

# Some Excellent Advice for McCain and Obama

As a pundit who gets paid to give his opinion whether you want it or not, it is my civic duty to dispense some worthy advice to the current front runners in the presidential race. Let's start with Barack Obama.

Senator, there is a good chance you will pull off one of the biggest upsets in modern political history and defeat Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination. So far, your theme has been: "Give Hope a Chance." And it's working—good for you.

But as with the John Lennon/Yoko Ono song "Give Peace a Chance," hearing it over and over is worse than being waterboarded. So you might think about upgrading from "hope" rhetoric to actual statements about policy. Now, I understand that the more specific you get about universal health care or Iraq, the more you invite criticism. But the folks like you, and effectively rebutting policy criticism might even make you stronger.

Shorthand: You might seal the deal if you boldly distinguish yourself from Senator Clinton on a vital issue.

Over to you, Senator McCain. After winning the Potomac primaries, you said that "we dare not let" the Democrats win in November. As I told Senator Obama, that kind of general statement doesn't move the debate dial. "We dare not," why? What would happen if the Dems win the White House?

It's not like Americans are cheering over the Republican party these days, with President Bush's approval rating hovering around 30%. Most Americans are not liking oil at \$100 a barrel and an Iraqi government that makes Moe, Larry, and Curly look astute.

So, Senator, you must get very precise about the danger of a Democratic president. And you can't play the "inexperienced" card with Obama, either. President Bush the Elder did that with Bill Clinton and we all know how that turned out.

Likewise, with JFK versus Richard Nixon in 1960. Inexperience won.

Senator, you have pulled off a political miracle comparable to Senator Obama's. So it's important that you understand most Americans want new ideas and creative solutions to complicated problems. Thanks for listening.

Now, you may have noticed that I did not offer advice to Senator Clinton. That's because punditry only goes so far. Mrs. Clinton is up against a charismatic opponent who is able to raise hundreds of millions of dollars. That's a happy meal if I've ever seen one.

Every since 9/11, American politics have been dark and intense. Folks are tired, unsure. Then along comes a candidate who is optimistic and full of positive energy. Obama is like a Caribbean vacation in February. It's tough to say no to that.

So like the Patriots losing to the Giants in the Super bowl, Senator Clinton may be facing destiny. Even punditry is powerless against that; bloviating can't dent it.

But maybe not. Perhaps Hillary Clinton can derail the Obama express in Ohio and Texas. Then we'll have yet another amazing political comeback.