

## **Politics 303\* --**

### **How to be more effective in politics?**

#### **I. Build GROUP Political Clout**

#### **II. Practice "Reward and Punishment." Be TOLERANT with potential friends.**

#### **III. Know How To Fight**

#### **IV. Know Thyself**

#### **V. Know Thy Potential Rivals**

**"Know thyself and thy enemies, then you'll win every battle."**

-- Sun Tze, a Chinese strategist, 512 BC. His book, "The Art of War" was and may still be a required reading for the Joint Chief of Staff.

\* This is the personal view of S. B. Woo, expressed at the request of President Kathleen To at its 8008 meeting. It may serve as a reference material for the Broad.

## **I. Build GROUP Political Clout**

Effective politics depends on large numbers in votes, money, volunteers & voices. Hence, all Asian Ams, and Asian PRs, must work together. (PRs may give money to political causes but may not vote) Each ethnic component, by itself, is not large enough in numbers.

The huge annual increase in AsAm population is due mostly to new immigrants. Hence, we must pay attention to AsAm immigrants who are not yet citizens or P.Rs.

## **II. Practice "Reward and Punishment." Be tolerant with potential friends.**

"Speak softly but carry a big stick" -- Lyndon Johnson. That is, practice reward and punishment in politics. Often AsAm orgs. waste energy & resources fighting each other which deters unity. We must be tolerant with all individuals and orgs. that are like-minded.

## **III. Know How To Fight Effectively**

(A) Having the heart and courage to fight is sooooo..ooo important.  
However, they can't be taught or transferred.

(B) **How to fight.** (See a separate sheet)

## **IV. Know Thyself**

(A) **The unique strengths & weaknesses of 80-20** (a separate sheet)

(B) **Those cultural traits that hurt us politically** (a separate sheet)

(C) **The hopes/fears/habits of Asian Am. officials/media/civic orgs** (a separate sheet. To be presented at the very end.)

## **V. Know Thy Potential Rivals**

(A) **The hopes/fears/habits of U.S. political leaders** (a separate sheet)

(B) **The hopes/fears/habits of U.S. media** (a separate sheet)

### III. (B) **How To Fight:**

Each of the following principles is **illustrated** with our past and recent interaction with presidential camps.

#### **1. Respect Your Friends and Rivals:**

Study their interests -- understand their hopes and fears; know where their principal interest lies, and find ways to enhance or weaken it.

#### **2. Create a Win-Win:**

"Victory without a battle is the only real victory." -- Sun Tze.

Where there is a potential conflict, find a win-win solution for us & them. That is, to find a way to induce our rivals to give us what we want, while enhancing their principal interests.

#### **3. When Win-win is refused, & a Conflict Looms**

"Always plan for a possible defeat first" -- Sun Tze.

When a conflict looms, start looking for a fail-safe retreat route, assuming that 80-20 suffers a defeat. Also assess if 80-20 has the means to inflict effective damage on a rival's major interest.

#### **4. Necessary Conditions for Entering a Conflict**

1. We'll still win the war, even assuming that we lose this battle, and
2. We can effectively inflict real damage on our rival so that it may be induced to go back to our earlier proposed win-win solution.

#### **5. During a Conflict**

- a) Be measured.

We are fighting for equal opportunity, not liberty. Hence, we must be measured in fighting for our goal. Begin with a measured force. If it's not enough then take stronger measures. Don't hesitate to use the full measure that is legal. Don't ever go beyond that.

#### **5. During a Conflict (continued)**

- b) Be daring and committed.

In a fight, the smaller and weaker person must be the one who is "more willing to die" in order to create a chance to win. 80-20 is normally much weaker as compared with its rivals. The leader must be committed i.e. put personal reputation and interest on the line, then the troops will follow.

c) "Speed is of the essence in winning a battle." -- Sun Tze

If we are faster in deploying our forces (mass email, affiliates and AsAm media), reacting to rivals, getting feedback from the grassroots (via their emails), and making tactical adjustments, of course we'll win. 80-20 has superb mobility because it employs emails. **However**, ultimately 80-20 can only be as speedy as its leader. Consequently, 80-20's leader must give an on-going fight the first priority. Sleep less, if required. He/she owes Asian Am. community that much.

d) Listen but don't weaken.

The leader of a fight must read email feedbacks from colleagues, our constituents, news articles, blogs, and our rivals. In a fight, both sides will may try to fake the other side out. So analyze battle conditions carefully and don't weaken.

## **6. After a conflict**

If we win, be humble and magnanimous. Try hard to find a win for our former rival to the extent of telling a white lie. If we lose, execute the planned fail-safe retreat. In either case, move on. We still have a huge job before us.

**WARNING: Every battle is different. Tactically, every battle shall be fought differently. But the same principle applies.**

## IV. Know Thyself

### (A) 80-20's unique strengths and weaknesses as a cyberspace organization with a big email list but no headquarters

#### Strengths:

1. Can organize nationally/**globally without much money and many dedicated leaders**. Not deterred by separation is distance & time!
2. can mobilize with **lightening speed**, if the leadership is good.
3. **can focus** national/global strength on a local issue -- creating the **illusion** of power or popularity.
4. can communicate with **1/1000 of the cost** of direct mail. Hence, 80-20's **endorsement is much more powerful** than that of a powerful politician who normally doesn't have the means to communicate with his/her constituents.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Email has a **short shelf life**. (Hence, 80-20 employs snail mail for messages that require a long shelf life e.g. fundraising and special recruitment.)
2. **Illusion of power could blind the leadership** (Howard Dean and Ron Paul's failed campaigns are examples. They can organize good rallies but may not get enough local votes.)
3. **No local roots**. (Few chapter leaders can discuss national politics in a ways that attracts members. OCA maintains its local chapters through i) annual banquet, and ii) raising money for scholarship. Perhaps a booklet on "How to run for offices and influence your Congressional delegates" may help. It'll have concrete projects for local chapter to complete.)
4. **Lack permanency**. A building has more permanency to most people than computers. Every body has WEB sites these days.

## IV. Know Thyself

### (B) Those cultural traits that hurt us politically

**1. Wanting To Be A Big Fish In a Small Pond** -- 80-20 may want to **set many examples of willing to be a follower**. A small minority with many ethnic groups of very different history is hard to UNITE.

### **2. Lack of Maturity Regarding U.S. Politics** -- easily correctable!

All you need to know is that we must abandon the Confucian belief that **government officials are like our parents** who are therefore above us and we must obey.

This concept is diametrically opposed to the American concept that **government officials are public servants** whom we as citizen may therefore "retain or fire" i.e. reward and punish.

As a result, Asian Americans who was unknowingly poisoned by the Belief that government official are like our parents,

- o **don't ask for accountability** from officials, whether they are AsAms or non-AsAms.  
Why? How may children ask for accountability from parents.
- o **don't ask for deeds** from official but are instead satisfied by vanity rewards issued by officials.  
Why? Children don't demand deeds from parents. Children are satisfied with a verbal praise or a "star" from the parents ( i.e. a photo with the politician)

Such Asian Ams tend to question the validity of an NGO (non-government organization) like the 80-20. They

- o **don't even want to hear from 80-20.**  
Why? 80-20 isn't even elected. Hence, 80-20 is an illegitimate **and un-filial son**
- o **don't like 80-20's idea of "rewarding or punishing" officials.**  
Why? How dare children reward and punish parents!
- o **don't like the idea of a bloc vote**  
Why? This is like children plotting against the parents. I know a Professor, a great guy steeped in Confucian beliefs and who has been in the US for decades and who asked if a bloc vote is legal.

YES, a bloc vote is legal. A bloc vote is the tool that American

forefathers gave to American citizens to "reward or punish" their public servants!!!

Nevertheless, we must STILL RESPECT our officials. Yes, in America, we respect everyone. We are equal with those whom we employ and those Who employ us.

## V. Know Thy Potential Rivals

### (A) The hopes/fears/habits of U.S. political leaders

#### 1. Hopes

Win re-election. It's just that simple. Below are in decreasing priority:

- a. endorsement by groups that can deliver votes e.g. Unions or Conservative Groups.
- b. money (having a big war chest attracts more money),
- c. no primary, and
- d. a weak opponent in the general election.

#### 2. Fears

Lose the re-election. Below are in decreasing priority:

- a. get a national group like AIPAC gunning for his/her Cong. race,
- b. get tagged in a well-publicized scandal,
- c. face a competitive primary opponent which AIPAC can arrange, and
- d. face a strong opponent from the other party, which again an organization like AIPAC can arrange.

#### 3. Habits

Below in decreasing certainty:

- a. seek favorable local/state publicity. (Can you help provide it?)
- b. place local/state interests above national interests,
- c. more accommodating to all citizens/orgs during the election season,
- d. don't carry grudges against constituents -- indeed they tend to court former opposing constituent groups more than faithful supporters.
- e. do carry grudges against politicians, whom they have the power to punish.
- f. try to accommodate groups on issues that can deliver bloc votes,
- g. give priority to donors when it comes to constituent service,
- h. will attend functions if his/her opponents or fellow politicians are said to be attending,
- i. love a chance to speak in public events; will be offended if not given recognition in a public event,
- j. will give very cold shoulder to individuals/groups of "ill" repute, or any group thought to represent non-US interests, Israel is an

exception.

## **V. Know Thy Potential Rivals**

### **(B) The hopes/fears/habits of our media**

#### 1. Hopes

- a. An ever increasing readership/listernship/viewership. The price of advertisement are set according the size of usership,
- b. More advertisers, and
- c. Win Pulitzer prizes

#### 2. Fears

- a. lose advertisers (80-20 can have a say in that)
- b. lose usership (80-20 can be effective in that with national TVs by recommending a close substitute for AsAms to watch, e.g substituting CNN with MSNBC),
- c. effective complaints to FCC (FCC will not interfere with freedom of speech; but will step in with expressions of racial hatred and slurs.)

#### 3. Habits

- a. begins to pay more attention to blogs. 80-20 can urge supporters to go to media's respective blogs,
- b. will publish feedback from users including negative comments on the media itself.

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### **IV (C1) The hopes/fears/habits of AsAm officials -- same hopes & fears but a unique habit**

#### 3. Habits

Many AsAm politicians rather have their AsAm constituents keeping their Asian beliefs, because it makes things easier for them.

### **IV (C2) The hopes/fears/habits of AsAm media -- same hopes & fears but a unique habit**

#### 3. Habits

Don't understand US politics and is not likely to improve soon, because its usership is not interest in US politics.

### **IV (C3) The hopes of AsAm organizations**

**Be the biggest fish in the small Asian Am. community pond.**