

The Politics of Politics

“Politics is life,” my father once told me. It was only inevitable that the politics of the coronavirus would be revealed. Different countries have had their own unique responses to the threat. Iran has denied that there is coronavirus within its country, while one of its leaders was visibly sweating on stage during a speech denying same. Subsequently, the official was diagnosed with the disease. In Israel, where we are currently visiting, the health authorities have been watchful. My childhood friend, Jeffrey Gabbay, meanwhile, has entered the world stage through his company Argaman which is providing copper oxide infused masks, preventing the virus from passing through to the wearer. Gabbay’s work in this technology is second to none in the world and he is now ramping up to produce millions of his product to be distributed throughout the world. Jeff always was a smart kid, and today he is showing the world something about lifesaving technology emanating from this tiny but often embattled State.

We read that in the United States, Republicans and Democrats are now fighting over how much funding there should be for the coronavirus. Media outlets in the U.S. are questioning whether Trump is “up to the job” in addressing the emerging pandemic. How many billions of dollars should the government spend in fighting the threat of the disease?

Recently I was told by a medical school head that coronavirus is “fake news.” You could have knocked me over with a feather. He said that the flu is much more dangerous and prevalent. Coronavirus is simply the new kid on the block. He does not deny that there is a disease being circulated that is a healthcare threat, but rather it will kill a very small percentage of people. Usually those people who will die from the coronavirus are already compromised. Many people have survived the coronavirus without even knowing they had symptoms! All of this is not to say that we should be complacent, but rather that both the news and the politicians are beginning to have a lot of fun with coronavirus. It is something to talk about and to agitate over.

Politics is not only about response to disease, but also not surprisingly about the politics of other nations. Bernie Sanders, touts himself as the Jewish Presidential candidate, while doing everything that he can to engender disrespect for both Judaism and the State of Israel. To quote my mother, “with friends like this, who needs enemies?” Bernie Sanders has dumped on the government of Israel, exercising his prerogative to hold Soviet era Marxist opinions. It seems that Bernie loves totalitarian left-wing dictatorships while spitting on any democracy whose leaders he does not like. It all sounds very 1950-ish to me. Yet, young people seem to be enamored with Bernie Sanders’ work. Is it just that he is the latest bad boy of American politics?

It has become obvious to many that Bernie Sanders’ trashing of the Israeli government is about a blatant attempt to influence the Israeli election to be held on March 2nd. Sanders already knows that he owns the extreme left-wing in the United

States. They are in his pocket and will do his bidding gladly. Bernie Sanders does not need to say anything more untruthful or bad about the Jewish people or Israel to get the vote of the left-wing fascists. So, what is Bernie really up to? He has the temerity to think that he can rally the dormant and pretty much dead extreme left in Israel to vote Bernie's way in the upcoming Israeli election. Simply stated, Bernie Sanders is sticking his finger in the politics of another country, trying to influence the electorate.

People in Israel remember when Barrack Obama's State Department gave money to an Israeli organization in opposition to Prime Minister Netanyahu's bid to be reelected. The news did not make much of a flap in America and there were no impeachment proceedings over President Obama's misconduct. The result of President Obama's very poor judgment was to help Benjamin Netanyahu win the election in Israel. No country likes the idea of foreigners meddling in their elections.

The United States has a long history of interfering in the politics of other countries. We were involved in trying to influence the French political structure during the French Revolution. We have invaded other countries such as Grenada, because we did not like their politics. John Kennedy was responsible for the Bay of Pigs, in a clear attempt to overthrow an unfriendly government in Cuba. We undermined the democratically elected government in Iran during the Eisenhower Administration in order to install the Shah of Iran. The Shah, of course, was booted out by Khomeini and his gang of criminals.

The interference by Bernie Sanders in Israeli elections, though unsavory and unseemly, is just the latest attempt by a powerful American to affect the politics of another country. It will probably help "BiBi" in the election. Maybe that is what Sanders really wants after all. Perhaps he would like to further drive a wedge between the Democratic Party and Israel by strengthening Netanyahu. Sanders may be smart enough to realize that his unbridled criticism of the Israeli government is so untruthful that it could only backfire.

Politics is not only infesting the body politic in connection with the coronavirus, but it is also infecting elections along with virtually every other human activity. It does not matter if we argue about climate change, disease prevention, birth control, family values, religion, or any other topic. Ultimately unscrupulous politicians will seize any issue that rallies the masses. This is not Republican or Democratic behavior, but is frequently exploited by any demagogue.

Since we can never deny the role of politics in society, we might as well see it for what it is. It is still important to stay informed, vote and to participate in the process of civil government. By the same token, it is important to step back and to realize just how manipulative our leaders and future leaders are capable of being.

Hopefully, the virus will abate, copper oxide masks will become more available and the decline of the stock market will be reversed. It is strange, but the economy often does follow the drum beat of political drama. The decline in the stock market is

likely to be nothing more than a buying opportunity for smart investors, while the coronavirus will be conquered by principled scientific professionals. Interference by various nations in the politics of others will never cease; there will be no cure for that sort of behavior.

****Addendum. Latest update from Israel, post-election, March 4, 2020:**

In an unofficial poll of Israelis down in a restaurant and in my son-in-law's office, most knew or cared very little about American politics. In fact, it was difficult to find anyone who heard of Bernie Sanders! Nevertheless, it remains my conviction based upon what I read in Israeli newspapers that at least the commentators, and no doubt some of the more informed voters, are justifiably concerned about the new American left and its abandonment of Israeli Democracy in favor of the creation of another Muslim terrorist state in this region.

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