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Sunday, 05/20/07

Tennessee Voices: It's not a question of Clinton or Obama, not in '08

By CAROL M. SWAIN

Is America ready to elect a minority president?

We must separate the question of whether America is ready to elect a minority president from the individuals currently running on the Democratic ticket. In other words, the success or failure of Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama says nothing about the willingness of the country to place its fate in the hands of its first female or first African-American leader.

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A March 2007 Gallup Poll shows that most Americans say that they are comfortable voting for a black presidential candidate (84 percent) or for a woman (77 percent). The country is ready for a minority president; but not any of the current Democratic front-runners.

Consider that Hillary Clinton does not seem to fit the bill as a woman whom most Americans feel comfortable supporting. Despite her intelligence, education and experience, polls show that she does not engender the kind of trust

and confidence needed to become the nation's first female president.

In fact, Hillary Clinton has lost ground. A May 2007, Gallup Poll shows that her popularity has fallen steadily. In April, the percentage of Americans that viewed her favorably had fallen from 58 percent in January to 45 percent in April. She evokes strong positive and negative reactions from the public.

Barack Obama could eventually become the country's first black male president. But first he has to overcome some disadvantages. He is relatively unknown across much of America, and his detractors dismiss him for not having enough experience. Moreover, he is not the product of old wealth.

Perhaps, Obama's best chance of becoming president will be after he has served in the No. 2 position on a Democratic ticket headed by a Caucasian male. Such a ticket, I believe, would be a potential winner for the Democrats and for Obama. It would give him the exposure needed for a successful future bid, and it would create much enthusiasm among African-Americans.



Carol M. Swain

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Gov. Bill Richardson, another minority candidate, has chosen not to seek media attention as the nation's first potential Hispanic candidate. As the governor of New Mexico, he is a dark horse with a number of strengths. Although his election would be a historical first, Richardson is shrewd and able to run as a Caucasian male.

Republicans could get into the game by persuading Condoleezza Rice to serve in the No. 2 position on a white-male headed ticket. Unfortunately, however, Rice's Teflon image has been marred to the point that it is not clear whether she could attract the votes of women or blacks.

I predict America will elect a black or a Hispanic male president long before it elects a woman of any race. At play are our Judeo-Christian, and now Muslim, traditions that have limited the roles of women. Unlike a man, on a global scale, a woman has to overcome the perception that she will be weak on defense and unable to persuade world leaders of nations where women are viewed as subordinate beings.

In a world where people of color vastly outnumber those of European descent, the "right" minority could make a world of difference in how America is perceived in the world.

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"...I've voted for a lot of women & some black people ... Fred Thompson 2008!"

Says it all ... GoSheeple still don't get it ...

Thompson is unelectable to the office of the presidency, period. The nation will not elect another Bush buttboy ... so, all of those on the right that claim the president is on the right track (even those who throw in the pandering, "but he did it wrong" qualification) will be left on the sidelines, looking in ...

The Nation is tired of our young adults being sacrificed for the Liar-in-Chief's whimsy ...

Posted: Wed May 23, 2007 6:30 am

The campaign process in the U.S. has degenerated into a sick sort of boot camp, from which it's nigh unto impossible for any candidate of any race, creed or color to emerge with integrity and dignity intact.

We could have a winner-take-all mud-wrestling contest among all candidates aired on one of the wasteland channels that usually features WWF Smackdown and end up with as good a result.

For the record, my decision will be based on the candidate's plans to address issues such as access to health care -- which has become a desperate issue for individuals and small businesses in the U.S. -- a more effective system of public education, international relations, disaster preparedness, energy policy, development of alternative energy resources, and other important issues.

Any candidate who proposes voters should support him because of his stand on the personal, apolitical issues of abortion and/or gay marriage will be crossed off the list.

Posted: Tue May 22, 2007 1:39 pm

All I can say is for me, skin color, sex, height, weight, hair color, eye color - none of that matters, it's the candidate themselves & their stances on the issues.

I've voted for a lot of women & some black people because they were the right candidate - substance before appearance, though appearance can be a plus.

Fred Thompson 2008!

Posted: Sun May 20, 2007 3:05 pm

I think we've reached a point where we just want SOMEONE we can get behind and feel confident in. Regardless of race, sex, or political affiliation, we seem to have run out of politicians we can truly respect and have confidence in. No one stands out in the crowd of faces, and that is disheartening.

Posted: Sun May 20, 2007 10:15 am

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