

The anti-establishment vote

Most pundits misapprehend the anti-establishment vote that has propelled Donald Trump to GOP frontrunner status. They still seem to think Trump will sooner or later lose his luster and fall from grace. They think the anti-establishment voter more fickle than he or she actually is. They believe Trump will suffer a loss of support once voters realize the credibility of attacks from Trump's Republican competitors that call into question Trump's conservative credentials and his fitness to lead. They think that once voters come to realize Trump's history of past liberal positions and lack of political leadership experience, they will reject him. The pundits misunderstand Trump, and they misunderstand Trump's supporters.

Trump supporters variously favor him because he is not of the Washington establishment, because he is politically incorrect, because he is unafraid to call it as he sees it, and because he is beholden to no one, to no Republican, to no Democrat, to no media icon, and to no conservative intellectual. Trump supporters reject groomed politicians who, together with their advisors, weigh the meaning of every word spoken and fear offense.

Trump supporters do believe in limited government, a strong national defense, and free enterprise. They reject government solutions to economic problems and favor a restoration of a vibrant, free enterprise economy unfettered by excessive government regulation. They reject a foreign policy stymied by advocates of social justice who will not allow this nation to annihilate its terrorist enemies, to revoke the appeasement deal with Iran, and to rebuild American military might and alliances. They reject international trade bargains built on concepts of "managed trade" where select industry insiders with political clout are favored in lieu of a true free trade arrangement. They want to secure America's borders and ensure

that the United States does not become a haven for terrorists.

Rhetoric from Republican candidates other than Trump consistently falls flat when it reaches the ears of Trump supporters because Trump's supporters are a new breed. They are comprised of all of the disaffected Republicans, conservative Democrats, and conservative-leaning Independents. Trump is the voice for many who abandoned voting altogether out of disgust over all things Washington. He has caused them to come back into politics in droves. That factor is one that raises the most fear among Democrats. Trump is unpredictable in all respects but one, i.e., his ability to inspire those outside of the electorate to become a part of his political movement and vote for the first time in years, if not for the first time ever.

Fundamentally Trump's supporters are fed up with all things characteristics of the Washington establishment. They do not want a candidate who can eloquently articulate viewpoints pleasing to their ears because they have watched politician after politician do that, then assume elected office only to betray the promises made. They want someone who has neither financial nor political ties to those in power, who will restore American greatness by courageously and unrelentingly breaking down all barriers to that greatness erected by those now in power and their cronies in the market. In short, they mean to take down the protectionist government that is, unleash the power of the private sector to restore American greatness, erect immigration limits and border security capable of stemming the flow of illegal aliens and terrorists, and rebuild American military might and power in the world. For that revolution, they seek a private sector titan not beholden to the Washington establishment. Trump perfectly fits that bill.

In Trump, they find a person who speaks his mind fearlessly; who stands toe to toe with those tied to the Washington establishment and has no problem directly exposing their

duplicity and weakness; who promises to shake things up in Washington such that barriers to economic growth, border protection, and a strong national defense are eliminated; who promises lower tax rates for corporations and individuals; and who plans to free the market rather than regulate it in politically preferred directions.

At root, Trump supporters are not ignorant, as their opponents like to believe they are. Rather, they have a very cogent reason for supporting Donald Trump, one that entirely eludes the media. They know that Trump appreciates well that America is in dire straits and will continue to lose its stature and its economic and military power unless major changes are implemented immediately. They know that Trump will bring about that major change by using the same meat cleaver approach in Washington that he has used successfully in business and in his presidential campaign. If you are in Trump's way, he will bulldoze you down. If you attack America under Trump, you are attacking him personally, and he will make you pay for it. He appreciates the significance of the nation's massive debt, of its prolific regulation that stifles competition, of its abandonment of America's defenses and vital interests in the world, and of its refusal to annihilate its terrorist foes. He promises to make America great again, and he means to do it whether the Washington establishment agrees with his approach or not. He intends to overcome opposition not by violating the Constitution (not by issuing executive orders that trench on the law making power of Congress) but by using the bully pulpit of the Presidency to brow beat into submission anyone in Congress or in the administrative agencies who stands in his way. He will work with Congress by working to defeat those in Congress who will stand in the way of restoring American greatness. He is dead serious, not a carnival barker or superficial actor as his opponents are fond of describing him.

Trump's supporters realize that the only way to save the nation from the corruption, the abuse of power, and the self-

aggrandizement that characterizes the Washington that is, the Washington now maintained by Democrats and Republicans alike, is to bring into the presidency an outsider not beholden to anyone in power who can lead a movement to create a new power structure. To do that requires a very strong leader, one not beholden to those who have either promoted or condoned the existence of corrupt government and one who does not care what the media or anyone else thinks of him.

The more politicians claim Trump to be a closet liberal, a brat with a temper, or a person woefully lacking in political experience, the more they reveal how strong Trump's Teflon is. Each attack gives way to a lambasting from Trump against the attacker, a lambasting which, by contrast with the original attack, is blunt and direct, an unvarnished reflection of what Trump really thinks. It is the tough and direct persona of Trump that engenders support, not the extent to which he is accurate, representative of conservative thinking, or versed in every nuance of law and policy. The amazing fact is that Trump supporters often do not agree with everything he says but credit him for speaking his mind rather than engaging in tortured and illogical rhetoric that appeases critics. His supporters understand him to be a tough, no-nonsense executive who will force change in Washington, bringing about a reduction in regulation essential for the restoration of a free market and the resuscitation of the rule of law.

Trump is viewed as unapologetic, strong, and sincere, a man who gets things done rather than prattles on about what he will do without a sincere interest in doing what he says and without the stamina required to withstand stiff opposition. Trump is the antithesis of political correctness. Trump supporters are fed up with groomed politicians who profess to be possessed of an elite knowledge and skill but who do nothing consequential in office. They want to remove government from the control of the political class and vest it in those who are from outside the realm of politics, who are

citizen politicians. They do not accept the legitimacy of the campaigners who hail from the political class and, so, they place little credence in the attacks they level against Trump.

It is likely that Trump will be the Republican nominee unless he falters on his own. He will win most, if not all, of the remaining primaries, including those on the all critical super Tuesday. Some postulate that if Trump's competitors were to drop out and endorse, say, Marco Rubio, Trump's vote would remain at 35% with the contender absorbing the remaining 70%, thus defeating Trump. The problem with that calculus is that it assumes that those supporting candidates other than Rubio and Trump would bolt to Rubio if Cruz, Bush, and Carson drop out. It is reasonably likely that a certain percentage of those for Cruz, Bush, and Carson would go to Trump, making it difficult for Rubio to overcome the Trump advantage. They also assume that this altruistic desire is a part of Cruz, Bush, and Carson. Rather, it is more likely that Bush and Carson will fall out and Cruz and Rubio will remain in, at least past Super Tuesday, and by then the overwhelming momentum is likely to favor Trump. Moreover, who knows what Trump's meat cleaver will do to Cruz and Rubio by the end of March.

The only way to defeat Trump is likely by word or deed of Trump himself, not by word or deed of anyone else. This is indeed the year of the anti-establishment voter, and Trump is deftly riding that wave to the consternation and misapprehension of his opponents. The media and politicians are in large measure bewildered by the Trump phenomenon because they have yet to grasp that Trump support is indeed deep, not superficial.

Voters are infuriated by the chronic abuse heaped upon the free market, the military, and the people by a government that serves the governors, not the governed. They want an end to government for the welfare of those who are elected and for the welfare of those in cahoots with the elected. They want a return to a free enterprise economy in which government is

securely out of the way. They want a restoration of American power in the world. They want American resolve to be unquestioned in defense of the nation's interests. They want American force to be overwhelming when applied to eliminate all who threaten the lives and property of Americans. They want a nation secured by impervious borders and a robust Second Amendment. Trump champions those causes proudly without qualification, apology, or politically correct language. That is why he may well be the Republican nominee and why he may well become the next President of the United States.

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