

Presidential election in the US

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The Presidential elections in the US on Nov 2, 2004 are crucial for that country as well as for the outside world. The contest is between President George W. Bush of the Republican Party who is seeking reelection for his second term and Senator John Kerry of the Democratic Party fighting for a fresh mandate. President Bush and John F. Kerry battled sharply over US policy on Iraq, Afghanistan and domestic issues in three debates. Whereas Bush insisted that he was fighting for the security of the US, Kerry charged Bush for wrong priority in that he left Al-Qaida and Osama half way and instead attacked Iraq, which did not have WMD and had not attacked US.

Internally "the Democratic nominee charged that the president has compiled a record of failures on the economy and health care, and Bush attacked Kerry's Senate record." (Dan Balz and Jim VandeHei, The Washington Post, 15 Oct 04) "Mr. Kerry now casts Mr. Bush as a tool of rich and powerful 'special interests,' and he has sharpened his critique of Mr. Bush's handling of Iraq." (New York Times, Oct 15 '04) According to Bush Mr. Kerry would not make a good president anyway.

Although Kerry had done well in the debates, the outcome of the election is uncertain. Both candidates are getting support from electorates who are ideologically different in their thinking. Democrats are traditionally liberal in their thought process, the Republicans are generally conservative. The neocons are wholeheartedly supporting Bush, others may have a soft corner for Kerry. The Patriot Act, which imposes limits on personal liberty and permits interference in the personal life of an individual, his bank accounts, etc. etc. may find support amongst conservatives but not amongst liberal elements. Tax cut of rich section of the population by the Republicans may not find favour with the majority who are not so rich. The bulk of the middle and lower middle class would welcome welfare measures being

promised by the Democrats.

Whosoever wins elections he will pursue policies, which are in the best interest of their country. Both consider nuclear proliferation as the greatest threat to the US; both want victory in their war against Al-Qaida, international terrorism and in Iraq. Both want to safeguard and ensure the security of their country. Both insist to improve the economy and welfare of their people. Both claim to support freedom and liberty not only for their own citizens but for the whole world.

It is being assessed that generally ethnic minorities in the US are attracted by the liberal

Clinton.

Another Muslim has been elected as a City Councillor in Houston (Texas), the fourth largest city of the US. Similarly, it is learnt that a Muslim has been elected in the state of New Hampshire as a State Representative, and so on.

Their tilt in the election will be more or less in line with other minorities of the US because of their common perceptions. The bulk of the electorates are likely to focus on economic and domestic policy issues, as the outcome of the elections is likely to affect their daily life in one way or the other.

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attitude and domestic policy issues of the Democrats and would like to support Kerry. Another significant development is that the Muslim minority, which, by and large, was indifferent to elections held in the past, seems to have realized that, like other minorities, they should actively participate in the politics of the country. They now wish to be integrated in the American culture and society. They have started taking keen interest in local, county and state affairs. For instance, a Muslim has recently been elected as a member of the city Education Board in Little Rock (Arkansas), the home of former President

that Kerry will manage socio-economic matters better, by improving health care, education and providing more jobs. In foreign affairs Kerry's doctrine of "global test" is being interpreted as subordinating US interests to outsiders. Bush is exploiting the security concern of the people by saying that all his actions are aimed at the security of America so that 9/11 does not recur and is not repeated. All neocons and others would like that Bush may be allowed to handle Iraq till victory is achieved so that America may feel more secure.

The outside world will not remain unaffected if there is change in government. Although

both candidates would like to pursue a foreign policy, which is in the best interest of the US, there seems to be a major difference in their approach to the main issues. For instance, in case of Iraq, John Kerry feels that George Bush has made a colossal error of judgement. Kerry would like to have a summit meeting with his allies to formulate a strong coalition to act in unison. This would alter the present situation where Americans are suffering ninety percent casualties besides tremendous financial loss to the US exchequer. He would like to involve the United Nations, expand the coalition and gradually extricate US by minimizing its contribution in finance and forces.

Kerry is likely to give top priority to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In his thinking North Korea and Iran should have got priority over Iraq, which did not apparently have WMD and was not a threat to the US in any immediate future.

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Before the Presidential debate between Bush and Kerry, the former had a significant edge over the later. The performance of Kerry in the debates has changed the situation. The support of Bush has slid from 52 to 49 and of the Kerry has gone up from 45 to 49 %. There seems to be neck-to-neck fight. Unexpected events, if any, like capture of Osama, may also have significant impact. In any case some states would support Bush and others Kerry. It is the undecided voters and swing states like Florida, Ohio, etc which are going to decide the final outcome of the election.