



## POLITICS IN A NON-POLITICAL VIEW

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As I write this, the most powerful nation in the world is gearing up for its next presidential elections. In my own country, the next general elections are scheduled middle of next year. Interestingly, elections have always been an arena where both personality and ability come into play. Politics, after all, makes strange bedfellows, as they say. And in politics, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies. There are only permanent interests.

I have never really found a genuine interest in politics, save for the practice of my right to vote that I religiously observe. We may not consider ourselves as huge contributors to society at large, but look at the way political candidates go to great lengths to win our approval and hope to get our votes come election time. Election periods are notable for the amount of spending they encourage for those running to get elected. And with the coming Christmas season, political candidates in my own country need to prepare themselves for the possible barrage of people asking for this or that donation or contribution. In my country, politicians need to have deep pockets and even deeper understanding for the constituents they serve. It's not uncommon for someone running for political office to have sponsored an educational scholarship or two (or even more) before running for office, or to have supported a charitable cause, all in the name of having easy recall for voters.

Although my country has often been perceived as having an unbelievable degree of political corruption at various levels of government, its citizens have still managed to exercise their right to vote. Unfortunately, citizens of my country do tend to forget easily. Many of us, perhaps jaded by the fact that whoever gets into position is still likely to become tainted, vote for political officials because: there's no one better; there's no one else; there's going to be another election in a few years' time, so why not give this one a(nother) chance? And then a couple of years down the road when the one in office has been doing their best (or worst), people complain, take to the streets and cry NO MORE! DOWN WITH SO-AND-SO! Yes, we easily forget that we voted for those people in the first place...maybe it's just like reaping what you sow, eh?

Politics has always been said to be dirty. One can get into politics all squeaky-clean and a paragon of virtue, while very few come out untarnished. Politicians can't claim to be forever untouched by all the grime and mudslinging. They will, sooner or later, experience numerous acid tests and moments of getting down and dirty. We can only hope that when they go through all that, they won't entirely forget those who empowered them to be in such a position.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define politics. What are your views on politics?
2. Have you ever wanted to be in politics? Why or why not?
3. Why is it never easy to remain perfectly "untouched" by all the dirtiness in politics?
4. What, to you, are the qualities of an ideal political candidate?
5. If you had the opportunity, would you run for political office? What position would that be and why?