

# The Last Lap

by Janet Jagan

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In just a few days, on Tuesday, November 4, 2008 Americans will vote in one of the most crucial elections in the history of that country. Never before, has there been a Black Presidential candidate and never before has there been a President in office so disliked and disrespected as is George Bush. Only 29% of the population support him.

The economic woes brought on by Bush, which have led to a world economic crisis, the extent of which has never before been experienced. His propensity for war rather than seeking peaceful solutions and guidance by the United Nations has led to grave problems of people and countries that may remain unsolved for generations. Trillions of dollars have already been spent on two wars that can never be won – that of Iraq and Afghanistan. That vast amount of money has gone into the coffers of those who own and manufacture the tools of war, from airplanes to tanks and munitions, and to the many who have filled their pockets with money destined for other things connected with the two disastrous military invasions.

That wasted money and the deaths and injuries of hundreds of thousands, could have filled the bellies of poverty-stricken people the world over and even more in health, water, housing, agricultural production, etc. But that was not to be. We cannot forget the deaths and injuries of hundreds of thousands of people and the suffering of so many people caused by these wars. Most Americans ignored what their President was doing, creating anti-American feelings world-wide, until it was too late. Now, with the severe economic crisis (the experts are trying not to use the word recession) which has led to growing unemployment and loss of homes, plus the credit squeeze, American citizens are finally aware of what the US Presidency has been up to in the last eight years.

At any rate, it is a good sign that the elections have, more or less, distilled into a situation where the voters have to decide if they want more of the past and its woeful mistakes or a change which carries hope of a better future. In the clearest of terms, Senator Mc Cain represents the stance of the Republicans, even though he tries fitfully to disassociate himself from the gross ills of the Bush regime, whereas Senator Obama represents to voters an opportunity to change what went wrong during the Bush administration and for a brighter future.

At this stage, on the eve of elections, Barack Obama leads the opinion polls with ease. And as the crunch gets more difficult for Mr Mc Cain, he has entered the stage of nasty abuse of his opponent. Those in the “know” know that this generally backfires and the one who is attacked and does not respond likewise, usually wins the most acclaim.

Senator Obama has carried forth a clean campaign, has an extremely efficient organization, has been heavily funded by the small man, which in itself means more votes and has a style and demeanour which has captured the hearts of Americans, even those not expected to give him support. He gained respect in the choice of his Vice President, whereas John Mc Cain has lost considerably by his choice. Obama could have played the game he was expected to play, and choose Hillary Clinton, but he was astute enough to recognize that this could put him in a situation that could harm him later on. It was a wise decision and voters look to leaders who have good judgment – one of the reasons for Senator Mc Cain’s decline.

The US Presidential elections are not only the concern of the American people; they are the concern of all people everywhere. The issue of war or peace affects us all and when the US has a warrior President, it means hard times for those in countries invaded, and throws out of balance the attention that should be given to the millions of underprivileged who need help of all kinds.

There is now a greater expectation that a new US President will really create a difference – to the betterment of this world in which we all live.

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