

THE BATTLE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

As Indo-US engagement deepens, New Delhi is also increasingly sensitive to the political developments within the United States. Understanding the internal dynamics in the US from an Indian perspective has become an urgent necessity for the Indian policy and business communities. The United States Studies Programme of the Observer Research Foundation hopes to meet this requirement. The *ORF Monitor* aims to provide a weekly assessment on the November elections to the White House. We welcome comments and suggestions on the Monitor.



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The Gay Community and Elections'04: Between a Rock and a Hard Place?

By Stuti Banerjee

“Life is divided into two kinds of people- the horrible and the miserable”, said Woody Allen. This statement aptly describes the dilemma being faced by the homosexual community in the United States (US) during these elections. The dominant theme in the 2004 Presidential campaign, for all intent and purposes, might revolve around the question of leadership in the post 9/11 world. But, for gay rights activists who are looking for a resolution on the controversial question of same-sex marriage, there is not much choice between the two candidates. The choice for them is between the Republican candidate- the horrible – who doesn't support them and the Democrat candidate –the miserable- who is not clear about his position.

According to the 2000 US Census, gay and lesbian families reside in 99.3% of the counties in the country as opposed to the 52% recorded in the 1990 Census. One reason for this sudden increase may be that more and more families are coming out in the open to identify themselves as a homosexual family. Ask any American today and s/he will say that s/he is in favor of equal rights for homosexuals in housing, jobs, and government benefits but these same people withdraw their support when it comes to the issue of same-sex marriages.

The gay marriage issue has become a major election issue with a little help from both the Massachusetts Supreme Court, which in a ruling asked the state legislature to rewrite the states marriage laws to benefit homosexual couples, and Gavin Newsom, the mayor of San

Francisco, who in one of his first acts successfully urged city officials to grant licenses for the gay unions that Californians had voted overwhelmingly to forbid when it came up on the ballot during the Presidential Primaries. The debate now primarily revolves around the issue of defining marriage as an institution. And it has divided America into two groups, those who support same-sex marriage and those who oppose it. The debate has been further intensified by the fact that neither candidate- President Bush and Democratic Challenger John Kerry - supports same-sex marriages.

In fact, President Bush has settled for the most repressive of all responses. He has embraced both the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) which proposes to amend the United States Constitution so "that it will... define... marriage as a union of a man and a woman and prevent subsequent legislative and court action from extending marriage rights to unmarried couples," and the existing Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA), a federal law signed by President Clinton in 1996 that "allows states to disregard marriage licenses granted by other states as long as they are same-sex marriages and not opposite-sex ones." This is in stark contrast to Bush's position on the issue in the 2000 election campaign where he had said that this issue should be left to the states to decide upon.

The Republican National Platform has also made it clear that the party is united on its stand and that it will not legalize gay marriages or any other form of legal recognition of same sex couples. Gay Rights groups have called it the "one of the most discriminating platforms in modern history." The strong influence of the social conservatives has succeeded in the use of strong wordings on issues of concern to the gay community. The conservatives are not prepared to compromise on this issue and are reported to be very unhappy by the statements made by Vice President Dick Cheney when he expressed his opposition to a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages at a campaign stopover in Iowa.

In the 2000 election Bush was able to get one in four gay votes, according to Log Cabin, the most prominent of the Republican gay groups. The group was founded in the late 1970's and its name refers to the first Republican President Abraham Lincoln who was born in a Log Cabin and who built the party on the ideals of equality and liberty. Log Cabin says that the Presidents' support for the FMA and the DOMA along with his opposition to Employment Non-Discriminatory Act (ENDA), which prohibits discrimination because of sexual orientation, and child adoption by gay families, may have alienated gay voters, numbering as many as one million, within the party. But, political analysts point out that it is good judgment on the part of Bush to consolidate the support of the conservatives who constitutes a bulk of his votes and have a potential to grow further. On the other hand, it is unclear if the Republican gay votes would have increased all that much even if Bush had adopted a kinder, gentler approach.

Would this then translate into more gay votes for the Democratic challenger? John Kerry was one of the very few senators who voted against the DOMA when it was introduced in 1996 and he is opposed to the FMA too, but at the same time he is opposed to gay marriages. Instead he supports the idea of a 'Civil Union' that would provide gay couples with all the rights that are enjoyed by heterosexual couples. He has steadfastly maintained that he wants gay couples to be endowed with benefits that are given to heterosexual married couples like the right to adopt a child and to sponsor their partners for immigration.

But his support of a Missouri ballot held in August 2004, where 70% of the people of the state voted in favor of banning same-sex marriages through a constitutional amendment, with

no provision for civil unions, has left the gay community angry and confused. It has also provided the Bush campaign with another issue after Iraq with which to paint the challenger as a ‘flip-flopper’.

Given such a Hobson’s choice, the gay community might just decide to swallow its pride and sit at home on Election Day.

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Elections 2000 Revisited

By Cherian Samuel

The events following the Presidential elections of 2000 might have faded from public memory but as Election 2004 comes around, is America ready to vote without a repeat of the snafus that happened the last time around? The answer to that question is apparently “NO”, according to a number of reports brought out by civil rights organizations as November 2 draws closer. That would seem surprising given that the authorities had four whole years to clear up the mess and the fact that President Bush had signed into law the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) which budgeted nearly \$ 4 billion to be spent over three years to reform the voting system.

But, first a quick recap. The election verdict of 2000 remained undecided for nearly a month after Election Day as election irregularities in Florida, where only a couple of hundred votes separated the two candidates, meant that there was no clear winner in that state. There was much controversy over the defective design of the now infamous “butterfly ballot” which led to many voters either voting twice (thus rendering their vote null) or voting for the wrong candidate. Successive recounts only led to more controversy and the matter ended in the courts at local, state and federal levels. The verdict finally went in favour of Bush after the U.S. Supreme Court halted the recount since there was no clear, politically neutral way of determining the election results. This resulted in Bush gaining sufficient electoral votes to catapult him into the Presidency though Gore had won 500,000 more popular votes than Bush.

The genesis of the problem lies in the federal system of government and Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution which places the responsibility of conducting elections upon the states. To complicate matters further, while the ground rules for conducting elections were decided at state level, local governments were given the responsibility of interpreting the rules and configuring voting systems to best meet local needs. Paradoxically, the main argument marshaled in favour of this de-centralised system of voting was that a “diversity of systems would promote innovation and inhibit systemic fraud.”

The southern states, which were dragged kicking and screaming into the Union, took advantage of the lacunae in the system to deny certain categories of voters the right to exercise their franchise, a practice that, civil rights activists say, continues to this day. Attempts to right these anomalies have been made, beginning with the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1870, right through to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, often in the face of strong opposition from the Representatives belonging to the Southern states. Even after these were passed, the Southern states still sought to circumvent the new laws in order to maintain the supremacy of the White vote. Diverse practices and techniques have been utilized over the years, ranging from literacy tests to poll taxes, to disenfranchisement of felons, the majority of whom belonged to the minority communities.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was the landmark legislation which strove to close as many of these loopholes as possible, putting an end to literacy test and poll tax requirements. Many of the provisions of the Act were aimed specifically at forestalling racial discrimination at the polling booth. One way was to strengthen federal oversight of elections, including the dispatch of federal observers to locations where election law violations were reported to be rampant. In the year 2000, for instance, 652 federal observers fanned out over twelve states excluding, lamentably, Florida. In the subsequent elections in 2002, Florida was also included in that list.

States to which Federal Election Monitors were sent in 2000



Civil Rights activists point to the irregularities of 2000 in Florida to maintain that while the more blatant forms of voter discrimination might have been eradicated, other, more subtle methods of disenfranchising the voter were still very much in place. This included the use of antiquated machinery in areas mainly inhabited by poor, mainly minority, voters on the excuse that the local governments in those areas couldn't afford more advanced voting machinery. However, faulty election machinery alone does not tell the whole story. Inefficient election administration by local officials, even prior to the election, on such procedures as preparing voting lists also resulted in large scale disenfranchisement. As the US Commission on Civil Rights noted after conducting its enquiry into the Florida incident, "The disenfranchisement of Florida's voters fell most harshly on the shoulders of black voters.... Black voters were nearly 10 times more likely than non black voters to have their ballots rejected..... Approximately 11 percent of Florida voters were African American; however, African Americans cast about 54 percent of the 180,000 spoiled ballots in Florida during the November 2000 election." Other studies concluded that the story was liable to have been repeated in many states across the country, resulting in a cumulative loss of nearly 4 to 6 million votes, with Florida just happening to land up in the eye of the storm.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) which was signed into law in 2002 has attempted to completely reform and overhaul the election process while continuing to leave control with the state and local governments. As per its preamble, it is “An Act to establish a program to provide funds to States to replace punch card voting systems, to establish the Election Assistance Commission to assist in the administration of Federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain Federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for States and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes.” The Act, thus, is essentially a series of measures that have to be enacted in a time-bound manner with much of the funding for the same provided by the federal government.

While much of the programme is behind schedule, a lot has also been done to ensure that history will not repeat itself. At least in Florida, where the punch card machines that were responsible for the fiasco last time around have all been replaced.

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Republicans Lavish Attention on India, Indian Americans

By Seema Sirohi

The Republican Party delivered a well-timed pitch to both India and Indian Americans at the national convention, embracing them in a big hug of partnership and promise.

The party strategists were savvy and focused -- they used key Indian American donors to reach a larger audience in the United States while sending a clear and positive message to the government in New Delhi through the party platform. The double delivery was impressive, showing that the “outreach” programme of the Republican Party was thoughtfully planned and effectively executed.

Although there were only about 14 Indian American delegates or official participants at the Republican National Convention in New York compared to more than 40 at the Democratic Convention, the Republican camp tried harder to appeal to their issues both before and during the four-day event. They even brought out an advertisement and a letter of appeal to the Indian American community a day after Aug. 15, using India’s independence day as an emotional plug.

A few days later President George Bush gave an interview to an ethnic Indian newspaper, a rare event for any president, and established firmly that he “cares” about the Indian American community. He was probably advised to reach out via the press by his friend and star fund raiser, Dr. Zach Zachariah, a Kerala-born doctor who knows the Bush family well and has been to the White House several times for dinners and movies.

The “big picture” for immigrants during the heavily choreographed and minutely managed convention was The Terminator-turned-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger who celebrated the idea of what an immigrant can achieve in this society. The details were filled out by smaller but no-less-significant events organized to showcase the Indian American community where US Congressmen recalled the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

India’s new ambassador Ronen Sen was in New York to mark India’s presence at the convention. He attended foreign policy events and used the opportunity to meet Republican leaders. He appeared at an event organized by the American Jewish Committee where the triangle of India, Israel and the United States and their common interest in fighting terrorism

was very much in evidence. The Indian American community has unabashed admiration and lust for emulating the American Jewish community and following it to the corridors of influence in Washington.

If words could conquer, the Republican Party certainly came out ahead in delivering them to India and Indian Americans, specially in the party manifesto. By contrast the Democratic Party platform barely acknowledged the presence of India except to remind New Delhi of its tensions with Pakistan and issue warnings about protecting its nuclear weapons from falling into the “wrong hands.”

Even though a party manifesto is never the last word on what an administration may do, it still puts in black and white the vision and basic contours of its policy. No wonder prominent Indian Americans in the Republican Party immediately began crowing about how their party understands the importance of India. Raghvendra Vijaynagar, chairman of the Indian American Republican Council, issued a quick statement reinforcing the point in case anyone missed it.

“I am so pleased to see the detailed analysis of India's rising importance in world affairs and the desire by Republicans to engage India in the GOP platform. Republicans are far more serious about strengthening U.S.-Indo relations and bringing Indian Americans into mainstream Republican politics,” he said. Rubbing salt into the wounds of prominent supporters of the Democratic Party, he gloated that all they could muster was “one pathetic sentence” on India in the party platform while keeping mum as their candidate John Kerry indulged in “aggressive India-bashing” on the issue of outsourcing.

The jarring outburst showed how some of the divisiveness of this presidential campaign has manifested itself even in the relatively small community of politically active Indian Americans. But the sharp contrast between the party platforms on how they deal with India is indeed noteworthy. The Republican Party talks of India in terms of a long-term partner and goes so far as to envision a role for it in “creating a strategically stable Asia.” The implications are far-reaching.

The platform talks of a “historic transformation” of Indo-US relations under President George Bush, of India as a “growing world power,” of “common security interests” and the two countries’ “fundamental commitment to political freedom and representative government.”

By all accounts, this is the most elaborate exposition on India by either political party in an election platform. On the other hand, the Democratic Party manifesto made only two references to India, one in the context of tightening export controls and strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the other in relation to Pakistan. Not only did the idea of India, when it finally occurred to the Democratic strategists, sound like an afterthought, what they envisioned was prescriptive and patronizing, not a partnership.

The Democratic platform said: “We must also take steps to reduce tension between India and Pakistan and guard against the possibility of their nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands.” To equate India’s clean record in guarding its nuclear technology with Pakistan’s dangerously tainted record not only showed monumental ignorance but also a myopic vision of the future of Asia.

The differences in vision resurrected an old idea among India watchers who maintain that a Republican administration is “better” for Indo-US relations because it is less encumbered in

terms of foreign policy ideas and initiatives. During eight years of Bill Clinton, Indo-US relations languished either from neglect or under sanctions resulting from the nuclear tests.

Republicans say that Bush actually has done more in four years with India despite the complicating factor of Pakistan being a key US ally in the war on terrorism. Vijaynagar pointed out that even in the matter of appointing Indian Americans to high government positions -- a prize coveted by the community -- Bush did better. He named 13 Indian Americans to full-time positions. In turn, the community has gained clout within the party.

“I have been meeting him twice or thrice a month during the campaign,” said Zachariah who stressed that he does not advise Bush on Indo-US relations because he is “not qualified” for that job. But he says Bush is well aware that Indian Americans want strong relations between India and the US.

As co-chair of the Bush-Cheney finance committee in Florida, Zachariah has helped raise \$17 million for the campaign. He is a Bush “Ranger” many times over -- a title given to rich friends who have individually raised \$200,000 for the campaign. Indian Americans in Florida alone have given \$500,000 to the Bush coffers. National figures for the community are not yet available for either party but the Republicans can boast of some heavy hitters among Indian Americans.

Zachariah and Vijaynagar, both big Bush men, used their influence to bring Katherine Harris whom they called “the heroine of 2000” to an Indian dinner a day before the convention. Harris, rather than a heroine was more a villain of 2000 for Democrats and independent voters. They believe the last election was “stolen” by Bush because of charges of fraud in voter rolls. As a senior aide to Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Harris was instrumental sidelining the Florida State Supreme Court and certifying that Florida's 25 electoral votes had been cast in the name of George W Bush.

But for Zacharia and Co., getting Harris to show up was an honour. They talk of Bush, his policies and even the war against Iraq with a passion of new converts. They and other wealthy Indian American supporters are drawn to the Republican Party for several reasons -- lower taxes, a “strong” national security policy, and promises to protect doctors from vengeful patients who sue for damages. Since many, many wealthy Indians are doctors, medical lawsuits are as emotional an issue for them as fighting racial profiling might be for poor South Asian taxi drivers in New York.

All these buttons were pushed in an e-appeal and an advertisement prepared by party strategists for the Indian American community and released two weeks before the convention.

“President Bush recognizes that medical liability premiums are skyrocketing and contributing to the rising cost of health care, forcing many physicians to give up treating patients,” said the ad signed by Marc Racicot, chairman of the Bush-Cheney campaign. Bush has proposed making “the medical liability system more fair” by putting a cap of \$250,000 on non-economic damages and a limit on punitive damages to reasonable amounts in cases where they are justified. In other words, he plans to erect a huge dam to stem the multi-million dollar awards given by sympathetic juries.

Whether Bush will fulfill his promises is a question for the future but the convention brought into sharp focus the Republicans’ attempt to woo ethnic minorities.

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“India Bytes”**From the RNC Platform 2004**

‘Under President Bush’s leadership, the United States has undertaken a historic transformation in its bilateral relationship with India, based upon his conviction that U.S. interests require a strong relationship between the world’s largest democracies. Since 2001, the United States has started with a view of India as a growing world power with which we have common security interests and a shared, fundamental commitment to political freedom and representative government. Through a strong partnership with India, we can best address any differences and shape a dynamic future. The prospects for that partnership were further enhanced by the announcement this January of the “Next Steps in Strategic Partnership” between the United States and India, a new effort to further deepen and accelerate cooperation between our two nations.’

‘Republicans applaud India’s move toward greater economic freedom. We hold a common interest in the free flow of commerce, including through the vital sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. Bilateral trade between the U.S. and India increased from \$15.9 billion in 2002 to nearly \$18 billion in 2003, with U.S. exports to India increasing by 22 percent, the largest increase ever. Finally, we share the commitment to fighting terrorism and creating a strategically stable Asia.’

From the Archives: Republican Platform 2000

‘Attention to the fate of East Asia should not obscure American attention to the future of South Asia. India is emerging as one of the great democracies of the twenty-first century. Soon it will be the world’s most populous state. India is now redefining its identity and future strategy. The United States should engage India, respecting its great multicultural achievements and encouraging Indian choices for a more open world. Mindful of its longstanding relationship with Pakistan, the United States will place a priority on the secure, stable development of this volatile region where adversaries now face each other with nuclear arsenals.’

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The GOP Convention: It’s Terrorism All The Way

By Harsh V. Pant

By all accounts, the Republicans seem to have had a successful convention in New York. Bush continues to do well in the polls despite the fact that the economy is not performing as well as some of his advisers might hope. It has long been assumed that the economy is the driving factor in a US Presidential election. Ever since Bill Clinton trounced George H.W. Bush in the 1992 elections primarily on account of a lackluster performance of the US economy, “it’s the economy, stupid” has become the mantra for those who want to decipher the intricacies of a US Presidential election.

But for the first time in decades, foreign affairs and national security issues have emerged in the US Presidential campaign as greater concerns among voters than economic matters. According to a recent survey by the independent Pew Research Center, 4 in 10 Americans now cite international and defense issues as the most important problems confronting the

nation. Only 1 in 4 feels it is the economic issues. Security concerns and foreign affairs have not dominated the US Presidential elections since 1972, the period of Vietnam war. And George Bush has consistently received a higher approval rating vis-à-vis his opponent in tackling the so-called war on terrorism. The threat of terror continues to deeply mould public opinion on the use of force and the effectiveness of the current Administration. By 56 percent to 38 percent Americans trust Bush more than Kerry to fight terrorism.

The Republicans have been successful in exploiting this sentiment to the fullest in their convention. While the economic and other domestic issues received only perfunctory treatment, it was the issue of terrorism that received primacy. Speaker after speaker made it clear made it clear that only George Bush is capable of leading the Americans in this time of grave crisis while John Kerry with this indecisive attitude cannot be trusted.

A disaffected Democratic Senator, Zell Miller was the highlight of the convention, giving the most rabble-rousing speech. In fact his speech was so vicious and demagogic that members of the Bush Administration were quick to distance themselves from it. Miller criticized Kerry for voting against many of the weapon systems in the Senate and argued that Kerry would make US interests subservient to the proclivities of other nations and the United Nations.

This was, of course, a gross distortion of Kerry's record and statements. But Miller was not alone. Vice President Dick Cheney and other speakers also did the same, albeit in subtle ways. Cheney argues that John Kerry's foreign policy record does not inspire much confidence as he has repeatedly made the wrong calls on critical foreign policy challenges and failed to comprehend the severity of threat US faces post 9/11. He also mocked Kerry's call for alliance building and multilateralism in dealing with Islamic radicalism.

The underlying message that Republicans wanted to convey was that Kerry is ill-equipped to deal with the threat of terrorism. For the Republicans, this focus on terrorism is in a way inevitable because of the interest of average Americans in security post 9/11. It is also a strategic political decision as it keeps the focus on President Bush's strengths, his handling of terrorism while distracting public attention from its failures in other aspects of governance. It was also interesting that even the issue of Iraq was not discussed extensively. Whenever it was mentioned it was tangentially linked to the global war on terror. This also worked well because a focus on Iraq would also have meant focusing on the failures of the Bush Administration to restore stability in Iraq so long after it declared "Mission Accomplished."

In his own speech at the convention, Bush was extremely vague on laying down his agenda for the next four years on domestic issues. But he sounded very confident and reassuring when he talked about terrorism and foreign policy. It is ironical because the agenda that Bush laid out four years before was heavily domestic policy oriented and Bush specifically called for a need for a "humble foreign policy." In four years he seems to have completely reversed his earlier agenda. Today, he has a radical foreign policy agenda for the US while his domestic policy agenda is nothing to write home about.

All of this, in the end, has succeeded in conveying an image of the President as a resolute leader in a time of security crisis like the one the US faces. At the same time, the Republican convention also succeeded in further strengthening the perception regarding Kerry as a flip-flopper, faint-hearted and an indecisive leader.

The Republicans have managed to set the agenda for the elections, at least for now. The Democrats will now have to work harder to reorient the focus of this election campaign to domestic issues, if they want to have any chance of getting the better of their opponents. If

the focus continues to be on the war on terrorism, John Kerry faces an uphill battle. Kerry on his part has already responded to an attack on his character by Cheney by questioning Bush and Cheney's refusal to serve in the military during the Vietnam war. All this points to an extremely negative campaign period in the coming months.

As of now, the Grand Old Party and President George Bush can revel in their success. But will this success hold till the November elections remains to be seen.

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Quotes from Bush Fest 2004

"America did not choose this war. But we have a President who chooses to win it. This is no ordinary time. The stakes could not be higher. Fate has handed our generation a grave new threat to freedom. And fortune has given us a leader who will defend that freedom. This is no ordinary time. And George W. Bush is no ordinary leader."

--*New York Governor George Pataki*

Kerry would let Paris decide when America needs defending.

I want Bush to decide.

John Kerry, who says he doesn't like outsourcing, wants to outsource our national security.

That's the most dangerous outsourcing of all. This politician wants to be leader of the free world.

Free for how long?

--*Democrat Senator Zell Miller*

"In fact, in the global war on terror, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, President Bush has brought many allies to our side. But as the President has made very clear, there is a difference between leading a coalition of many, and submitting to the objections of a few. George W. Bush will never seek a permission slip to defend the American people."

--*Vice President Dick Cheney*

"Marriage is important not because it is a convenient invention or the latest reality show: marriage is important because it is the cornerstone of civilization, and the foundation of the family. Marriage between a man and a woman isn't something Republicans invented, but it is something Republicans will defend."

--*Republican Senator Elizabeth Dole*

The U.S. economy remains the envy of the world. We have the highest economic growth of any of the world's major industrialized nations. Don't you remember the pessimism of twenty years ago when the critics said Japan and Germany were overtaking the U.S.? Ridiculous!

Now they say India and China are overtaking us. Don't you believe it! We may hit a few BUMPS -- but America always moves ahead! That's what Americans do!

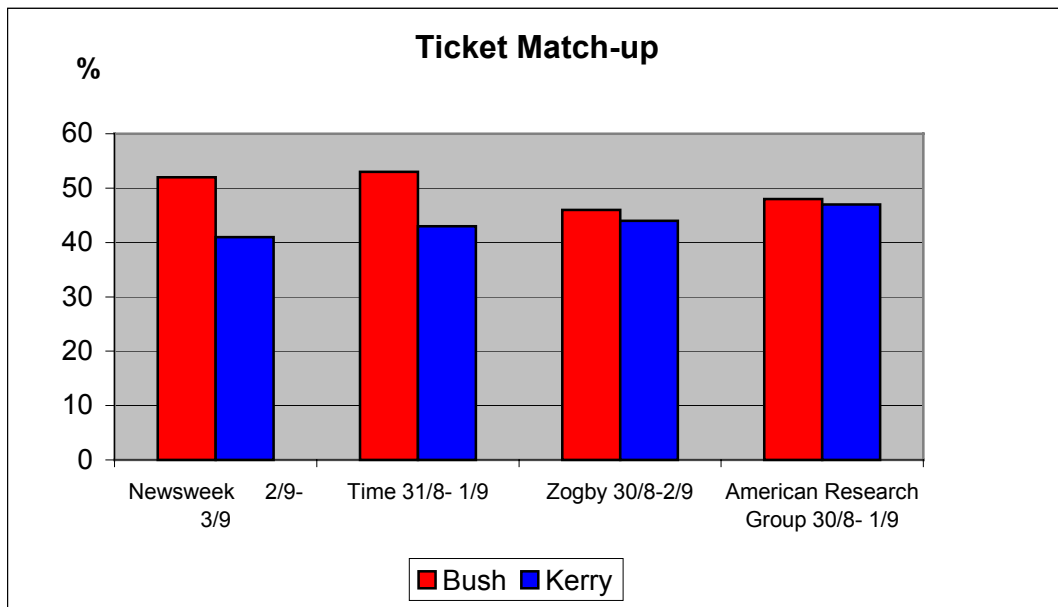
--*California "Governator" Arnold Schwarzenegger*

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Poll Analysis: Bush, Back with a Bang!

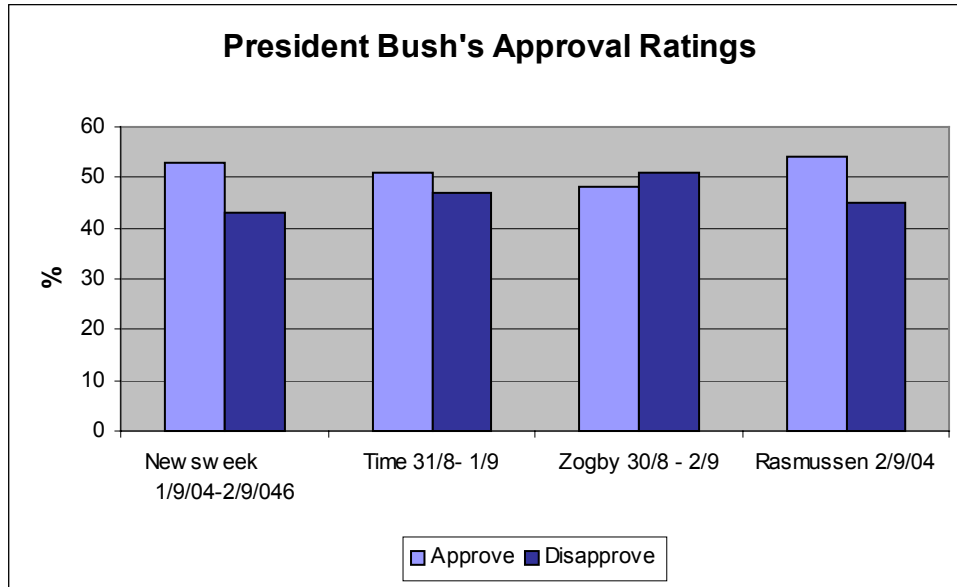
The battle for the White House becomes more intense now that their respective parties have formally endorsed both the candidates.

President Bush went in to the Convention with a lead of a few points over his rival and challenger John Kerry. He comes from the convention holding on to his lead and improving it, depending on which poll one takes into account. The convention has been good for the President; for the first time he is leading the race among the independent and the Catholics. Not only is he leading in Republican dominated states but his figures are on the upswing even in the blue states. The gamble to have the Convention in Democrat-dominated New York seems to have paid off. Not only did it bring the focus back on the war on terrorism where Bush has always had a solid lead over his rivals, the threat of disruptions from protestors also ensured much higher media coverage and interest among viewers and voters, all of which translated into Bush getting a much-higher post election bounce than Kerry did post the Democratic convention.



But the economy still remains a weak spot for a President who says his goals are to build a safer, more secure and more opportunity filled America. Most people polled still say that they disapprove of the way the President has handled the economy and Kerry has been leading in all polls that query voters on the economy. Many of those polled say the President has left a lot of questions related to the domestic issues unanswered. What the people want to know from him is where he will tackle the economy with the same vigor and commitment that he has shown in his war on terrorism.

What might be some solace for him is that Americans are now saying that the situation in Iraq warranted the involvement of America. 51 % of the people polled by Gallup said that the situation in Iraq was worth a war as against 50 % who say that US involvement in Iraq was not a mistake.



In an election where the image one portrays has become very important, the result of a survey by Landor and Associates provides some food for thought. A sample of 1,262 registered voters associated Bush with the down market Dunkin' Donuts while they think John Kerry is a smooth Starbucks man. The study also found that while Bush is associated with mainstay brand such as IBM and Ford, Kerry is associated with premium high quality brands like Apple and BMW. In other words, Bush's image could do with a bit of brand polishing. Bush himself would be quite happy with that finding since he has always liked to portray himself as a man of the people.

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EDITORIAL TEAM: Dr C. Raja Mohan, Cherian Samuel, Stuti Banerjee, Ashok Sharma and Avanti Bhati

Readers Comments: ORF would like to thank the recipients of the US Election Monitor for the number of encouraging responses that they have sent to the past thirteen issues. We value our readers and their opinions and are therefore glad to announce an interactive board called 'Readers Comments'. Our readers can write in on issues and arguments, carried in the monitor, or use the space to send us their comments.

Disclaimer: If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please do let us know by writing to cherians@orfonline.org.

We appreciate your support and your patience in our endeavours.