

Obama vs. Hillary

As I watch a slide show of the Obama-Clinton debate in Texas yesterday, I am struck by the fact that regardless of the final numbers that the candidates garner eventually, and regardless of who goes on to the national elections and wins, today America stands for absolutely what can be *best* in the world.

Yes, there are many things that we have done worse in the past many years, and we have read and heard and soul-searched about them deeply, but today simultaneously, we have also managed to achieve the 'very best,' and that too, surprisingly, in American politics. We have found that one possible best hope for our as well as our world's future with a brilliant woman candidate matched with an equally brilliant black man for President. I say, black, and yet he's changed the country already; turning politics of color into that of non-color.

The color of Obama doesn't matter because his oratory, education, personality and command over his mind transport the audience to a deeper plane, well beyond the color of his skin. And when I listen to Hillary, her gender doesn't matter either, because how many men or women have such level of aptitude, brilliance, resiliency and the ability to deliver under fire. Perhaps, at this time, only Obama.

Even McCain from the Republican field appears to be the best candidate left standing. So yes, I believe we have surprisingly the three best candidates America can offer today, despite the crudely moneyed and limiting two party politics of the country. And today I actively look forward to the best possible presidential election in the world. One, that I think, has the 'potential' to change it.

This election provides the hope for dialog and diplomacy, long the stalwarts of politics, forgotten in this modern world of Star-wars and Strike and Awe campaigns that boomerang; hope for deliberative thought, not reactivity; for unifying the world, not sundering it apart over ill-defined axes of Evil; and perhaps ultimately, the potential to have what America has needed for a long time in politics, a Statesmen, or perhaps a Stateswoman.

Why else would people turn out in record numbers, and stand in cold and snow for hours to participate, to have their say, like I did for close to five hours, just so I might have input in this unprecedented contest. The first time in a while that a mere democratic caucus or primary in America seems hopeful enough to draw people in more numbers than ever, out together on the streets.

It isn't because we need a black president or a woman president. No- we are much beyond that layer of superficiality already, whether we realize it or not. It is that what we need urgently is a President who is a visionary and can talk diplomacy, who is brilliant and educated, thoughtful as well as decisive, and who understands the world as well as the country spread wide outside their doorstep.

We need a President who can get us and the world outside the quagmire of Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan. Who has the language and the cultural understanding to talk to Iran, and can find the right leverage to talk to North Korea and China.

We need a President, who can bring some sort of balance to the dangerous see-saw of Israel and the Arab world; Who knows where Congo and Sudan and Rwanda and the rest of the world are on the map; Who can help curb genocide; and who can juggle healthcare, social security, education, and not the least, immigration reform.

Yes, it's a tall order, and we also have to remember that ultimately, Presidents can only be as good as their advisors. So, who are these advisors? It's time to scrutinize them, put them under the scope lest we get another Cheney or Rumsfeld.

However today, as Hillary reaches across the podium to shake hands with Obama and say, "No matter what happens in this contest, I am honored to be here with Barack Obama," a hope springs in my heart, and I believe her. More often, I like to take things at face value, especially when they have the potential for good.