

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY AT HISTORIC CROSSROADS

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"In a few days," says Walle Amusa, "the Democratic Party will select a new chairman. Regardless of who wins, the Party's continuing relevance will depend on how truthfully and effectively it deals with three major challenges.

"The first challenge is President Trump and the Republican Party (GOP). Candidate Trump combined a campaign on jobs, immigration, trade agreements and law and order with outrageous distractions, insults, mockery and crafty media manipulation. It was a risky strategy that vanquished 16 unprepared GOP candidates and Mrs. Hillary Clinton. The same strategy guides President Trump as he governs and prepares for re-election.

"The GOP controls the executive and legislative branches of government in Washington D.C. and in two-thirds of the states.

GOP legislators, Governors and President Trump are moving lockstep on domestic issues. President Trump's former opponents within the GOP have lost their voices. They cower in fear of tweets, abandon principles and engage in Orwellian justifications of the unjustifiable.

"The Democratic Party must either fight the GOP's agenda seriously at all levels or become irrelevant.

"The second challenge facing the Democratic Party is the legacy of the Clinton 2016 election campaign. Mrs. Clinton is a highly qualified candidate. Her campaign raised over a billion dollars and spent heavily on ads mostly repeating Trump's insults. Her campaign staff and consultants abandoned the 50-state and battleground state strategies. Gleefully, they chased Republican endorsements while ignoring campaign fundamentals. It was a text-book case of gross electoral malpractice.

"In several states, many Democrats made similar or worse errors. They refused to defend the many accomplishments of President Barack Obama. They ignored the voting records of their GOP opponents. They appeared to be more interested in convincing voters about their disagreements with President Obama. These Democrats played the race card and lost.

"Today, many Democratic Party state organizations are in disarray. They lack focus and discipline. An eclectic mish-mash of tactical gimmicks has become a substitute for intelligent strategy. Racism continues to negatively impact party strategy and allocation of resources.

"The decay of party organizations started in 2009 under the DNC Chairmanship of Senator Tim Kane. He is a very good man who inspired and energized few. Under his leadership, the Party lost hundreds of elections while lining the pockets of mostly white, male and inexperienced consultants. "The Party recovered slightly in 2012 under the leadership of Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz only to be savaged in 2016 by Senator Bernie Sanders' attacks on Party leadership.

"In 2018, 23 Democrats in the U.S. Senate will face re-election. It will be tough. Some of these senators seek accommodation with the GOP on some issues. This is an exercise in self-deception. This GOP does not make concessions on its agenda. These Democrats may as well start writing their concession speeches because President Trump and the GOP are focused on winning, by any means necessary, in 2018 and beyond.

"The third major challenge facing the Democratic Party is Senator Sanders. He has not joined the Democratic Party. While he gives voice and clarity to many issues, he continues to lead and build a movement that organizes and raises money outside of the party. He knows that to effectively protect the hard-won gains and rights of Americans, the Party needs unity, organization and an intense focus on the issues. Riding two horses going in slightly different directions means he will continue to destabilize the Party until he signs up.

"Finally" Amusa declared. "We must be clear."

"An election campaign is both a science and an art. The science covers the fundamentals that must not be ignored. The art covers strategy, issues, candidate selection, inspirational stump speeches, wise deployment of resources, persistent hard work and selection of staff and consultants based on experience and fitness rather than favoritism.

"Fixation on Presidential temperament and daily distractions is not a strategy.

"The time has come for the Democratic Party to invite the best organizers and allies in each state and hold hearings and organizing workshops on issues in every Congressional District.

"Only a detailed, consistent and coordinated field organizing can rebuild party organizations, slow down a right-wing agenda and elect or defeat candidates based solely on their voting records."

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