



MEMORANDUM

TO: McCain Leadership
FROM: Rick Davis
DATE: November 29, 2007
SUBJECT: One President on Stage

At last night's CNN/YouTube Debate in Tampa, Florida, John McCain was the only candidate who sounded like a president - clear in his vision for a safe and strong America - and the only candidate on stage with the experience and knowledge to be commander in chief on his first day in office. I have to think the Clinton campaign is having a great day after watching the various school yard fights that broke out between Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani. Do we really believe that by ripping our party apart on immigration we will be better able to win a general election against Hillary Clinton and the Democrats?

We need John McCain to be our party's nominee to restore integrity to Washington and dignity to the chaotic selection process. All current national polls show that today John McCain is best able to defeat Hillary Clinton in the general election. Americans know he is ready to lead, but it is also becoming clear that John McCain's ability to contrast with Hillary Clinton on substance, rather than just name-calling, will be a difference maker in the general election.

In his post debate analysis, Bill Kristol said, "McCain seemed by far the most plausible commander in chief." David Gergen agreed, saying that John McCain was the most presidential.

While other candidates spent their time delivering canned one-liners, debating lawn care and taking credit for stopping snow storms, John McCain took on the toughest issues with bold honesty and moral certainty. Instead of bickering and playing "gotcha politics," he cut through the petty back and forth with a vision for America's future in the war against Islamic extremism, fighting wasteful spending, reforming Washington, finding a real solution to border security and upholding American values. He did not equivocate and he did not rely on the advice of his lawyers and advisors; he spoke with a voice of reason and experience. As Jonah Goldberg with *National Review* said about his discussion of the immigration issue, he was "grown-up and serious."

By being "grown-up and serious," John McCain reminded us that the Presidency of the United States is more than just an office won in a partisan contest; it is the embodiment of the values and ideals of our nation. A president does not hide behind lawyers and advisors when discussing national security or the pros and cons of torture, as Mitt Romney did last night. A president stands up for the principles that make our country great and condemns such practice as antithetical to American values. John McCain was the only candidate on the stage last night not only willing to do so, but with the experience to speak with gravitas. As David Yepsen of the *Des Moines Register* said, "McCain had his strongest debate of the campaign. He was forceful and blunt throughout."

John McCain...

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The *St. Petersburg Times* summed up John McCain's performance in an editorial this morning, "McCain's once-foundering campaign has experienced a recent resurgence, and the debate should give him another boost with Republicans interested more in tested leadership than pure ideology." By acting like a leader, John McCain also showed why he's the only candidate in this race who will defeat Hillary Clinton. No Republican is going to beat Hillary Clinton by debating lawn care; she is too politically savvy to take the bait and get into such petty debate.

John McCain will take on the tough issues, offer a vision and contrast it directly with Hillary Clinton's liberal alternatives – not only offering a vision more acceptable to the American people, but restoring to politics the kind of leadership and discourse Americans long for in a president. One man on stage last night was presidential; one man on stage showed the moral fortitude we need in a leader; one man demonstrated that he is prepared to be commander in chief – John McCain.

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