

## What will be revealed at the Texas and Ohio Primaries

The Ohio and Texas primaries are tomorrow. For the two contenders for the Democratic nomination, the stakes can't be higher. On the outcome of these primaries could hinge the nomination. On that nomination could hinge the general election. On that election depends the path of the free world for the next crucial eight years. On one side, there is optimism, confidence, and a rising awareness that the future rides with them. On the other, a determined core of resilience that yet hides a desperate hope. In that desperation, there resides a central belief that the tide can be turned by reaching to the minds of the American people. Persuasion takes the form of reasoned debate, a look at the facts, a rational assessment of reality, a point by point answer to doubt.

But, in this election, as in most, that is the path to defeat.

Hillary Clinton, a wonderful candidate, a hard worker, a tireless advocate for the issues of the ordinary American has run into a tsunami. It is a tidal wave of feeling, or irrational exuberance, of the heart over the head. It is, in fact, the force of inspiration. No rational analysis, no reasoned debate will win this election. The pundits and analysts will talk all day about policy, white papers, positions on salient issues of the day and detailed plans for the future. They will sagely point out that in opinion polls and in one on ones, the voters have said that they want the candidates to be specific on the issues, to outline their positions, to delineate their plans. That is what the voters will say. It is not how the voters will vote.

What the voters want is for the candidates to tell them that they are in good hands, that the future is a bright one, filled with promise and capable of fulfilling their dreams. They want to know the story of America in the 21st century and they want the candidates to tell them how the ordinary American will fit into that story. They want to know everything

is going to be alright. Most people want to know that white papers exist, that, in fact, there IS a plan. Do they want to delve into that plan? I'm sorry, but I don't think they do. The last several elections have been won on "the economy, stupid" and "A return to moral values" and "we must stop the terrorists". Where were the plans with these things? How detailed were they? What did they have to do with experience?

All elections are about the heart, ultimately. I think we like to believe we vote with our heads, but I think we "feel" the rightness of a candidate, and go from there. We like to feel that the candidate is human. We like to feel that they CARE about us. We like to think that they will take care of us, represent us well, serve as the guardian of our dreams. It is a tall order for anyone, and impossible for the mind to grasp. Not so for the heart. It is our emotions that tell us that there is no inconsistency in these desires. It is our BELIEF that all of this is possible that gives value to ourselves. And, in the end, it is all about value.

Obama has done the best job, so far, of speaking to the heart. Like I said earlier, Hillary did well in New Hampshire because, for a brief time, people forgot everything about her except that she was real. When she showed emotion, she spoke from the heart, and not the head. She connected to the audience, who desperately WANTED to connect to her. She hasn't gone back to that dangerous place again. What Hillary COULD do, if she wanted, is have a conversation with the nation. An intimate conversation. A "fireside chat". Without stridency, without the trappings of the need to be "presidential". With Hillary, inspiration can come from who she really is. She could tell the story of America, as a story, for the next eight years. What will we be like in eight years time? When that wonderful day comes, will we see the world be a better place? How will that look for us? Will we feel that, once more, we can stand with the purpose that has defined being an American for the last 225 years? Will we feel that, once more, we are the beacon for the world, a city on a hill, a nation set apart? Will we feel once more our special destiny that, deep down, has made us all proud to be Americans?

I believe that most Americans feel, at some level, that something has changed over the last eight years. For whatever reason, most Americans feel that we have lost that special place in our own heart that

make us proud of who we were. We have stepped down from the high ground into the darkness of the forest. The candidate who will win this election will take us from the forest to the mountaintop. That candidate will say, "We have been in the dark, but there is a brightness ahead, and it is the light of home. It is where we all reside, all of us Americans. It is a place of beauty and idealism, a place of hope for the future and of faith in ourselves. Within the hearth of our home burns the fire of our possibilities, for it is our aspirations that draw us onward, that give value and purpose to all that we love, and that fuels the strength and determination that has forged our national character. All greatness comes from the inherent belief in the nobleness of what we stand for, in the purpose of our lives. Though we sometimes falter and slip from the heights to which we aspire, in our hearts, we still believe that that height is where we belong";

The candidate who will win this election will never forget that what America wants is to be great. We may not say it, we may not shout it out, but we feel it to the core of our being. And greatness is not defined in military power, or economic wealth, it is defined by the value we give to our dreams.