

John McCain: The Right Man for These Times

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When deciding how to vote in a given election, I ask myself two questions. First, what are the most pressing issues facing our city, state, or nation? Second, which person has the qualities and experience to do the best job? In the 2008 Presidential election, I support John McCain because his strong personal qualities, including honesty, thoughtfulness, and willingness to support bipartisan negotiation, compliment his extensive experience first as a military officer, then as a prisoner of war, and now as a longtime U.S. Senator.

It is my contention that the most important issue facing our nation is developing a coherent strategy to restore America's credibility around the world. Only when we have a leader with the wisdom and experience to make sound decisions and develop broad coalitions with other nations will we be able to begin to solve the myriad of problems the world faces. Successfully bringing peace and stability to both Afghanistan and Iraq, securing Pakistan and Russia's nuclear arms, protecting Americans at home and abroad from future terrorist threats, helping to negotiate a peace settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians, recognizing China's role as a new world superpower, managing the wayward leaders of North Korea and Iran, and ending conflict in Chad, Kenya, and the Darfur region of Sudan are just some of the problems that a new President will be faced with immediately when he or she steps foot in the Oval Office in January 2009.

There is no question that domestic issues like the economy, immigration, health care, and education reform are important to our nation. However, foreign policy is paramount because domestic political outcomes are contingent upon foreign policy choices. The heavy cost of multiple wars reduces the funding available for social programs or tax cuts designed to stimulate the economy. The impact of another terrorist attack similar to the horrific acts of September 11, 2001 would significantly damage our economy. At the same time, decisions made domestically do not directly preclude our leaders from furthering their foreign policy agendas. Therefore, foreign policy can impact domestic policy, but domestic agendas do not affect foreign policy in the same manner. As a result, foreign policy issues must be at the top of any President's agenda.

In making the case for John Kerry's candidacy for President in 2004, famous Democratic political strategist James Carville praised Kerry for the way he dealt with difficult situations that every person fears. Carville asked, "What would I do in a time of war?" "How will I react when I have cancer?" "How will I respond when facing public humiliation and almost certain defeat?" Carville argued that Kerry would address each situation with grace and dignity, proving that he had the character necessary to lead our nation. During the Vietnam War, John McCain led a naval squadron and acted with unheard of valor while a prisoner of war for nearly six years. Like Senator Kerry, McCain has also dealt with personal health crises that have left him unfazed. When so called political experts were writing McCain's political obituary and discounting his chances to win the Republican nomination last summer, McCain took out a personal loan to keep his campaign afloat, cut staff, hopped on the Straight Talk Express, and talked with voters in small groups, proving he had the determination and courage needed to win the nomination. His personal strength helped him defend his unpopular positions on the best ways to move forward in Iraq and immigration reform and swayed voters one by one. He won the Republican nomination on his own terms.

John McCain's greatest political strength is his ability to transcend partisan politics in favor of principled legislation that sets sound policy for all Americans. At

various times, Senator McCain has taken unpopular positions on taxes, campaign finance reform, immigration, and the confirmation of judges to name just a few of his stances that are not in accordance with certain segments of the Republican party. As a conservative, I have often questioned his voting record. However, looking at the larger picture, McCain's principles emerge. Rather than supporting lower taxes, McCain believes in lowering our national debt. Rather than opposing free speech, McCain favors ensuring that the American people have a government that is ethical and accountable to the many and not just the few. Rather than supporting amnesty, McCain supports fairness, honoring work, the "American dream," and creating enforceable immigration legislation. Rather than fighting to get some conservative judges seated now, McCain supports the workings of our federal process. In case after case, we see that Senator McCain supports pragmatic policy over partisan politics.

People believe John McCain when he says, "I do not allow my views and my concerns about the future of the United States of America to be affected in any way by my personal ambitions." Americans know that McCain will always strive to do what is right and not simply what is popular and, as a result, their best interests will be served. This honesty and adherence to principle engenders a great deal of trust in the Senator. This trust will allow him to become an effective President because he will have the ability to persuade Americans and politicians from both parties to support his domestic and foreign agendas.

John McCain is the right person to lead the country during these difficult times. McCain's personal history has transformed him into a true statesman. He is the rare politician who values sound, principled policy over partisanship. John McCain's experience and personal character make him the most well-equipped candidate to handle the international political arena and, in doing so, bring the country together to transcend the bitter partisan politics of the last fifteen years. I have no doubt that Senator McCain can inspire Americans to "become part of something larger than their own self interest" and sacrifice for the good of the country.

For more information please visit www.johnmccain.com.