seven altogether for the 'peace candidate'). He approved a \$2 trillion dollars Wall Street and bank 'bailout', while leaving over 3 million family home mortgages in foreclosure. He rounded up and deported two million immigrant workers. Meanwhile wage inequality between black and white workers actually widened; and overt police violence against black youth increased. We can expect Trump to follow Obama's pattern of double speak and reverse his campaign promises.

So far, Trump seems to have appointed conventional Republicans to his Cabinet posts. Treasury and Commerce Secretaries will remain in the hands of Wall Street insiders. Prominent Republican warmongers will manage foreign policy.

Meanwhile, Trump has been on a post-election charm offensive to woo traditional conservative Republican Congressional leaders who had opposed his candidacy during the primaries. They will work with Trump in lowering taxes while eliminating government regulations and environmental controls – policies that have long been on their agenda. On the other hand, Trump's populist pledge to '*reindustrialize*' America will be opposed by Congressional Republicans with ties to Wall Street and financial speculators. Trump's promise to persuade US multi-nationals to repatriate their billions and headquarters to the US will be opposed by the majority Republican Congressional leadership. Even a Trump Republican majority on the Supreme Court, will veto any Trump initiative to 'force' big business to sacrifice its tax-free overseas profits to come home and 'Make America Great Again'.

In other words, Trump will implement only policies that coincide with the traditional Republican agenda and will continue some version of Obama's pro-Wall Street policy. Instead of Obama's executive tax loopholes benefiting big business, Trump will do it through legislation. Where Obama made pronouncement about supporting Civil rights and justice for African-Americans but actually ended up increasing police power and impunity, Trump will simply make modifications directly favoring the police state via Congressional legislation or Presidential decree. Whereas Obama rounded up and expelled 2 million immigrant workers, Trump will go after an additional 2 million Latinos on the basis of 'criminality'. Obama relied on border police; Trump will beef up border patrols and concoct some agreement with Mexico's conservative counterpart – short of erecting 'the Great Wall'.

Obama and his Democratic predecessor, President 'Bill' Clinton cut the proportion of unionized workers in the private sector to 8%, through economic and labor policies backed by millionaire trade union bureaucrats. Trump, on the other hand, will crudely dismiss these impotent 'union' functionaries and hacks while slashing whatever remains of worker rights.

Presidents Obama and Clinton linked 'identity groups' with the interests of bankers, billionaires and militarists, but Trump will toss out 'identity politics' in favor of populist appeals to construction workers and infrastructure contractors while attracting the same Wall Street executives, billionaires and militarists that had worked closely with previous administrations.

Trump's Wall Street appeal was clear after his victory when the stock market broke new highs, jumping 1,000 points between November 4 and 10th.

The pro-Clinton Wall Streeter boosters were smartly outflanked by the 'silent majority' of financial CEO's who applauded Trump's promises of deregulation and corporate tax cuts.

Despite the certainty of President Trump's reneging on all his promises to American workers, he will still retain the support of small and medium businesses and professionals, who outnumber and outvote the so-called 'white worker vote'.

Trump Complies with Rightwing Republican Agenda

To unify the Republican Party and gratify the rightwing electoral base Trump will offer up some symbolic gratification, such as:

1. Increase frontier security – He will triple the number of border patrol officers and extend the Obama-Clinton's search and expel formula. His PR machines will crank out timely reports of mass deportations of Latino workers to titillate the Anglo voters – while reassuring agribusiness and other industries that their access to cheap imported labor will continue.
2. He will appoint a rightwing WASP (first in a long time) to the Supreme Court after decades of 'identity appointments'. His court will try to reverse Roe versus Wade on access to abortion– satisfying Catholics, fundamentalists, orthodox Jews and Protestants – sending the issue back to the reactionary states. Women in the urban centers and large population coastal states will retain reproductive health rights while poor and rural women will see significant regression.
3. Trump will 'renegotiate NAFTA' without reversing current free trade provisions, offering tax incentives and tax penalties to discourage future flight but with little effect.
4. Trump will force a repeal of the multi-party nuclear agreement with Iran, but he will not re-impose international sanctions because of Russian and Chinese vetoes in the UN Security Council and the lucrative billion- dollar trade deals signed between Iran and Germany and France. Trump's Iran caper may pleasure Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli lobby, but this would force him to violate his own stated pledge to avoid more Middle East entanglements.
5. Trump's anti-Muslim policy will be reduced to writing tighter immigration rules for Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia, but not include total exclusion. These watered-down policies will quell opposition and satisfy Islamo-phobes.
6. President Trump's deregulation of environmental protections will alienate ecologists and the science community but will appeal to big energy corporations and their employees, workers and gas property leasers. However, the rest of the world will continue to treat climate change as real and Trump will end up isolated in a climate-denial corner with the reactionary presidents of Poland and kleptocratic-Ukraine.
7. Trump will face stiff opposition when he tries to break the newly restored diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba to please his rightwing Cuban exile supporters. But the deals will go thru: On December 1, 2016 Delta Airlines will begin three daily flights, joining a dozen other airlines to the delight of thousands of travel agency owners and employees as well as tens of thousands of tourists and visitors. US business and agro exporters will object to any re-imposition of trade sanctions. Trump will probably end up tossing some bones to the rightwing exile community in the way of

rhetoric while maintaining diplomatic ties and Obama's embargo. He may expand the US base in Guantanamo.

8. Trump will continue to support the right-wing '*golpistas*' in Venezuela but will not commit US troops for an invasion. He will make deals with right wing and center-left regimes in the Latin America without pushing for coups or exclusionary regional trade pacts.

9. Trump will end economic sanctions against Russia and then negotiate some cooperation agreement with Putin to bomb Syria's Islamist terrorists '*into the stone age*' and withdraw US commitments to the Saudis, Gulf Monarchies and its jihadi mercenaries on regional 'regime change'. He will renegotiate trade relations with China to encourage greater reciprocity, investments and exchange rates (if necessary).

Conclusion

On vital economic policies, Trump will pursue **traditional Republican business policies** - the linchpin being lower taxes and fewer regulations.

On identity politics (as well as human rights), Trump will tighten restrictions on access to abortion and immigration to satisfy the right-wing moralists and religious fundamentalists.

Trump will not confront Wall Street, the multi-nationals, the military industrial complex or the pro-Israel billionaires and lobbies.

US workers will find very few new well-paying jobs except in select infrastructure projects.

The industrial rust belt will continue to rust.

The tens of thousands of public sector workers and professionals slashed by Trump's pledge to cut government will not find decent jobs in the private sector.

Over time, Trump supporters who flocked to his promises for economic change will be replaced by a motley collection of Bible thumpers of all colors and faiths. There will emerge a new groundswell of frustrated workers, employees and professionals — but where will they turn? Certainly they must not return to the increasingly discredited 'progressive' Bernie Sanders, who perfected his role as political 'Judas Goat' herding his reluctant supporters into the blood-stained Wall Street Corral of the War Goddess Hillary Clinton - known as the Democratic Party.

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