

If the polls are within 3 to 4 points on November 3rd, McCain will win

National polling has become very unreliable.

by
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Partially because so many people use cell phones and aren't included in the mix and some because those being polled just don't tell pollsters the truth anymore. They don't like to be bothered.

Let me throw my controversial prediction out and then explain it: I believe that Midwestern whites could determine the outcome of this election. In states where many would least expect it, I believe that whites will not pull the lever for Barack Obama when they make their final choice.

The most prejudiced region of the country is not the south anymore. It is the Midwest and they are pretty reticent about admitting it. They will find every excuse under the sun, but the bottom line, in my opinion, is that they will not cast the promised vote for Obama on November 4th.

The most interesting aspect of this election cycle isn't that an inexperienced young Democrat is competitive in the final four weeks before the election. It is that the aged Republican is still a factor in the race.

Had the Democrats chosen a middle-aged to elderly Anglo like Joe Biden or Chris Dodd, even with all their imperfections, this race would have been over weeks ago. Having Hillary at the top of the Democratic ticket would have presented the same problem, albeit for different reasons, that Obama is posing for Dems. She polarizes the nation like no other candidate. Like no other candidate, as Joe Biden would redundantly repeat.

With an unpopular war in Iraq raging on endlessly and the Republican candidate pushing to stay the course, and with the economy sliding and the financial markets costing voters their retirement safety nets, and with an immensely unpopular president and vice president, the Republican should be polling in the 30's or low 40's, not be within two to four percentage points of a glib, even though brand new to the national scene, Democrat.

So, why is it a race with less than a month to go?

Sarah Palin is one reason but her newness is wearing off and voters, especially true Independents who have taken no oath of fealty to either Party, have grown a bit disenchanted with an attractive woman who has gotten so much further in her life than they have in theirs. Most Independents are not truly independent - they favor one political philosophy over the other but, like frequenting Starbucks, saying you're an Independent is fashionable and that's why they claim to be one.

John McCain is not getting any younger and his age has been one concern from the get-go. Unlike Cloris Leachman, he never appeared on the Mary Tyler Moore show and can't claim the legion of

elderly fans Leachman can.

Hell, John McCain can't even claim the diehard Republicans.

He has been a maverick and many Republicans don't like that about him. It wasn't very long ago that James Dobson of Colorado Springs' Focus on the Family said he would never vote for McCain. But, when you're supporting another candidate in the primary, you say a lot of things you eat for the general election.

Fellow Republican Senators in Washington have never accepted McCain's buddy-buddy relationship with certain Democrats. Russ Feingold is one of the most liberal members of the Senate and McCain and he crafted an election financing reform bill that many Republicans still believe limits free speech.

McCain has a notorious temper. At his age and in his physical condition from the torture inflicted on him in Hanoi, he can not follow up his verbal anger with physical force but he is known to have more than a mild temper and has a reputation for making threats on his colleagues.

Yet, he is within a few points in the polls of the younger, more telegenic, better speaking Democrat with none of that baggage. In fact, three years ago, Barack Obama could not have been picked out of a line-up, he was so unknown.

In fairness, none but her closest friends in Wasilla, could have singled out Sarah Palin in an Alaska grocery store until a few weeks ago.

The Democrats extreme efforts, greatly aided by the liberal media, to portray Ms. Palin as inexperienced has also served to heighten voter's memories that Obama has no experience himself and he heads the Democratic ticket, he is not in the second spot as Palin is.

Voters are more often asking themselves: If we will end up with an inexperienced person in the White House, would I prefer it be in the No. 1 or No. 2 position?

Make no mistake about it, Sarah Palin has no foreign policy experience. But she wasn't likely to have. She was a mayor of a small, but rapidly growing city in Alaska, then governor of Alaska during the same time Barack Obama has been in the Senate. He also has no foreign policy experience. The Democrats have held control of both Houses of Congress for some of the time he's served (he took office in January, 2005 and the Dems gained the majority in January of 2007) but he made no effort to travel abroad to the regions we have servicemen and women stationed in combat conditions.

One way or the other, American people are going to have an inexperienced person in or near the White House come January of 2009. Pointing out that none of our recent presidents, George Bush

the Younger, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, nor Ronald Reagan had any foreign policy experience when they assumed the presidency probably won't give great comfort to voters either. During the past 40 years, only Richard Nixon and Bush the Elder had foreign policy experience when they became president.

We elect governors to be president and they seldom have any occasion to gain foreign policy experience in that job. Bill Richardson would have been an exception because he was in other positions before becoming governor of New Mexico. If you want to count Hillary's travel to quilting parties overseas or tagging along to make sure Bill didn't act on his philandering, you might think she had foreign policy experience. Under that, Chelsea Clinton is also ready to be president as are the Bush twins.

Why isn't Obama pulling away in the polls?

First, it might be that the polls are wrong. In Minnesota, during a recent visit, one poll had Al Franken (the comedian) ahead of incumbent Republican Senator Norm Coleman by double digits and another poll had Coleman ahead of Franken by double digits. Granted, the Minnesota Poll favoring Franken polled a disproportionate percentage of identified Democrats but it passes itself off as a credible poll.

If it's not inaccurate polls, what is it?

Is it that the country is still not ready for an African-American president? That in spite of what some say for public consumption, they are not going to vote for Barack Obama simply because he's African-American? Which, by the way, is a bit of a mischaracterization. His mother is an Anglo from Kansas.

This presidential election is very volatile. Because of all of the baggage carried by John McCain, including his age, he might not be able to get voters to go his way either. The "nonvoting" numbers may be high on both sides. John McCain is not only 72 years old, they have been very difficult years. He is not the picture of a youthful 72. He looks every day of his age. Because of the risk that he might not be in the best health and there is some danger that he will not serve out even a first term, it is important that voters at least "think" that Sarah Palin could do the job if it is thrust upon her.

Diehard liberals will never vote for McCain, regardless of Obama's inexperience and diehard conservatives will never vote for Obama, in spite of McCain's age.

In so many elections, the winner is the candidate who receives the fewest "no" votes. In other words, voters decide who they will not vote for - who is most objectionable to them - and the other candidate gets their vote. Not because voters are for him or her, but because they detest the other candidate more. It's a helluva way to win an election but that's more common than not.

When was the last time you voted for a candidate because you honestly thought they would do a great job and represent your interests well - better than the other candidate? Even the daily rag in Cheyenne has encouraged voters to "hold your nose" and vote for someone *they* favor. That's a ringing endorsement, isn't it?

This election will turn on two things:

- 1.) Voter turnout of young voters and African-Americans. Obama will have the advantage if either group turns out in unusually high numbers. If either or both of those voting groups stay home more than usual, he will not win.
- 2.) Whether true Independents conclude that Sarah Palin can do the job if it suddenly becomes hers. If they don't believe that, they are unlikely to vote for McCain. If they do, McCain is in good shape.

To the headline: The critical secret which will be guarded by Midwestern voters until November 4th is that they will not vote for the candidate they tell pollsters they'll choose when the time comes. If credible polls show Obama ahead by 6, 8 or even 10 points in those states on November 3rd, it will be closer than that but Obama will win. If those polls show McCain trailing in pivotal states by 3 to 4% on November 3rd, I believe he can win by a narrow electoral margin.

Whichever candidate wins this presidential election, history will be made. Either an African-American will be in the White House or a woman will be for the first time in American history. George Washington became our first president on April 30, 1789. Now, nearly 220 years later, an American other than a white male will hold one of the two highest offices in the land. It's about time. It is about time.

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