

## CONVENTIONAL DISSONANCE: ON TRUMP NOMINATION

### Trump is deliberately alienating minorities of all hues in his re-election bid

There are few events in U.S. election politics that offer a more predictable denouement than the National Conventions of the two major parties, given that the presidential and vice-presidential tickets for both are known beforehand. Yet even this low bar of dull certainty was scarcely surpassed by the Republican Party as it reaffirmed its faith in a President who has shredded its ideological moorings and dug his heels in defending the record of his first term in office, including an impeachment on allegations of abuse of power and obstructing justice. The Convention culminated with Mr. Trump's address in which he appeared to fall back upon the same lines of political attack that he employed against former Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election, only this time against Democratic nominee and former Vice-President Joe Biden. In doing so, Mr. Trump conjured up, once again, the spectres of socialism and globalisation that threatened to creep upon the U.S. economy should Mr. Biden prevail in the 2020 election, warning that the latter was the "destroyer of America's jobs... [who] took the donations of blue-collar workers... [but] voted to ship their jobs to China and many other distant lands". It is unlikely that many among the party faithful who thronged to the Convention questioned his basic premise regarding the danger posed by the Democratic Party to the economy: that there are jobs aplenty and the pandemic is a thing of the past. Nothing could undermine that assertion more than the fact that unemployment rates are still high, and that during the time of the Convention, more than 3,600 people succumbed to COVID-19 in the U.S.

As disturbing as the false claims made about the economy and the pandemic were, more deleterious for the future of U.S. societal harmony was the strident note that the President struck regarding racial tensions that have flared up across the country following several deaths of unarmed African-Americans at the hands of armed police. Leaving little doubt as to which side of the line he stood on, Mr. Trump said he "condemns the rioting, looting, arson and violence we have seen in Democrat-run cities like Kenosha, Minneapolis, Portland, Chicago and New York". Little wonder that police brutality of the kind that was inflicted upon Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin, has continued to foment anger in the streets of that city, and that Mr. Trump's regular allusions to "mob rule" by "thugs" associated with the Democratic Party is likely costing him what little support he might enjoy with minorities of all hues. When November 3 rolls around, it might take Team Trump more than a vicious attack on mail-in voting to prevent this broad sense of anger in multicultural America from drowning out its political ambitions for a second term.

### Meanings of Difficult Words:

- ❖ **conventional** (adjective) – normal, regular, typical, traditional/standard.
- ❖ **dissonance** (noun) – incongruity, disparity, disagreement, discrepancy, contradiction.
- ❖ **deliberately** (adverb) – intentionally, purposely, knowingly/wittingly.
- ❖ **alienate** (verb) – set apart, isolate, set against, separate, cut off, divide.
- ❖ **hue** (noun) – character, aspect, nature; type, kind.
- ❖ **bid** (noun) – attempt, effort, endeavour/try.
- ❖ **denouement** (noun) – ending, final outcome, end result, climax (of a situation).
- ❖ **convention** (noun) – conference, meeting, assembly, gathering, summit.
- ❖ **given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind.
- ❖ **beforehand** (adverb) – in advance, ahead of time; earlier, previously.
- ❖ **bar** (noun) – level.
- ❖ **certainty** (noun) – confidence, sureness, assurance.
- ❖ **surpass** (verb) – be greater than, be better than, exceed, go beyond.
- ❖ **reaffirm** (verb) – assert, state, assure again strongly.
- ❖ **shred** (verb) – tear something into small pieces.
- ❖ **ideological** (adjective) – relating to a system of ideas.

- ❖ **scarcely** (adverb) – hardly, barely, only just.
- ❖ **moorings** (noun) – stabilizing influence/power.
- ❖ **dig (in) one's heels** (phrase) – oppose, fight against, refuse to accept.
- ❖ **impeachment** (noun) – the act of charging or accusing (a public official) with a crime done while in office.
- ❖ **allegation** (noun) – charge, accusation, indictment.
- ❖ **culminate** (verb) – end with, terminate with.
- ❖ **address** (noun) – speak, talk, discourse.
- ❖ **fall back upon** (phrasal verb) – have recourse to, rely on, make use of, utilize.
- ❖ **rival** (noun) – opponent, adversary, contender, competitor.
- ❖ **nominee** (noun) – candidate.
- ❖ **conjure up** (phrasal verb) – produce, materialize, generate (by magic).
- ❖ **spectre** (noun) – threat, menace, danger/peril.
- ❖ **Socialism** (noun) – it's a state-controlled economy in which the state controls the means of production: factories, offices, resources, and firms. Since the government controls almost all of society's functions, it can make better use of resources, labours and lands.
- ❖ **globalisation** (noun) – the process of making the trade of goods and services equivalent in all nations (Courtesy: VOA Learning English).
- ❖ **creep upon** (phrasal verb) – inch, crawl, tiptoe, move slowly & stealthily.
- ❖ **prevail** (verb) – win, triumph, succeed.
- ❖ **blue-collar workers** (noun) – it describes people who do manual work. Workers who work in a factory, for example, who wear a uniform.
- ❖ **white-collar workers** (noun) – people who work in offices, doing administration or managerial tasks – clerks for example – were referred to as white-collar workers.
- ❖ **distant** (adjective) – faraway, far off, far.
- ❖ **unlikely** (adjective) – not likely, improbable, questionable.
- ❖ **throng** (verb) – crowd round, gather, assemble together.
- ❖ **premise** (noun) – belief, thought, assumption, proposition, assertion.
- ❖ **aplenty** (adjective) – in large quantities, in large numbers, in abundance.
- ❖ **a thing of the past** (phrase) – something no longer exists/happens.
- ❖ **undermine** (verb) – reduce, diminish, spoil, damage, weaken.
- ❖ **assertion** (noun) – statement, claim/opinion, declaration, affirmation, contention.
- ❖ **succumb** (verb) – die from, pass away as a result of, be a fatality of, fall victim to (a disease or injury).
- ❖ **deleterious** (adjective) – harmful, damaging, adverse.
- ❖ **societal** (adjective) – relating to society.
- ❖ **harmony** (noun) – unity, agreement, cooperation, consensus, understanding.
- ❖ **strident** (adjective) – in an excessively forceful way; high-pitched, loud & harsh.
- ❖ **strike a note** (phrase) – express/communicate, call/bring to mind, cite.
- ❖ **flare up** (phrasal verb) – start suddenly, erupt, break out.
- ❖ **at the hands of** (phrase) – (suffer, get hurt & be treated badly) as a consequence of someone's actions.
- ❖ **condemn** (verb) – censure, criticize, castigate, attack.
- ❖ **looting** (noun) – stealing, robbing, thievery, theft.
- ❖ **arson** (noun) – setting fire intentionally to damage/destroy public properties, particularly buildings.
- ❖ **no/little wonder** (phrase) – it is not surprising.
- ❖ **brutality** (noun) – cruelty, barbarity, inhumanity.
- ❖ **inflict upon** (verb) – cause, impose, force, thrust, deal out, mete out (something damaging, problematic or troublesome).
- ❖ **foment** (verb) – instigate, incite, provoke/stir up.
- ❖ **allusion** (noun) – reference, remark, mention, citation.
- ❖ **mob rule** (noun) – ochlocracy; the rule of government by a large, disorganized, and often violent crowd of people.
- ❖ **thug** (noun) – gangster, a criminal, violent person.
- ❖ **cost** (verb) – cause the loss of, damage.
- ❖ **roll around** (phrasal verb) – (of a time/event) happen/arrive.
- ❖ **vicious** (adjective) – brutal, ferocious, savage.

- ❖ **mail-in voting** (noun) – postal voting; a type of voting in an election where ballot papers/voter slips are distributed to voters to their addresses before Election Day and mailed back by the voters or deposited at a voting location or secure dropbox by a certain time on Election Day.
- ❖ **in-person voting** (noun) – a type of voting in an election where voters cast their votes/ballots in person in a polling booth on Election Day.
- ❖ **absentee voting** (noun) – a type of voting in an election where voters cast their vote by post, because they can't physically be present at a voting center on Election Day due to various reasons ranging from being out of country (for study/job), having disability or illness, serving as an election worker & etc.,.
- ❖ **drown out** (phrasal verb) – make inaudible, be louder than, overpower, overwhelm.

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## **TARGETING HEZBOLLAH: ON ISRAELI ATTACKS IN LEBANON**

**Israel and the Shia militia should not risk a wider war by engaging in targeted attacks**

The Israeli attacks on Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon following what it called “cross border fires” mark a significant escalation in the crisis that has been building up along the border in recent years. Hezbollah, a Shia militia-cum-political party in Lebanon, and Israel, which have fought two wars before, have been observing a tenuous ceasefire for 14 years. Tensions began after Israel’s targeting of Iranian weapons and supplies within Syria. Israel fears that Iranian supplies to Hezbollah via Syria, where the Shia militias fought alongside regime fighters against rebels and Sunni jihadists, would leave them stronger, enhancing Israel’s security challenges in the northern border. In July, a Hezbollah commander was killed in an Israeli raid in Syria for which the group had vowed retaliation. Since then, there have been attempts to target troops on Israel’s borders with Lebanon and Syria, according to Israel. In Tuesday’s attacks, Israel targeted an observation post, which the Israeli Defense Forces claimed was used by Hezbollah for intelligence collection. The raid, at a time when Israel was carrying out an air campaign in Gaza, shows the growing appetite of the newly formed unity government of Netanyahu, under fire at home over its handling of the COVID-19 crisis, for war as a means to address the simmering border problems.

Hezbollah has been a tough target for Israel. In 2000, after 18 years of occupation of southern Lebanon, Israel was forced to withdraw mainly due to the fighting of Hezbollah. In 2006, Israel invaded Lebanon, aimed at destroying Hezbollah’s military capabilities. But after a month of Israeli aerial and land attacks, even on the day of the ceasefire, Hezbollah fired hundreds of short-range rockets into northern Israel. Ever since, both sides have been wary of another open conflict. Israel, which has bombed Gaza several times since its 2005 withdrawal from the strip, had been careful when it came to Hezbollah. The militants, on the other side, turned their focus to capacity building after the 2006 war, and, since 2011, to the civil war in Syria. The Baathist Syria has been a vital link between Hezbollah and Iran ever since the group was founded in the early 1980s. Mr. Assad has survived the civil war, and Iran has substantially increased its footprint in Syria, bolstering the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis. Israel sees this axis as a growing security challenge and hence, started the bombing operations in Syria, risking another conflict with Hezbollah. The past two wars suggest that it would not be easy for Israel, despite its military might, to defeat the battle-hardened Hezbollah fighters at their base. Hezbollah, on the other side, might resist an Israeli attack, but risks pulling Lebanon, already battling an economic crisis, political instability and the after-effects of the Beirut blast, into a wider war. Both sides should avert such an outcome and stick to the ceasefire.

### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- ❖ **cross-border** (adjective) – across a border between two countries.
- ❖ **escalation** (noun) – intensification; an increase in the intensity of something.

- ❖ **mark** (verb) – indicate, represent, signify.
- ❖ **militia** (noun) – armed forces, military unit, soldiery (from the civil population to support main forces).
- ❖ **build up** (phrasal verb) – increase, raise, intensify, escalate.
- ❖ **Shia** (adjective) – relating to Shia branch/sect of Islam.
- ❖ **tenuous** (adjective) – weak, fragile, shaky; insubstantial, unspecific, indefinite.
- ❖ **ceasefire** (noun) – a negotiated agreement that will be accompanied by other associated commitments to de-escalate the fighting; a temporary stoppage of a war, truce, armistice.
- ❖ **alongside** (preposition) – together with.
- ❖ **regime** (noun) – government.
- ❖ **rebel** (noun) – agitator, insurgent, subversive; dissenter, dissident.
- ❖ **Sunni** (adjective) – relating to Sunni branch/sect of Islam.
- ❖ **Sunni jihadist** (noun) – Sunni extremist.
- ❖ **raid** (noun) – surprise attack.
- ❖ **vow** (verb) – affirm, pledge, promise/swear, make a commitment.
- ❖ **retaliation** (noun) – revenge, vengeance, counter-attack.
- ❖ **observation post** (noun) – a position from which military observations (visual, audible, or other means) are made; military base/camp positioned for watching the movement of enemy forces.
- ❖ **intelligence** (noun) – (military) information.
- ❖ **at a time** (phrase) – during.
- ❖ **carry out** (phrasal verb) – conduct, perform, execute.
- ❖ **appetite** (noun) – liking, desire, craving, thirst, hunger.
- ❖ **under fire** (phrase) – being attacked/criticized strongly.
- ❖ **means** (noun) – method, way, procedure.
- ❖ **address** (verb) – tackle, deal with, attend to, try to sort out.
- ❖ **simmering** (adjective) – fuming, smouldering, brewing (of emotions).
- ❖ **occupation** (noun) – capture, invasion, takeover, annexation.
- ❖ **withdraw** (verb) – pull out, pull back, retreat, leave.
- ❖ **invade** (verb) – occupy, conquer, capture, seize, take over, annex.
- ❖ **capability** (noun) – (military) forces, resources.
- ❖ **aerial** (adjective) – happening in the air.
- ❖ **wary** (adjective) – cautious, careful, circumspect.
- ❖ **open conflict** (noun) – conflict that is very visible and deep-rooted; surface conflict is visible but shallow or with no roots; latent conflict is a conflict that is below the surface with potential to emerge.
- ❖ **Gaza Strip** (proper noun) – simply Gaza, is a self-governing Palestinian territory surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, Israel and Egypt.
- ❖ **militant** (noun) – extremist, radical, fanatic, sectarian.
- ❖ **capacity building** (noun) – capacity development; it has typically been defined as the development and strengthening of human and institutional resources. The United Nations Development Programme defines capacity as “the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and achieve objectives” at three levels: individual, institutional and societal.
- ❖ **Baathist** (adjective) – Relating to the Baath Party. Ba’ath (in Arabic) meaning “renaissance” or “resurrection”).
- ❖ **substantially** (adverb) – considerably, significantly, largely.
- ❖ **footprint** (noun) – the area occupied.
- ❖ **bolster** (verb) – fortify, support, reinforce/buttress.
- ❖ **axis** (noun) – alliance, coalition, bloc, union.
- ❖ **might** (noun) – strength, force, power.
- ❖ **battle-hardened** (adjective) – having experience of battle.
- ❖ **base** (noun) – place.
- ❖ **instability** (noun) – uncertainty, unpredictability, lack of stability.
- ❖ **after-effect** (noun) – repercussion, aftermath, consequence.
- ❖ **avert** (verb) – prevent, stop, avoid.
- ❖ **stick to** (verb) – abide by, hold to, comply with.