

One swallow can make a summer



SHIFTING IMAGES
While speaking at the Democratic National Convention last month, President Obama observed: "People outside of the United States do not understand what's going on in this

election." The truth is that many Americans are also baffled and shocked at the hatred and pessimism propagated by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. But, it took just seven defining minutes to clear the mist and virtually turn the tide of the entire narrative of the 2016 elections. These crucial seven minutes belong to a hitherto unknown Khizr Khan, father of Captain Humayun Khan who fell fighting in Iraq. "Mr. Khan", as he is now known nationally, delivered a heart-rending speech at the Democratic Convention. He walked onto the stage with his wife Ghazala Khan and recounted an emotionally charged story of his son who was killed by a car bomb in Iraq while trying to save his comrades.

While drawing sharp attention to Trump's consistent attempts at smearing the character of Muslims and calling for a ban on Muslim immigration in the country, he asked Donald Trump: "Have you read the US Constitution", which provides equal rights and protection for each citizen? In a masterstroke of public communication, Khizr Khan turned the tables by drawing attention to his son's supreme sacrifice and proclaiming that Donald Trump had sacrificed "nothing and no one" for the country.

The short but poignant speech reverberated in the US and around the world. It succeeded in shifting the media narrative about Islam and Jihad to one



candidate's comments, however, have provoked a barrage of protests both from military and civilian families who are appalled at his lack of empathy for a grief-stricken mom.

While heated discussions on the issue continue, I would like to offer a perspective on why I believe Khan's speech has touched the hearts and minds of so many. It was neither his eloquence nor his political stance but the fact that he spoke from his heart and underscored some universal human values. Values that we should all uphold and teach our children - that it matters little who you are - Muslim or Christian or Jewish or Hindu - all human lives are precious and sacred. Khan did not talk about persecution, hatred or anger but about "hard work, goodness" and respect for "women and minorities". He highlighted the fact that Muslims are as concerned about making this a safer world for their children as people of other religions. They are as affected by the horrors of terrorism as everyone else - in fact they are worse-off since they are often subjected to suspicion and discrimination. Khan's core message was that terrorism cannot be countered by building walls but by uniting people of all faiths and ethnicities.

Like Mr. Khan, we too need to voice our protests against terrorism as well as the social injustices and marginalisation that Muslims are subjected to. Just as we don't want the terrorists to win, we must not allow the hate rhetoric about Muslims or any other religion to prevail. True, not all of us are heroes like Captain Humayun Khan but each one of us has the capacity to be bold and stand up against injustice and unfairness. And that can make a difference!

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about the disempowerment of honest, hard working, patriotic Muslim citizens like the Khans. In the current environment where most Muslims bear the stigma of the terrorist acts of a handful, Khan's words were a powerful rebuttal. He made it clear that the majority of Muslims desire the same thing as other communities - a just and peaceful world where everyone's rights will be protected.

Many of us may be wondering why a simple speech by an unknown person created a more positive impact on the

perception of Muslims than all the intellectual discourse defending Islam as a religion of peace. Mr. Khan's words resonated in the hearts and minds of most people because they were sincere and honest and not motivated by a personal agenda. In today's world of 'political correctness', most people are afraid of speaking their minds lest they are denounced, even victimised. But Khizr Khan spoke with courage and conviction. He did not sugar coat his message about the pain and frustration felt by a Muslim American family that has made

a supreme sacrifice for the country and yet their patriotism is questioned by the leader of the Republican Party and his followers. Donald Trump responded in his characteristic aggressive manner by attacking Ghazala Khan's dignified silence on stage: "If you look at his wife . . . she had nothing to say - maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say . . ." Rather than offer his sympathy to a bereaved mother, he derided her by hinting that she did not have the freedom to express herself, thus stereotyping all Muslim women. The Republican

RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE THE HOMESTRETCH BEGINS

FROM A BYSTANDER
THE Democratic Party Convention - which ended in Philadelphia on July 28, 2016 - nominated for the first time a woman, Hillary Clinton, for the White House.

In the presence of 4,763 state delegates and party activists, political heavyweights such as

Bernie Sanders, President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle, former president Bill Clinton, Joe Biden and Michael Bloomberg were among others, who spoke in support of the candidacy of Clinton.

Party conventions during American presidential elections are carefully orchestrated political dramas where candidates and political heavyweights appear to speak in support of the candidates. The acrimony that usually accompanies these meetings was avoided this time as there was only one candidate.

There are two more candidates in the fray - Libertarian Gary Johnson and Jill Stein from Green Party. But the actual fight will be between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, who was earlier nominated by the Republicans.

The theme of the Democratic Convention was inclusiveness as opposed to the divisive xenophobia peddled by Donald Trump. Opposing Trump's "I can fix it" rhetoric, Clinton's refrain was, "We are stronger together . . . We will rise to the challenge." The speakers tried to dispel Trump's negativity and dwelt on the positive aspects of the US. In his inspiring speech, President Obama criticised Trump, asserting that the US was not a "country where we turn against each other, and turn away from the rest of the world". Supporting Hillary Clinton's candidature Obama declared, "There has never been a man or woman, not me, not Bill, nobody more qualified than Hillary Clinton to be president".

None of the speakers, however, went into the details of major issues of economy, defence,

foreign policy or gun violence. Speakers spent a large part of their allocated time touching upon some of the major socio-economic statistics, painting an optimistic progressive picture of the United States. The convention was, in fact, a well scripted event to re-launch and boost Hillary Clinton's personality and image.

Accepting the nomination, Clinton called for unity among voters, describing the election as a "moment of reckoning", and extolled American values of "freedom and equality, justice and opportunity". Clinton named Timothy Michael Kaine, Senator from Virginia, as her Vice President.

A closer look at Donald Trump's incoherent

came up repeatedly in the campaign, Clinton spoke about a blend of conservative-liberal policies.

One of the most unique aspects of the American presidential election is its long, expensive campaign, spread over almost two years. It is a spectacle where candidates demonise each other using slangs, name calling and uncivil language to score points. In this exhaustive process, untold shocking scandals and weaknesses of each candidate come out in the public domain.

It is actually the electronic media that plays a decisive role in the formation of voters' viewpoint about the contestants - critically

What is most remarkable is that this election is no longer about Republican conservatism or Democrat progressivism. The time around it is not being fought along conventional lines. On the one hand there is a politically experienced woman, and on the other there is an unqualified man. This election is no longer about the Democratic "Donkey" or the Republican "Elephant" of the yesteryears.

convention speech will reveal that it is full of anti-globalisation rhetoric: "Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo". He has also promised to build walls around America. Trump's anti-globalism rhetoric lacks detail but resonates with those who believe in 'White nationalism'. The wind of neo-nationalism is sweeping across the capitalistic West. It is blowing hard in Europe, and the US, it appears, is not immune to this contagious syndrome.

On the other hand, Clinton denounced Trump saying, "We will not build a wall . . . He wants to divide us - from the rest of the world and from each other". On the economy, which

analysing the personality, policies, and ideology of each contender. Social media also plays a crucial role in shaping the popularity of the candidates. Interestingly, a big chunk of the media will have been used by candidates to rubbish their opponents.

However, all is not well with the Republicans. The GOP is split between the old guards and supporters of Donald Trump, considered by many as an intruder who has hijacked the party. He got the nomination as he was the only remaining candidate at the Republican Party Convention. He, however, continues to draw the white Middle-American

crowds who are angry at the establishment.

The generational divide within the Democratic Party was effectively patched when left-leaning Bernie Sanders, who created a large base among young white Americans, was present at the convention and supported the candidature of Hillary Clinton. Clinton has a wider support base which includes African Americans, Latinos, women, older white Democrats and reportedly even a section of the Republicans.

It will be a massive task for both candidates to galvanise their respective parties and make sure that their supporters do not drift away or stay away from voting. Both parties have also been trying to poach on the support base of their rival.

The campaign has now entered the final phase, which no doubt will be extremely interesting. As old GOP stalwarts distance themselves from their nominee, Donald Trump has already launched his vitriolic

attacks against Clinton. Unfortunately, Trump, the loose cannon that he is, creates controversy every time he speaks, which are ignored by his blind supporters and loathed by his detractors.

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As the popularity ratings of the two candidates move up and down over the next three months, the debates in September and October will largely determine who will wield power at the Oval Office in January 2017.

The writer is a former Ambassador and Secretary

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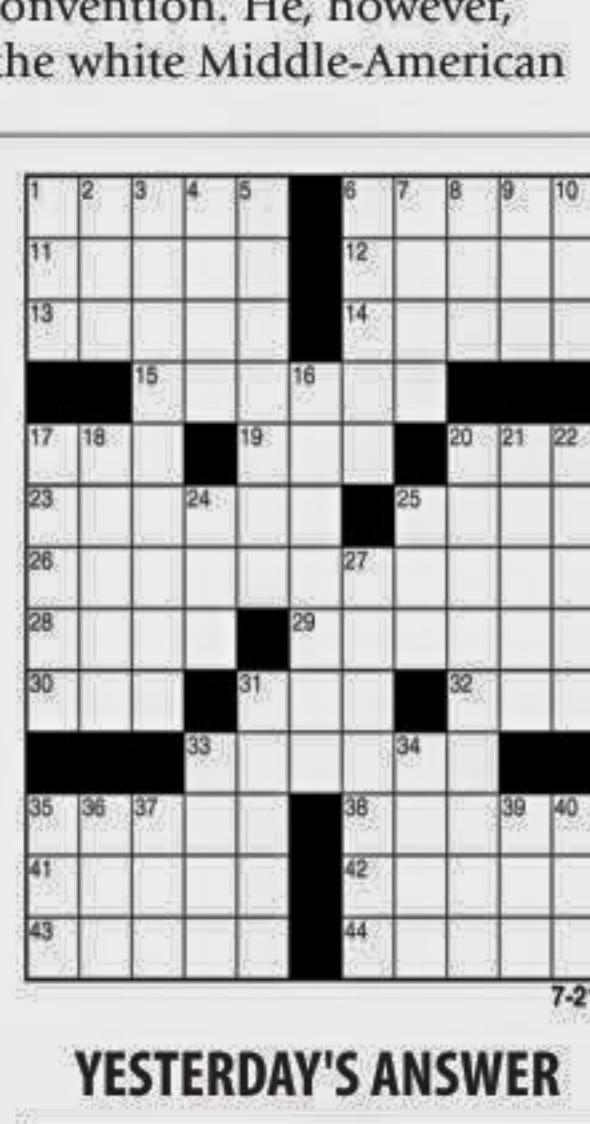
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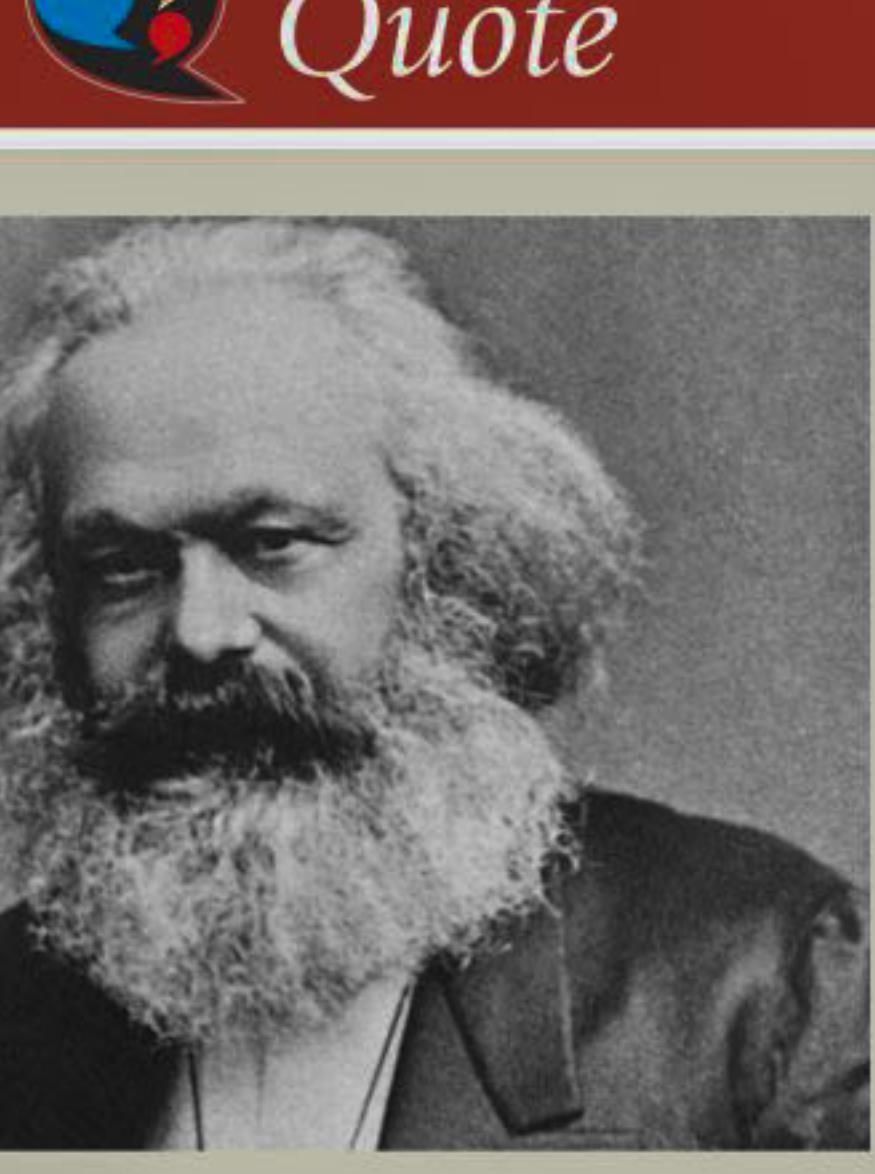
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- 6 Alabama city
- 11 Singer Cara
- 12 Self-evident truth
- 13 Davis of "Thelma & Louise"
- 14 Fuss-budget
- 15 Allow
- 17 Ocean off Cal.
- 19 Sister, of sorts
- 20 "2001" computer
- 23 Homes
- 25 Window section
- 26 Cabaret cost
- 28 Smooth
- 29 Bank, at times
- 30 German article
- 31 Michele of "Glee"
- 32 Holler
- 33 Cafe's cousin
- 35 Wading bird
- 38 Humming homes
- 41 Knock for a loop
- 42 Kagan of the Supreme Court
- 43 Lesson leader
- 44 Bookish, perhaps

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- 1 Greedy one
- 2 Before, to bards
- 3 Planted spy's position
- 4 Writer Rice
- 5 Student
- 6 Polio vaccine developer
- 7 Way to go
- 8 Pot part
- 9 Like go-go boots
- 10 Writer Tan
- 16 Body-builder's pride
- 17 Showed nervousness
- 18 Higher than
- 20 Book type
- 21 Fury
- 22 Suspicious
- 24 Cozy home
- 25 Frying need
- 27 Idol honoree
- 31 Cruise ship
- 33 Doofus
- 34 Irritate
- 35 Bowler, for one
- 36 Running bird
- 37 Mob pariah
- 39 Purpose
- 40 Utter



QUOTE



Reason has always existed, but not always in a reasonable form.

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