President Barak Obama's Second Term:

More Reaganesque Acting or Bold Nixonian Action

by John Stanton

President Barak Obama will easily defeat his Republican opponent former Governor Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

There was never any doubt about the outcome.

American media corporations portrayed the 2012 presidential election as a vibrant and close contest between Obama and Romney, even though the outcome in Obama's favor was certain from the outset.

After the billions are spent and the mountains of election data sorted through, the reason for Obama's victory will be incredibly simple: Romney is not emotionally capable of empathizing, nor would he want to, with Americans of comparatively meager means (unless it is in service of the Mormon Church). He is incapable of "feeling the pain" of the American people.

Romney can't "act the part" whereas Obama has taken the political acting profession to an entirely new level, and, in the process, has surpassed the "Great Communicator", President Ronald Reagan, in the ability to attach to the majority of the American people in some form whether it be through basketball/sports, beer making, raising young children, or making sure he does not get on the wrong side of his wife, the First Lady, Michelle Obama. As he is seen through the media, President Obama appears to most Americans to be a fun guy to be around and has the standard dad/husband pleasure and pain. Shoot some hoops and then go for a burger and a beer. What is more American than that?

Oscar for Best Actor in a Plutonomy, Theatric Election: Barak Obama

And though President Obama takes pride in his wealth and his elite membership in the American ruling class (like Romney) he manages to convince much of the American populace that he is very much the "common man" which, of course, he is not. As with all great actors playing a part, it is nearly impossible to watch a performance and separate the character/role from the actor's real personality. Such is the case with President Obama.

Conversely, Romney's demeanor suggests that he should be wearing a crown of jewels atop his head. He comes off as the character Crassus portrayed by Lawrence Olivia in the movie Spartacus. He appears to be certain that 50 percent of Americans are freeloaders. Romney is the quintessential American Plutocrat, part of Citicorp's Plutonomy (Equity Strategy: Plutonomy, 2005).

"In a Plutonomy there is no such animal as the U.S. consumer or the UK consumer, or indeed the Russian consumer. There are rich consumers, few in number, but disproportionate in the gigantic slice of income and consumption they take. There are the rest, the "non-rich", the multitudinous many, but only accounting for surprisingly small bites of the national pie.

The top 1% of households in the U.S., (about 1 million households) accounted for about 20% of overall U.S. income in 2000, slightly smaller than the share of income of the bottom 60% of households put together. That's about 1 million households compared with 60 million households, both with similar slices of the income pie! Clearly, the analysis of the top 1% of U.S. households is paramount. The usual analysis of the "average" U.S. consumer is flawed from the start. To continue with the U.S., the top 1% of households also account for 33% of net worth, greater than the bottom 90% of households put together. It gets better (or worse, depending on your political stripe) - the top 1% of households account for 40% of financial net worth, more than the bottom 95% of households put together...We hear so often about "the consumer". But when we examine the data, there is no such thing as "the consumer" in the U.S. or UK, or other Plutonomy countries. There are rich consumers, and there are the rest. The rich are getting richer, we have contended, and they dominate consumption."

American Political Process: Staged Theater, Duopoly, Money, Raging Repetitive Commentary

The US election process is tightly regulated by both Republicans and Democrats ensuring that only in the rarest of instances will third, fourth or fifth generation parties appear to challenge the duopoly. The presidential campaign, like sporting contests, is reported in electronic and print form in a dramatic fashion similar to that used by legendary sports broadcaster Howard Cosell calling a boxing match featuring Mohammed Ali.

Cosell's style is used by news readers, editors and reporters to highlight, again-and-again-and-again the discombobulating comments of Obama and Romney. The media repetitively publicizes the most incendiary statements by the two candidates in support of open conflict with Iran (soft conflict with China and Russia) thereby pushing the agenda and cash from Israel and Saudi Arabia directly into the American political pipeline. The mind numbing recycling of the news is at its worst as the candidates soothing propaganda that wildly distorts the seriousness of unemployment, too little government revenue, climate change, a black hole of personal and national debt, child poverty, and the deteriorating state of human capital and infrastructure in the United States is repeated over and again.

All of this comes between advertisements.

Over the decades, American democracy's legions of circus promoters (pundits, pollsters, academics, Electoral College experts, politicians, marketers, corporations, institutions, et al) have convinced the electorate that American-style democracy is sacred and immutable, that American human capital matters at the voting box, and that political candidates are speaking directly to the people.

That is incorrect.

America's national politicians and leaders are actually speaking to each other via media outlets. The American people are simply listening in on the conversation.

What really matters besides the contestant's acting ability, of course, is money. According to Open Secrets nearly \$1 billion has been raised by the two presidential candidates: \$432,197,459 for Obama and \$279,343,000 Romney. Those numbers will increase as November's election day rolls around. Cash

is flooding into the presidential (and congressional) campaigns thanks to the US Supreme Court's decision in Citizen United which holds, in part, that corporations can indirectly and lavishly fund the candidate of their choice.

That's not too surprising as the American election process has come to resemble an auction with the congressional seat or Oval Office going to the highest bidder. A new twist thanks to Citizen's United is that foreign corporations, via non-profits, can get deeper into and influence the outcome of US elections.

According to the <u>Sunlight</u> Foundation, "Citizens United allows 501(c)(4) nonprofits to fund independent expenditures and electioneering communications without disclosing where the money came from. Citizens United created an environment in which it is perfectly legal for a shell non-profit corporation to engage in election-related spending on behalf of a hidden interest. And there is nothing to ensure that the hidden interest is not a foreign national, a foreign company or a foreign government..."

In Citizen's United, Justice John Paul Stevens' dissenting opinion opposed the cash-for-politicians majority ruling adding that the deceit quotient will rise. "...for-profit corporations associated with electioneering communications will often prefer to use nonprofit conduits with "misleading names," such as And For The Sake Of The Kids, "to conceal their identity" as the sponsor of those communications, thereby frustrating the utility of disclosure laws...It might also be added that corporations have no consciences, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires. Corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings, to be sure, and their "personhood" often serves as a useful legal fiction. But they are not themselves members of "We the People" by whom and for whom our Constitution was established."

Capitalists meet the Socialists

It is to the World Socialist Website that we turn for an excellent insight about the capitalist American election process. Why not?

The presidential election of 2012 may be decided a month prior to the official election date in November. "The states of North Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, New Hampshire and Michigan, the first four considered key battlegrounds, have already begun absentee balloting, while Iowa, another of the most closely contested states, begins both absentee and in-person early voting on September 27. Early voting in Ohio, where the Obama and Romney campaigns have devoted the most time and resources, begins on Tuesday, October 2, one day before the first nationally televised presidential debate. Florida begins absentee voting the same day. Nearly 30 percent of the votes in the 2008 election—just under 40 million—were cast before Election Day, and the proportion in 2012 is likely to be even larger, as the two capitalist parties and the super PACs formed by their wealthy backers are making efforts to "lock in" votes as early as possible.

According to a report in Politico.com, early and absentee voting accounted for more than half the total 2008 vote in at least four of the battleground states, including Colorado, with 79 percent voting early; Nevada, 63 percent; North Carolina, 61 percent; and Florida, 52 percent. More states are likely to fall

into this category in 2012. These figures explain the mood of desperation in the Romney campaign, and Republican Party circles more generally, over polls showing Obama with a small but significant lead in nearly all the battleground states. Even if there is a shift away from Obama in the polls as Election Day approaches, many voters will have already cast their ballots."

President Obama's Legacy: Less Reagan, More Nixon

"The current Democratic administration, in the midst of the second global breakdown of capitalism in the past century, has no New Deal to offer. Obama has not proposed a single genuine social reform," said the World Socialist Website.

And they are correct.

What is Obama going to do for the United States and its people?

What is Obama's legacy at the moment? A strategic and tactical failure in Afghanistan, the killing of Bin Laden, voracious use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for remote assassinations, an immense transfer of American treasure to bailout the finance and banking industries plus sustain/increase military spending, an economy in tatters, a worn out military, a currency war, and a bankrupt domestic and foreign policies. The list could go on and on.

It need not be this way.

President Obama should take a gander at what President Richard Nixon accomplished. Like or hate Nixon, he got things done and created organizations and executed policies radical for their day that have benefited the nation and its people.

Nixon signed off on the Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air Act. He signed the Coastal Zone Management Act; the Ocean Dumping Act; the Marine Mammal Protection Act; the Federal Insecticide, Fungide, Rodenticide Act; the Toxic Substances Control Act; he Endangered Species Act; and the Safe Drinking Water Act. He opened the door to "Red Menaces" Communist China and negotiated with the USSR to the fury of his political friends and foes alike.

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