

The Republicans' Subliminal Ticket: Will American Voters Be Hoodwinked?

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There is something very funny about the current Republican Party ticket, and I don't mean "funny ha-ha" but "funny pe-e-e-culiar." And that is the following: If it has been ascertained (and it has), that the GOP Presidential hopeful John McCain promises nothing but a continuation of the disastrous Bush-Cheney policies; is utterly confused about major foreign policy issues; is committed to one hundred years' occupation of Iraq and new wars; knows zilch about the economy (as demonstrated again by his comments following the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy); will maintain Bush's tax breaks for the super-rich; and so on and so forth, — then, on what basis do he and his backers think they have any appeal to the population? In this day and age of manipulation of masses through carefully orchestrated media images, it may well be that the McCain campaign and its backers think they can appeal to the electorate, by evoking subliminal images of times gone by — times presented as far rosier than the current situation. This may be a wild suggestion, but we live in wild times, so please let's take a look.

Anyone who grew up in the United States in the 1950s, or had contact with the popular culture of that period, must have had a *deja' vu* experience, albeit not conscious, while watching the Republican Party's convention over the Labor Day weekend. On a superficial level, the nominee John McCain may have recalled images of Dwight David Eisenhower, a former general in World War II, since McCain has been grooming his image as a Viet Nam war veteran, former POW etc. Also, the slogan that dons his website — "Reform, Prosperity, Peace," — literally copies the "peace and prosperity" associated with Eisenhower.

But there is an added dimension. McCain himself seemed to have been especially prepped for the Convention performance. In lieu of his usually lethargic appearance, and clumsy movements across the stage while struggling to maintain eye contact with one of his life-saving tele-prompters, this time he appeared energetic and aggressive, a man primed to get the job done and to whip up enthusiasm for his enterprise. If he had been competing in the Olympics one might have suspected doping — an extra shot of adrenaline, if not speed or cocaine. Why? Because Mr. Nice Guy McCain had suddenly been transformed into a rabble rouser, an attack dog, gesticulating wildly and shouting at the crowd, "Stand up! Stand up!" and so on. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoS7udeA_tl)

Then came his "surprise" choice of running mate for the vice-presidential spot, Alaska governor Sarah Palin. Seen rightfully by most convention participants and also political observers, as a political nobody, Palin presented herself as a typical American woman, "just your average hockey mom," ready to assume responsibility for the nation and the world on the basis of such humble credentials. Her speech to the convention introduced a number of lines she would then repeat verbatim again and again in appearances following the

Republican Party convention, like: "In politics, there are some candidates who use change to promote their careers. And then there are those, like John McCain, who use their careers to promote change." As Justin Raimondo has accurately identified, the woman seems to have been programmed (not to say brainwashed) by the neocon con men, to spit out pat phrases to address in the most simplistic fashion, any of a range of complex issues, foreign or domestic. (See "Sarah Palin, Neocon Pod Person: Did they hypnotize her, or was that unnecessary?" at www.antiwar.com/justin). Thus, in her first major interview, with ABC, she lectured her interviewer Charles Gibson, whom she amicably addressed as Charlie, with such profound concepts as, "We have to keep our eyes on Russia. Under the leadership there." And she stressed the unique vantage point she has from Juneau to do this, since "You can actually see Russia from here." So, "we have to keep our eyes on Russia."

When called upon to deal with questions she had {not} been prepared for, Palin responded, obviously according to a modality her "briefers" had taught her: try to define and address a broader issue, i.e. to evade the question and throw in whatever vaguely relevant formulas her neocon prompters had drilled into her. Thus, when asked if she were really ready to assume the office of President of the United States, she said she was; we "can't blink" was an oft-repeated remark. When asked for her appraisal of the Bush doctrine (of preemptive warfare), she quite visibly did blink, and begged to know "in what sense?" Her all-too-cordial interviewer was gracious enough to define the Bush doctrine for her, but that didn't help much. All she could offer was the maxim that, if the U.S. were threatened and the intelligence were there to say so, then the U.S. would have every right to self-defense, and so forth. Asked whether she would support U.S. military cross-border strikes into Pakistan even without Islamabad's okay, she again blinked (obviously not adequately briefed on the issue) and added some friendly words about the need to work with our allies against terrorism, etc.

In general, she said the U.S. had to be "wired into the mission," i.e. of winning the war (on terrorism, and presumably any other new wars that a McCain-Palin administration might want to start). As for what those new wars might be, she readily agreed that, if Georgia were to become a NATO member as she and her running mate believe it should, and if Russia were to engage in new conflict with Georgia, then the U.S. would have to intervene militarily. The prospect in this, the 21st Century, of actual war between the two major nuclear super-powers did not seem to faze this born-again strategist one bit. (It might be noted in parentheses, that, through no fault of her own, the Alaskan governor is however only 44 years old, and therefore has no experience of World War II.) Nor did she shrink from the perspective of war against Iran, if launched by U.S. proxy Israel. No U.S. government could "second guess" Israel's need to defend itself, etc.

Anyone who has watched the videos of Palin's interviews with ABC, must have come away, as I did, with a cold sweat. This was not only sophistry; it was a deadly serious presentation of a person, who might very well be a loving wife, mother etc., and a conscientious governor, but who has not the faintest clue about how the world works. And she should be brought into the position of someone who is that heartbeat away from the Presidency of a major world power? What qualifications does she have for such an awesome responsibility? Obviously, none.

Then, the question begs itself: where could the appeal of this duo lie? How could the Karl Roves and Steven Schmidts really believe they can hoodwink the American public into voting for this lose-lose option?

Well, look more deeply. What are the subliminal images conjured up by these pathetic candidates? For McCain, the reference to Eisenhower (even despite the fact that hurricane "Ike" was raging not long thereafter) can only be superficial; McCain was no military commander, but rather a pilot in the tragic Viet Nam war who, once downed and captured, broke down under extreme torture. Although, certainly out of due respect for his personal trauma, neither the press nor the Democratic campaign have dwelled on this issue, it may be legitimate to raise the question, not only of McCain's physical condition (since he has a history of serious ailments), but also of the possible long-term effects of such psychological torture and breakdown.

In short, he is no second Ike. But there's another figure from the Eisenhower year that he does resemble. That is a certain Mr. Clean (yes, Clean, not McClean, not yet). Remember that popular character presented on television, in the daily life of millions of post-war Americans, Mr. Clean? He was the Procter & Gamble product which made its debut in 1958, and soon became a best-seller on the cleaning product market. In 1963, Mr. Clean appeared in the guise of a cop, named "Grime-fighter," and was applauded because he could solve any and all dirt problems. He was the first dirt-fighter to appear in a plastic bottle, and in 1965, emerged as "New, Mean Mr. Clean" to fight dirt. In the course of time, Mr. Clean introduced a two-front war policy, knocking dirt on the one side, and introducing a shine on the other. Compare any recent McCain appearance you have seen with the vintage ad for Mr. Clean. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbiofcuTZBo). Think of his pledges to clean up Washington (whose dirt he has been sitting in the dirt for decades) and the comparison to Mr. Clean is perhaps not just coincidental.

Now, consider his VP choice. What does she have to offer? Given her total ignorance of world affairs, lack of experience, etc., the only thing that Palin can offer is an image, subliminal or not: she is, as she stated in her acceptance speech, nothing more than a "hockey mom" who joined the PTA to help improve education for her children, etc. But then what attraction does she have? For those of us who grew up in the 1950s, the image she evokes is that of Debbie Reynolds, the typical Hollywood starlet who embodied all those 100% American values that Palin says she represents. Palin, like Reynolds, also began her career as a beauty contest winner (or, runner-up). Like Debbie Reynolds, she is as American as apple pie, — and as banal, one might add. Many have commented on Palin's not-so-up-to-date hairdo; but few have recognized that this is vintage 1950s, a la Reynolds. In fact, her hairdresser, Jessica Steele, at the Beehive Beauty Shop in Wasilla, told *The Sun*, that "We worked on putting her hair up in a move to TONE DOWN her sexy image and make her seem taller. We would talk a lot about how if she looked too pretty or too sexy, people wouldn't listen to her." Debbie Reynolds, anyone? Ask Eddie Fisher. (See www.debbiereynolds.com and click on photo galleries, especially 2,3,4, and 12.)

But that's only for starters. Now her father has told the world proudly how he taught his daughter to hunt moose, kill them and then skin and butcher the remains. In a major piece in *The Sun* on September 15, author Fergus Shanahan reports on Sarah's Daddy's tale of how his daughter learned to wield a gun. "She started shooting a gun when she was eight," he said proudly, "and shot her first animal when she was ten. It was something small, possibly a rabbit." Soon she would move on to bigger and better prey: "She is really a good shot," Daddy continued. "I taught her to shoot a moose and dress it, to fish and hunt for game." In fact, it turns out the Palins could make it as survivalists; "We raised our family to be able to support ourselves," Mr. Palin said; "90 per cent of our meat and fish we get ourselves."

(www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/the_real_american_idol/article16879.ece?p...) She is a leading member of the National Rifleman's Association. Last but not least, Sarah the beauty queen was also a top basketball player at school, so good that she earned the name "Sarah Barracuda" for her toughness. (See Sarah's pictures, in www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,299307,1837632_1758995,00.html, and www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,299307,1837632_1758999,00.html, and www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,299307,1837632_1762127,00.html — with the moose.)

Any guesses what subliminal image this might evoke? How about Annie Oakley, the real-life killer who was made famous and fashionable in the 1950s, in the various "Annie Get You Gun" films? The real Annie Oakley was born in an Ohio log cabin to Quaker parents, never really learned to read and write, but was "a damn good shot" (like Palin), and won contests against top male sharpshooters, putting them to shame. It was said she could knock the ashes off the cigarette of Kaiser Wilhelm II, when he, still the Prince of Prussia, asked her to try. Since neither the current President of China nor the two main leaders in Russia are known to smoke, perhaps our modern-day Annie Oakley Palin could do target practice on chain-smoker Helmut Schmidt's cigarette. Out of respect for the Atlantic alliance, Schmidt might even assent

So what we have before us in the November elections, is a Republican ticket made up of Mr. McClean and Debbie Reynolds, this time playing Annie Oakley. He, the President, is supposed to rectify all the wrongs of the world, clean up the messes left by the preceding administrations as quickly and efficiently as Mr. Clean cleaned up your mother's house, and she is to mobilize the very ordinary American women to hang out their yellow ribbons for our men and women (like her son) in Iraq. And if anyone objects, it's time to pull out the family rifle and shoot to kill.

There is a further, more important aspect to the affair. If all this is the subliminal message, then who are the {real} people on this GOP ticket? As far as McCain is concerned, the American public have had enough experience with him in the Senate, as well as in his various primary campaigns, to get an inkling of how his program of "change" will indeed promise four more years of Bush-Cheney disasters. But what about Ms. Palin? Who is she really, and what does she represent?

Although her nomination as VP candidate was presented at the Republican Party convention as a surprise, etc., it was well known to insider circles that the Christian fundamentalists had demanded such a candidate. McCain, all well and fine, was their view, but he has had no appeal to the fundies, those tens of millions of American voters who would have preferred a Mormon, like Romney, or a fundamentalist preacher, like Huckabee. Those tens of millions of American voters known as the Christian Right, who were the swing factor for the election of George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004, (discounting possible fraud). But these voter groups exist, they are powerful, they represent the "Christian Zionists" clamoring for Holy War more loudly than AIPAC, and they will be counted.

So, how can the Republican Party mobilize these absolutely crucial mass voter constituencies to turn out for their candidates in the November elections? McCain may be conservative etc., but he is no born-again Christian. Enter Sarah Palin.

Palin was brought up in the Wasilla Assembly of God, in the town of the same name where she was brought up. She attended that church from the age of ten, and two years later, was re-baptized there. She maintained her close association to the Assembly of God until 2002. In the state capital as governor, she has been attending the Juneau Christian Church,

identified as an Assembly of God church associated with the so-called Third Wave Movement, or Joel's Army, which belongs to a current known as Dominionism. (See www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=10167) The belief structure of this grouping asserts that when the End Times come, then supernatural powers will exert their influence on a group of Christians and take over the church and the world. Young people in Joel's Army are supposed to reconquer the world for God.

Now, in the event that all this sounds like a preposterous argument, based on artificially connecting the dots between her church and a vast network of weird fundi operations, take a look at what Sarah herself has said about her church and her beliefs. In an article published in The Times of London on September 16, by Hannah Strange (www.timesonline.typepad.com/uselections/2008/09/palin-linked-el.html), the revealing story is told of how Sarah attributed her victory in her bid to become Alaskan governor, to a blessing she had received from an African evangelist Pastor Thomas Muthee, during one of his ten visits to her church as a guest preacher. To appreciate the significance of this aspect of Palin's personality, it is highly recommended to view the video clip itself, in which she recalled that event. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=8twqZpUTzNQ). It was June 8, 2008, when she gave a speech at the church. Referring back to Pastor Muthee's miraculous offering, she stated: "As I was mayor and Pastor Muthee was here and he was praying over me, and you know how he speaks and he's so bold. And he was praying, 'Lord make a way, Lord make a way.'

"And I'm thinking," she went on, "this guy's really bold, he doesn't even know what I'm going to do, he doesn't know what my plans are. And he's praying not 'oh Lord if it be your will may she become governor,' no, he just prayed for it. He said, 'Lord make a way and let her do this next step.' And that's exactly what happened."

Now, Pastor Muthee is a personality of his own. He is the founder of something called the Word of Faith Church, aka the Prayer Cave, set up in Kiambu, Kenya in 1989, in response to a "calling" from God. Pastor Muthee gained recognition for his campaign to exorcise the community, after it had been beset by a number of auto accidents, which he attributed to the evil doing of a woman named Mama Jane, whom he denounced as a witch. The pastor organized prayer meetings, vigils etc. to rid the town of her evil influence, until the woman packed up and left town. The story has been recounted in the Christian Science Monitor (1999) as well as in a video "Transformations" put out by something called Sentinel Group, as reported in the Times article.

In the same video, Palin spoke about various visits she had made to different communities in Alaska since becoming governor, and mentioned that in one church she encountered, she had been warned that their services might seem a bit bizarre to her. Her response was prompt and candid: she had grown up in Wasilla, so "nothing freaks me out about the worship service." (Again, there is no substitute for viewing the video itself.) The other interesting aspect of this video, is that it presents the idea, embraced by these fundi networks, that "God has a destiny for the state of Alaska," which is to become the last refuge for all Americans, when the End Times come.

If the fundis demanded a VP candidate representing their ideology and capable of mobilizing their considerable constituency, then they got their money's worth in Sarah Palin. That is what she is, and that is why she was selected.

Where does this leave the Democrats? It is known that the Democratic Party has

demonstrated an uncanny talent for losing elections, even against incumbents despised by the American people and the world. One would hope that, this time around, considering the stakes, they would seize the opportunity and challenge offered by the unprecedented financial, social and strategic crises facing the U.S. and the world, and present concrete alternatives. It is time for the Democratic ticket to take Hillary Clinton's programmatic approach off the shelves, and offer Americans solutions to the banking and mortgage crisis, as well as a sane foreign policy orientation, based on partnership with major nations to overcome the worldwide collapse crisis. These programs won the endorsement of 18 million Americans in the primaries, and, in the wake of the demise of Lehman Brothers, and the delivery of Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac and AIG into the intensive care unit, there is every reason to believe that millions more will rally to support candidates promoting {real} change in policy. Clinton has endorsed the Obama-Biden ticket; why not use the political capital and sound ideas which that represents?

And, as for dealing with the alleged GOP challengers, any serious contender would simply have recourse to that almighty power, the truth. Let the truth about McCain and Palin, as concrete, historical individuals with their belief structures and personal allegiances, be told to the American electorate. Subliminal associations can be swept away, like bad dreams, once they are recognized as such. The American public was hoodwinked by the Bush-Cheney cabal's lies about Iraq two times, and endorsed two catastrophic wars; the American people were served the charade of W. Bush's Hollywoodian performance aboard a ship to declare his mission accomplished; they also bore witness to Bush's Thanksgiving visit to the troops in Iraq, complete with plastic turkey. Is it not time for reality, the truth, to prevail over subliminal suggestions and doctored media escapades?

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