

Heightened Awareness, Elections and Leadership in America

Our water supply and the availability of clean water as well as the potential terrorist threat to our water supply and water infrastructure are issues that are central to our survival as a nation. These issues have very little to do with politics and, yet, both are very much political footballs. Neither issue is discussed or even understood by the general public or elected leaders.

The other night I watched Glenn Beck's program on CNN. He noted that terrorism is truly a survival issue in America today, with which I definitely agree. He commented about the political rhetoric that is so prevalent. His solution was that we, Americans, need to get past the rhetoric and vote for the best candidate for the job.

But how do we do this? The 60 second sound bite is king. Can we learn all we need to know about a candidate's position in that 60 second period of time? According to the media, we can.

Worse yet, we do not seem to be able to discern between social issues and true survival issues. Many issues on the news today may be important social issues but are not issues that affect our ability to survive as a country. Abortion is an important social and moral issue, having clean water to drink is a survival issue. True survival issues include water, food, energy and public safety.

For example, in my books and articles, I explore issues involving water quality, quantity and availability in the western United States and globally. Having or not having clean, safe water is a survival issue. Without sufficient clean water, we can not live more than a few days, nor can we have food to eat.

As a board member of a small water district located west of Denver Colorado, I am familiar with the challenges of supplying safe water to our consumers every month. We openly invite our customers to attend board meetings and give us their input. Very few ever do. They only respond if there is a problem. A rate increase or no water coming out of the faucet elicits a response. They know next to nothing about the water system that serves this life giving fluid to their homes. They depend upon us, the five elected members of the water board to uphold their best interests. As an elected board member, I am flattered by their confidence. However, I do think they would be better served knowing more about their water supply and water supply system.

It is the same with terrorism. There is definitely a serious potential threat to our water infrastructure by terrorists. However, terrorism is another topic not widely read or understood by the general public and the media. It has become the subject of the 60 second sound bite as well as a volatile political issue. Our water supply is a very real and plausible target of terrorism.

As far back as 1941, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director J. Edgar Hoover wrote;

"Among public utilities, water supply facilities offer a particularly vulnerable point of attack ..."

For our safety, public education about our water system and supply is almost a requirement for water suppliers in the United States. As noted in an American Water Works Association report,

"In many cities and small towns, the public is the first line of defense, serving as an extra set of eyes watching over key utility assets such as tanks, reservoirs and even fire hydrants."

First responders and security experts agree the higher the level of awareness of the general public about the issue of terrorism, the better our chances of preventing or at least mitigating the next attack. As public awareness increases, disinformation, rumor, paralysis and "knee-jerk" reaction decreases in a crisis.

Only heightened public awareness of issues like energy, water and terrorism will really make a difference to the survival of this country. While very few of us need to be experts, a good working knowledge about these extremely important topics allows us to exchange meaningful ideas and question the experts and leadership. For some reason our politicians are unwilling to lead us. So the general public needs to take the lead. Need we continue to be puerile about these issues?

Sadly, it seems to me that our country's leadership actually reflects us very well. We all seem to want instant answers and quick fixes. It seems that both major political parties, Republicans and Democrats, are more motivated by self interest than whether America survives as a country. The latest

public outcry is often designed to deflect our attention away from key survival issues. The economic bottom line seems to be the most important issue in our lives and our society.

Worse, we do not seem to realize the need to know more about these critical survival issues. We seem to be satisfied with the information contained in 60 second sound bites, unwilling to make an effort to become informed to have meaningful discussions, find viable solutions and insure that we can maintain our way of life.

Further, our elected leaders apparently want to keep the public unaware and uneducated about these survival issues. They run campaign advertisements and sound bites in order to get re-elected. When they are interviewed on radio and television, there is no discussion about educating the public or trying to raise the awareness of their constituents. Many of our elected leaders seem to know as little as we do about these vital survival issues and can parrot back only the "party line" as meaningful discussion.

An aware public with a good working knowledge about energy, water and terrorism would not tolerate candidates and elected leadership in this country who refuse to deal with these survival issues. They would know that if these critical issues are not addressed and effective long term solutions implemented by both an educated leadership and an aware public, there will be no economic bottom line to sustain.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

H. Court Young is a writer, author, publisher and a geologist interested in water and terrorism issues. His books about water and terrorism can be found at <http://www.waterconflicts.com>. & <http://www.understandingwaterandterrorism.com>