

## Review of the 2016 Election, Part 1: The Republicans

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We have witnessed a political revolution with the election of businessman Donald J. Trump in favor of former Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton as the nation's next President. The lessons learned in this election may be important in future ones. This review will address four areas of importance: a) the candidates; b) the polling; c) the mainstream media; and d) the public sentiments likely twenty years from now.

The Republicans fielded a total of seventeen candidates, fourteen of whom (all but Mr. Trump, retired pediatric surgeon Dr. Ben Carson, and former Hewlett-Packard CEO Ms. Carly Fiorina) were professional politicians. Many of those professionals had a good track record as either U. S. Senators or governors. The professionals were: Jeb Bush, former Governor of Florida; Chris Christie, Governor of New Jersey; Senator Ted Cruz of Texas; James Gilmore, former Governor of Virginia; Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina; John Kasich, Governor of Ohio; Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana; Mike Huckabee, former Governor of Arkansas; George Pataki, former Governor of New York; Rand Paul, Senator from Kentucky; Rick Perry, former Governor of Texas; Senator Marco Rubio of Florida; Rick Santorum, former Senator from Pennsylvania; and Scott Walker, Governor of Wisconsin. Of these seventeen, five (Graham, Jindal, Pataki, Perry, and Walker) withdrew before the primaries got started. Eight of the remaining twelve did not have a real chance: Santorum and Huckabee have views on abortion that are not widely shared by the electorate, including many Republicans; Gilmore's successes were too far in the past to be remembered; Bush and Christie are indistinguishable from a typical Democrat; Carson and Fiorina had neither the connections nor the money; and Paul's views are ahead of his time, more libertarian than the typical Republican voter. Therefore, had this been a conventional election, the nomination would most likely have gone to Marco Rubio, John Kasich, or Ted Cruz.

But this was the year that the average working guy responded to a consistent message from the outsider Donald Trump: the nation is on the wrong track under Mr. Obama and Mrs. Clinton would only continue it; the trade deals made over the past twenty years were detrimental to the average working guy; the federal government has undermined the nation with lax immigration enforcement; certain agencies of the federal government (Department of Justice, FBI, IRS, and ATF) have become politicized and have knowingly and willfully undermined both the notion of equal justice and the rights of the people; and the weak foreign policy of Mr. Obama has served to embolden the worst of the Islamic terrorists.

Mr. Trump's great advantage is that he is even less politically correct than the average person; he is media-savvy, having starred in a TV show; was willing to discuss any issue and make any appearance on TV and radio. He connected in a way with average people that the others found difficult. Although he frequently insensitive and abrasive, he was able to connect with the public in a way that the media could not control. He won the Republican nomination, not because he was such a sterling candidate, but because there were too many people in the field, and thus 30 to 35% of the popular vote in a Republican primary was enough to give him that state's votes for the nomination. Which brings us to the first lesson of this election: politicians will nearly always do what is best for themselves and their quest for power. Here is the example.

The Republican Party establishment generally expected that Mr. Trump's candidacy would implode of its own excesses. But after a few early primaries, where it became evident that Mr. Trump's message was resonating, the major forces in the party turned on Mr. Trump, attempting to portray him as too far outside the mainstream to be viable. Furthermore, he would be dangerous to the Party if nominated and subsequently lost to the Democrat, and would be dangerous to the nation if actually elected President. If they truly believed that, why didn't the major candidates get together and do what would have been best for

both the party and the nation, namely, choose from among themselves one or two that could put up a real fight against Trump, and deprive him of the nomination? Mr. Trump probably could not have prevailed against one or two focused candidates. But no such thing ever happened: they all stayed in until mathematically eliminated, providing Mr. Trump with a narrow victory at the nominating convention. So either the Republican establishment was lying, or the politicians once again did what was best for their own quest for power rather than the nation. Mr. Trump won both the nomination and the general election, and is now the de facto head of the Republican Party. Maybe the Republicans are the stupid party after all. It is worse than that. The other candidates embarrassed Mr. Trump into signing an agreement which all the others had signed, pledging to support the nominee in the general election, whoever it was. But once Mr. Trump won the nomination, only four of the main twelve (Carson, Christie, Huckabee, and Paul) gave anything more than the most tepid endorsement. Now the establishment portion of the Republican Party is led by the person they claimed to have feared the most. The professionals were simply outmaneuvered at every turn by Mr. Trump, a political outsider (albeit one with name recognition), but one who had the message that the professionals should have had.