

As Published On

→The Human Conspiracy Blog: <http://www.jaygaskill.com/blog3>

→The Policy Think Site: <http://www.jaygaskill.com>

All contents, unless otherwise indicated are

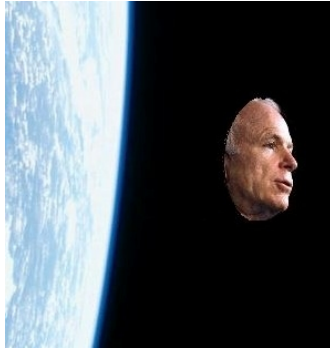
Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 by Jay B. Gaskill

Permission to publish, distribute or print all or part of this article (except for personal use) is needed. [Permission for use in group discussions is almost always routinely given.]

Please contact Jay B. Gaskill, attorney at law, via e mail at law@jaygaskill.com



WHO WILL BELL THE CAT?



A Presidential Candidate Rating Process

**By
Jay B. Gaskill**

INTRODUCTION

Every open presidential election – that’s every one with two non-incumbent candidates – represents a watershed. Sometimes the outcome makes only a marginal difference in world history, and at other times the outcome is critical. Many wonder whether we are at one of those pivotal junctures in world history, moments of particular consequence like the immediate aftermath of World War II, when events could easily have sheered off in a vastly different direction.

This is one of those times.

Yes, like every previous election, we have two candidates-in-the-making who are ... imperfect. Recall that Lincoln, FDR, Truman and Reagan were imperfect candidates for POTUS when they first ran for office and even afterwards. **All the presidential candidates were.** This is not a good time to “sit this one out”.

Perspective: Everyone has his and her pet issues. Remember when first time POTUS candidate Jimmie Carter promised to reveal the government’s secret UFO information? Now that was an issue to remember. The takeaway lesson is that several of the issues you think are most important during the election will turn out to be the minor ones in the real world. This is why a candidate’s character and track record matter so much.

When forming your own presidential criteria, the perspective of history is a good place to start. My list was shaped by a passion for deep patriotism (as defined below); my sense that those values, achievements and practices still captured by the notion of “Western Civilization” are both challenged and irreplaceably valuable; that the USA is a critically needed defender of the best form of civilization that has so far emerged in the planet; and my concern that we Americans have become so seduced by our shallow comforts that we could let the whole thing go to the dogs. This less a sense of American exceptionalism (though I share that view) as it is the recognition of American indispensability in the current crisis. So I didn’t bother with two obvious issues: the sub-prime mortgage meltdown and the shaky economy. They will be in the background as we address the six criteria I set out below. If we as a country get the energy independence and restoring American manufacturing policies right, a healthy economy and strong dollar will follow. I invite you to apply the rating criteria to the two Senators who are campaigning to lead the US. Try to set aside partisan leanings and just see where the results lead. Then consider how you would construct your own criteria.

The Rating Criteria

1. **Deep patriotism** consists in devotion to America’s greatness and wellness with all that entails. For such patriots, **honoring our country’s deepest values, protecting our safety, security and economic health all trump political party, political posturing, both left and right. America comes first.** The voices who pander to anti-American international expectations and indulge in the grandiose gestures of Anti-American moral elitism are the new post-patriots. The voices who are willing to talk the language of patriotism without supporting its risks and sacrifices are the shallow, fair weather patriots. **We are not in fair weather. We can only trust the deep patriot variety in the White House.**
2. **Effective, practical energy independence is a matter of long-term national survival.** America’s energy flow is the national carotid artery. **US energy needs must never again be hostage to foreign dictators and manipulators.** Therefore **we must implement a supply-side energy policy that puts America’s interests ahead of those of our enemies and drives the cost of energy down.** Our goal must be nothing less than to lead the world in energy generation, in developing

and implementing a whole suite of newer energy technologies and resources, especially nuclear-electric power, and environmentally smart coal-derived natural gas and ethanol; these two are among the areas where the US already enjoys a strong advantage in resources and technology. We should not let the rest of the world talk us out of exploiting them.

3. **We must start now to rebuild American manufacturing.** This will require heavy lifting against entrenched interests: sustained investments in **energy** production, storage and distribution technologies, in automated manufacturing technologies (no, we don't need to outsource to cheap child labor because we invented robots), in new **aero-space** technologies (yes, we were first in space and we're there to stay), in **cutting edge cyber technologies** (forget not that we were first in computers, internet and information processing technologies) and in food production (demand for basic foodstuffs has outstripped supply in the international economy; once we were the breadbasket of the world; this represents the intersection of necessity and opportunity). **The USA must restore and aggressively develop all manufacturing processes that are essential to our security - at home.**
4. **Congress needs adult supervision. America is tired of bickering and posturing in Washington.** Everyone but the politicians seems to know that common sense and real world accomplishment trump the politics of ideology and gesture. Who can bring us back to the real world and get things done? A political lightweight, however charismatic, cannot reign in the loopy extremists of one party and bring in their recalcitrant opponents. Politicians seem perpetually unable to put country over party.
5. **Realistic diplomacy that effectively represents the great American purpose is urgently needed. American diplomats need to stay on one positive MESSAGE and remain awake to Reality:**

The MESSAGE:

This is a young nation, one that has not lost its honor, resolve nor its founding purpose. ***We are still the world's most enduring and powerful revolutionary democracy.*** We are a generous country, peaceful by nature, but no one should mistake our decency for weakness, or confuse our idealism for naiveté, or misread our self confidence for Wild West arrogance. Yes, we look out for our friends; yes, we keep our promises; yes, we deal fairly with everyone; and yes, we expect good behavior in return. Those who dare to harm us always learn too late that American diplomacy is backed by the most professional and formidable support system in the world -- the American military.

The REALITY:

Diplomacy deals with the three circles of power outside our borders – (1) our loyal and trusted friends, (2) our hostile and duplicitous enemies, (3) the opportunists who can go either way as self interest and local politics dictate. Diplomacy exists to expand our list of loyal allies and contract the list of duplicitous opportunists, while curbing the worst behavior of our enemies.

6. **The next commander-in-chief must be prepared to do whatever is necessary to prevent a nuclear holocaust in the 21st century. The most urgent challenge of the 21st century is to achieve responsible, civilized control of every deliverable nuclear weapon in the world.** We are poised at that critical moment when it is still possible to keep the most deadly and deliverable weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of the most irresponsible, bloody minded dictators, terrorists and jihadists in the world. Once a critical mass of nuclear terror technology is outside civilized control, the MAD standoff of the Cold War will look like the ‘good old days’. This task **calls for a leader with steady nerves, proven courage, high intelligence, moral clarity and the demonstrated willingness to act decisively when necessary.**



RATING THE CANDIDATES

Use any point system you prefer, for example -

- 3 = ‘as good as we need’
- 2 = ‘barely acceptable’
- 1 = ‘deficient’
- -1= ‘really deficient’
- -2 = ‘unacceptable’

Note that, in my system, a ‘perfect’ score of 18 is not really perfect, just “as good as we need”. But any negative net score is a warning and 12 is “barely acceptable”. So....

- [1] **Putting America’s interests first**
- [2] **Implementing supply side energy policy**
- [3] **Rebuilding American manufacturing**
- [4] **Providing adult supervision in Washington, DC**
- [5] **Restoring more realistic and self-confident American diplomacy**
- [6] **Stopping nuclear terror before it reaches Critical Mass**

Once you have rated the candidates, you will probably want to assign different weights to parts of the criteria and you may want to add or subtract criteria from the list. Ultimately the exercise is worthwhile if it stimulates introspection and the kind of careful thinking we expect of our fellow “deep patriots”.

JBG